

DESERT LAND TO HOMELAND

The Land that could have been
New Sindh



Bhai Pratap, the man who achieved the impossible

MOHAN GEHANI



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ISBN No 978-81-927065-3-5

Printed on December 2015

Edition : 2015

Published by



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SINDHOLOGY.
BHARTI SINDHU VIDHYA PEETH

Adipur (Kutch)- 370 005 Phone (02836) 263851-260336.

Email : sindlogy@yahoo.com, contact@sindhology.org

Visit: www.sindhology.org

Sole Selling Rights-

SLEEK ADVERTISING P LTD

Sleek House, 37 Wheeler Road, 2nd Cross, Frazer Town, Bengaluru 560005

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Author – Mohan Gehani

Design – Ravi Y Adivarekar

Printed at –

PRIME PRINTERS

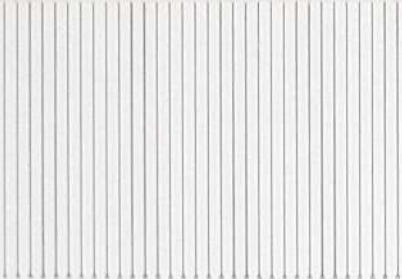
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New Sindh

MOHAN GEHANI





PREFACE

Let me start with a confession. When I received a proposal from my friend, Lakhmi Khilani, to write about the Historical development of Gandhidham-Adipur-Kandla, along with a background of the heroic efforts of Bhai Pratap; I was sceptical. I thought, what could one write about the sleepy twin townships tucked away in one extreme corner of India? Especially, one situated in a desert? How could a mere 60-65 years qualify as History? All these thoughts haunted me before I decided to finally accept his proposal.

During my morning walk, a thought flashed across my mind. It suddenly occurred to me, that so far all the towns and cities in the world have been established by rulers: Kings and Emperors, with all the state resources at their disposal.

In all of history, no commoner has dared to dream let alone try to establish a city or township. This was what made Bhai Pratap so unique. He who dared to dream and even managed to establish a thriving township in the midst of desert, which is now such an important gateway, as a port to India. My curiosity was aroused and I wanted to know more, through exploring the mindscape of Bhai Pratap and finding out about the actual conditions, under which he had to start his venture or adventure, whichever way one may look at it.

I realized by then, that I could also get some people who would have living memories of those early times, while any delay would have resulted in the loss of getting an oral history account of those times.

Previously, I had visited Gandhidham Adipur three times. The first time was in 1960, at the time of Akhil Bharat Sindhi Sahit Sammelan, subsequently in 1972, in company of Kirat Babani and Popati Hiranadani and finally in the year 1999, when the present building of the Indian Institute of Sindhology was about to be inaugurated. On each one of those trips I carried a strong feeling that it is truly the natural soil for Sindhis, which enlivened me to embarking on this journey of exploration without any hesitation.

I was lucky to have very close friends who were amongst the early settlers. Prof. Pritam Varyani came to Adipur, when the total population there was of merely 40 people. Prof. Satish Rohra, Mr. Nirmal Vaswani and the Late Mr. Valiram Kishnani, were also some of the early settlers.

The late Dadi Krishna Bhambani, an educationist and a pioneer of education in Adipur and a lifelong companion of the late National poet, 'Hundraj 'Dukhyal' opened up with a treasure chest of her memories from those times.

They all had fascinating tales to narrate, from those long lost times of grim struggles for mere survival, their unbelievable courage and indomitable will, all which Bhai Pratap infused in them.

Bhai Pratap didn't merely succeed in imparting his dream, but also won them over, which turned it into a reality. His vision was not a narrow one down to just settle Sindhis who has migrated from Sind; he did this while enlisting the support of leaders of the local population. He understood that a town needs all types of trades, so he encouraged his barber to settle there and carry on his trade even without a chair for getting a haircut. He also called his cobbler to set-up shop and tailor to start his trade.

The doors of the Indian Institute of Sindhology and Sindhu Resettlement Corporation (SRC) were opened for me. I could go to Mumbai and obtain annual reports of the corporation from their office. I also met the sons of people who were handed down the stories of those times by their fathers and mothers. All those stories are of a personal nature and a treasure trove in my memory.

This entire study, however, raises many questions. Bhai Pratap wrote a letter for a grant of Land on 27th January 1948, while the order for granting the land was issued on 30th January (within merely 2 days). One can only imagine the amount of ground-work, time and effort that must have taken to happen. Yet, it is intriguing as to why when nearly the entire deal was settled, a delegation of Sindhi refugees were sent to Gandhiji on 22nd January to sabotage the proposal and ask Bhai Pratap for land in Maharashtra, near Nasik or Mathura. Who were the leaders who inspired this 'fake' delegation?

All the grants by the ex-rulers were cancelled, which resulted in the cancellation of this grant as well. At this time why no Sindhi leader approached the government of those times, who were occupying important positions of power, to make this one grant an exception in light of the extraordinary historical circumstances, which had forced Sindhi community to migrate to India.

Why no one among the leadership insisted that the government was duty-bound to provide planned rehabilitation, rather than scatter the community all over India, into the dilapidated camps vacated by British troops after the Second World War?

Why did it take six crucial years for the matter to be resolved? Why was the grant of 15000 acres reduced to a mere 2600 acres to sub-lease for 100 years?

After all history hides many questions in its womb and historical narratives only tell selective truths.

In these crucial six years, Sindhis struggled to eke out their existence wherever they found a foothold. Thus, they were condemned to live a fragmented and scattered life all over India, instead of being resettled to one region which they could call their own and attain their all-round potential of growth, as envisioned by Bhai Pratap.

We all realize that the vision and dream of Bhai Pratap, was thwarted at the critical time in the history of our community. He had a larger vision than building a city. The periodical that he launched to popularize this project was called "NEW SIND", which speaks volumes of his wider vision and dream for the Sindhi community!

(Translation of his vision is given in Appendix 2)

Can his thwarted dream be resurrected?

Is it possible for anyone to predict the abrupt turns and twists of History? Could anyone have foreseen the partition of India, the bloodshed and mass exodus? Today in India we have prospered due to our own efforts and earned the praise for our hard work and entrepreneurial skills. We are at the tail end of the distribution channel of economy leading to overvisibility.

The neo-rich class that has emerged in our community is known for its ostentatious lifestyle. Thus, prosperity without political power makes us an easy target and most vulnerable when the economic contradictions become acute. Are we alive because of this fact of socio-political dynamics.

In such a situation, will it not be wise to have something akin to accident insurance? We all know and hope that no accident is around the corner, when we opt for an accident insurance, yet in our wisdom we still get insured. In the same manner, is it not advisable that the community invests some part of their income in a fund which can be invested in Kutch, to create our stakes for the development of the region? This will go a long way to creating goodwill among the local population and in case of any repeated historical emergency that we may face; at least we shall have a place to look forward to.

Mohan Gehani

FOREWORD



Writing a suitable foreword is not a simple task, be it at the best of times & particularly when it relates to a learned author such as, Shri Mohan Gehani & his labor of love in writing the book 'Desert Land to Homeland: The Land that could have been New Sindh'.

I am not at all sure of my competence to do justice to this responsibility & would accordingly request the readers to kindly bear with me.

Undoubtedly, immense effort has gone into the compilation of this outstanding work, which has been extremely timely for a history that could be lost if not recorded authentically, while people are still alive and can corroborate events, in relation to the building & growth of Gandhidham & the Kandla complex.

Sometime in 18th century, the Meers, Subedars of the Durrani dynasty of Afghanistan, in Sindh, considered extending their domain over Hindu Kutch, which was foiled as a consequence of one the fiercest battles recorded in human warfare. Kutch was thus saved from becoming an extension of Afghanistan, as Sindh had earlier become. However on the Indian subcontinent, Bengal, Punjab and Sindh, were all areas favored by nature as they were crisscrossed by streams of perennially flowing water, as the poem goes...

*'Sindhu in might surpassed all rivers that flow...
The roar of the river is lifted up to heaven above the earth;
It puts forth endless Vigor with a flash of light...
Even as cows with milk rush to their calves,
So other rive roar into the Sindhu.
As a warrior king leads other warriors,
So does Sindhu lead other rivers.'*

Rig Veda

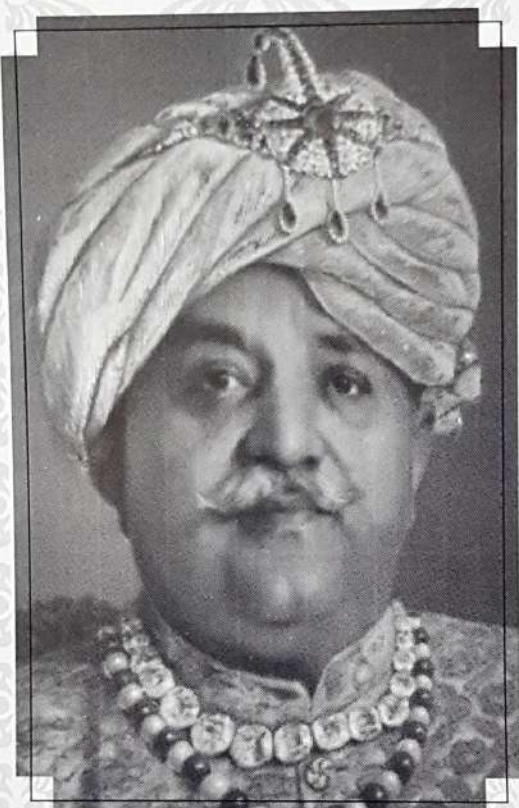
Whereas Bengal & Punjab were partitioned, Sindh was totally lost for its Hindu inhabitants & Kutch in partitioned India, although it did share a similar topography, climate & language, hence it made a convenient location for displaced inhabitants from Sindh to settle.

The loss of a homeland to enterprising Hindu Sindhis, resulting from the partition, was a gain for the world over, as they eventually settled in pockets of different parts of the world. My late grandfather, Maharao Shri Vijayrajji, visualized this as an opportunity to enrich our sparse countryside by offering a settlement to a large number of displaced Sindhis, located adjacent to Kandla. Without their hopes & aspirations, Kandla could not have become what its founder, Maharao Shri Khengarji, had desired it to be for both Kutch & India.

Unfortunately, as we all are aware, the bane of independent India had been its tardy implementation of policies, compromising the chances for rapid & timely developments. Accordingly, the development which was visualized to be complete in a decade, eventually took three decades to materialize. Both, the Kandla Port & the assigned objectives of SRC, took off by 1980. A good thirty-two years, after their grand commencement.

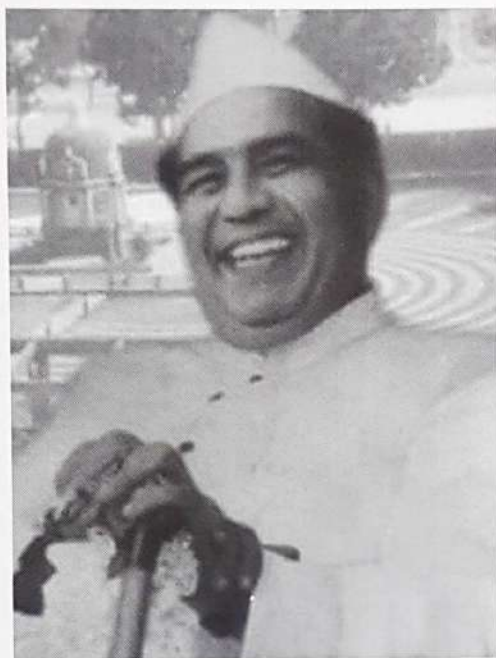
Hence it has taken considerable time for the desert to blossom, but most certainly it has bloomed & I have no doubt whatsoever, that the cherished dream of my grandsire as well as Bhai & his companions, has finally materialized making all of us today the beneficiaries of their magnanimity, toil & dedication. The account therefore deserves serious reckoning.

Pragmulji
Maharao of Kutch 2011



Maharao Saheb of Kutch
Shri Vijayraji

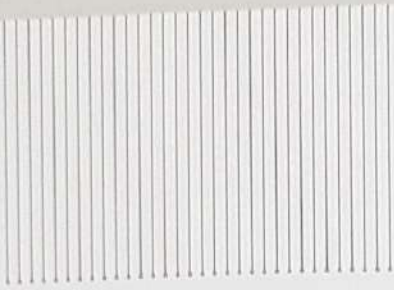
A large hearted, Maharao of Kutch, at the time,
who liberally granted 15000 acres of land to
Sindhu Resettlement Corporation Ltd.



DEDICATED TO

Late **BHAI PRATAP**

WHO DARED TO DREAM



Acknowledgements & Dedications



Acknowledgements

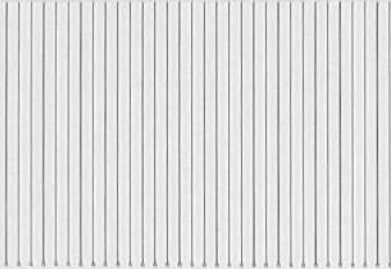
For writing a book of such a type, one is indebted to many people and institutions apart from the many reference books mentioned in the text, while some others remain as background material.

I owe my thanks to His Highness
Pragmulji Maharao of Kutch

Dadi Nirmala Gajwani, Chairperson
of the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation
and the directors of the corporation.

All my friends at the Indian Institute of Sindhology, particularly
Mr. Lakhmi Khilani, Prof. Satish Rohra,
Prof. Pritam Varyani, the Late Valiram Kishnani,
Dr. Moti Prakash, Mr. Sahib Bijani,
Librarian **Mr Mukesh Tilokani**
and all supporting staff members.



- 
- Mr Nirmal Vaswani, for his insight and sharing his experiences of the olden days, reading the manuscript with insightful suggestions made.
 - Late Dadi Krishna Bhambani, Ms. Anjana Hazare of the Tolani Group of Educational institutions.
 - Mr. Kamlesh Murjani and Dr. Acharya.
 - Mrs. Aruna Jagtiani (the youngest daughter of Bhai Pratap) who gave me an insight into his personal life.
 - Mr. Mavji Sawla, for using the matter from his column in the 'Kutch Mitra'.
 - For photographs, the old issues of 'New Sind' and annual reports of the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation.
 - The Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
 - Mr. Kamal Kishmi and Roshan Golani, for taking photographs specially for this book.
 - Ms Varsha Venugopalan, for Editing and structuring this book.
 - Special thanks to Mr. Nandu Asrani of wethesindhis.com, without whose untiring efforts, the publication of this book would not have been possible.
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Section I

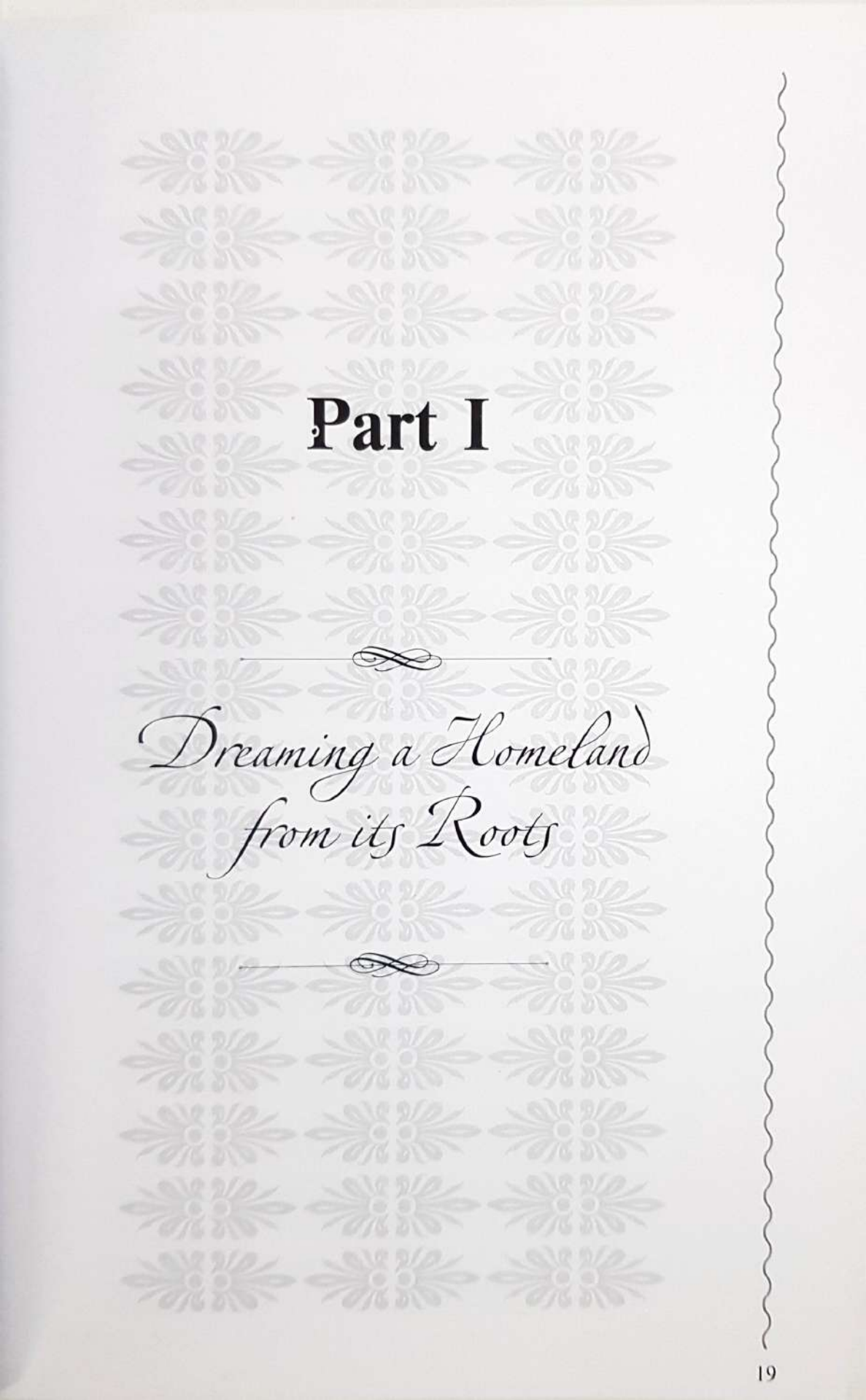
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Part I

*Dreaming a Homeland
from its Roots*

CHAPTER 1

Brief Historical Perspective

*"Paiso ladhun pata man Paise vartum gahu Gahu dinum gain khe Gain dino kheeru
Kheeru dinum aman khe Aman dino lolo Lolo dinum kawan khe Kawan dino khambu
Khambu dinum raja khe Raja dino ghoru!"*

(Sindh: Stories from a Vanished Homeland, Saaz Aggarwal)

In the prophetic chapters of the Puranas, two brothers are mentioned as Puru Cach'ha and Buja Cach'ha. A traditional tale asserts, that one of them is said to have been the founder of the ancient city of Teja, in Kutch. This is a country whose geographical position corresponds to present province of Kutch. Another traditional tale attributes the name of the province to its shape, which is like that of a 'katchuwa' in Hindi, which translates to 'tortoise'.

As we travel from tradition to location, geographically, Kutch is situated in the northern part of Western India, within 68–70 degrees of the east longitude and on the 22nd and 24th parallels of the north latitude. It is bound on the west by the Indus River, on the east by Gulf of Kutch and the salt desert of Rann, with the north by a great desert and by the sea towards the south. The province is about 160 miles in length from east to west and sixty miles in breadth from north to south.



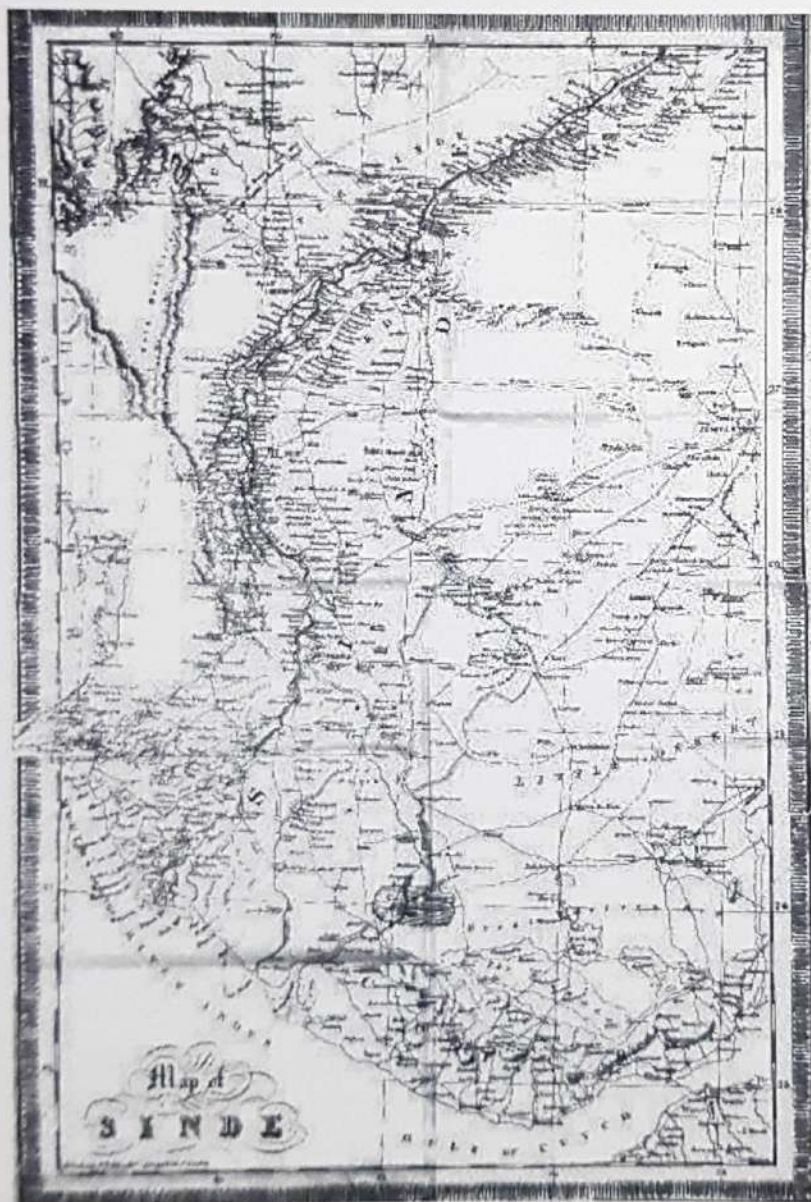
Map of Kutch State

The history of Kutch can be traced back to the periods of the Harappan or Indus Valley civilization. In those days, the people chose suitable ecological sites for their settlements, which meant the availability of adequate resources for agriculture and animal husbandry. Climatic conditions were conducive for the growth of grass and pasture to feed animals. It had the further advantages of being directly connected with Sindh by a land route. Thus, Kutch's geographical proximity to the nucleus of the Harappan civilization, gave it strong ties with Sindh rather than Saurashtra. The main

site of the habitation of the Harappan civilization of Surkotada is located near Adesar in Kutch, while the other site is located near Guntali, in Nakhatrana Taluka.

Infrastructural evidence of the fortification around the citadel, residential areas of Surkotada and some other sites, also indicate the strategic position of Kutch as being on the route of migrations and invasions from Sindh. One of the inferences from this is that the Harappans may have preferred the land route from Sindh.

In the subsequent centuries too, the greater portion of inhabitants of the Kutch seems to have emigrated from either Sindh or Marwar. Hence, this land consists of people of heterogeneous races. Most of the rulers of Kutch are from the Samma tribe of Sindh and the Jadejas, who are also descendants of the Mod and Manai tribes, who came from Sindh to Kutch.



Sinde Map

Digging deeper, descriptions in the Rigveda, evidence from the Mahabharata and other literature, the archaic geographical records of old river beds etc., shows that during the ancient period, Rann of Kutch was not directly connected to sea. It was connected only through the Gulf of Kutch and the Gulf of Cambay as Nal and Rann of Kutch was solid land, according to cultural records dating back to 2000 BC.

According to ancient literature, two mighty rivers Sindhu and Saraswati flowed from Himalayas to western India. The course of river Saraswati is presumed to flow along Rann of Kutch and Cambay. However, due to natural disruptions, the either river ceased to flow and disappeared with the passage of time or merged with Indus or Sutlej.

Likewise, in ancient times, Rann was an arm of the Arabian Sea; Kutch was an island, easily to be reached from what is now Sindh, to form a kind of 'Adam's bridge' between Sindh and Kathiawar. Although, one can only guess how long Kutch remained truly an island entirely surrounded by sea.

Yet its function as a bridge linking Sindh and the west-coast of India may have lasted into the dawn of history. In addition, it is said that it was here that the assembly of the Gods was held. Koteshwar signifies a crore of Gods. Here lays a peculiar stone resembling a worn-down linga, which symbol, pilgrims had imprinted on their arms with a hot stamp which is done in a similar manner in Dwarka. According to the sacred writings of Hindus, this spot has been considered as one of the pinnacles of Hindu faith. While their location on the branch of this river was not just one of the western streams, but also a principal tributary of Indus.

When Alexander the Great reached these parts in 325 BC, the Rann was no longer an arm of the sea. The eastern branch of the Indus, an important channel then, emptied itself into the Rann, which made Kutch an extension of Sindh on the other side of the vast freshwater lake that could be easily crossed. It was during this period, which lasted until 1000 A.D., the connection between Kutch and Sindh was intimate.

¹In McMurdo's report on the River Indus, published by the Royal Asiatic Society in the year 1805, he speaks of a canal by the name of Bhamana Lohana River, which moved through sterile districts that now border on the great desert of Jone and Badban Parganah near Allah Bander. It further spread itself over a flat state & found its way into the sea, through Lakpat. This appears to have been what was the eastern most branch of Indus, where a lake was formed near its mouth, as mentioned by Arrian and the name of Narayana Sarovar. This lake along with Koteshwara is situated on this river & about twenty miles southwest of Lakpat Bandar. This proves that a lake of some kind did actually exist in that place. In addition those two places are date back eons in time and are mentioned in the Hindu Puranas, as places of worship.

However, sometime in 11th century, the main body of the Indus water began to move from the eastern to western branches. The fresh water lagoon dried up and salt water began to seep into its place due to the seismic activity that the Kutch region was prone to. This resulted in Rann becoming a saline and marshy plain. It remained flooded during monsoon months and became difficult to cross throughout the year. This character has remained such till present times.

The Gulf of Kutch divides this country from Gujarat. From the end of this gulf, a strip of wasteland called, Bhani, and Rann, pass round the north of Kutch and continue as far as Lakhpat Bandar. From the month of July till October, this portion is covered with water rendering Kutch into a sort of island. This water flows in torrent into this area from the Lakhi Mountains which form a complete chain from east to west through centre of the Kutch.

Huien-tsang, a Chinese scholar visited many parts of India during 630–644 AD. His writings shed an important light on the historical period of his times in India. However, the names of places stored in the Chinese language have made it difficult to identify at present.

Nevertheless, it is without a doubt from his records, that he classifies Kutch as a part of the Kingdom of Sindh. This is obvious from his descriptions of the distance he travelled from the capital of Sindh Alor, situated on the banks of Indus to Koteshwar, which was 267 miles. Koteshwar was a commercial centre, which makes it impossible to suppose that it was the only town in Kutch, although Huien-tsang mentions no others.

In further testimony, Huien-tsang found out from the size, importance, as well as advantages of the situation between the Indus and Arabian Sea, that Koteshwar was said to share the prosperous trade that existed throughout Sindh and Western India. In addition, a century before the Chinese pilgrim arrived in India, the classical geographer, Cosmas Indicopleustes, described how the spice trade of the far East, arrived in the ports of India from where they were shipped to Persia, Arabia and Africa. It is interesting to note that there was an import of large quantities of Ivory from Africa into India. As Cosmas noted, the tusks of African elephants were large and more highly valued than Indian ivory. This ancient trade may explain a long continued Kutch connection with Africa to this day.

According to the Chinese traveller, the religion professed by the people of Sindh and Kutch was Buddhism. At this time Jainism was steadily making roads into Sindh, Kathiawar and Kutch.

Apparently, it might have been so, but in India changes of far reaching consequences were also taking shape and the situation appears to have changed soon after.

At this time, Rajput clans were beginning to take shape. The foreign fighting clans of Sakas, Huns, few others as well as the aristocracy mingled with existing warrior local clans and tribes. They embraced the Hindu religion and worshiped Hindu deities, calling themselves the Kshatriyas.

Strong, Rajput-ruling elite emerged, which was to fight for and rule India. As the saying goes, 'as the King so the people', (Yatha Raja tatha Praja) and the populace also slowly followed the rulers in matters of faith and reverted back to the Hindu fold.

Towards the end of the 6th century, the great conqueror King Shrias of Sindh, whose territory extended in the north as far as borders of Kashmir and on the west as far as Makran, had Kutch also in its territory.

It may be mentioned here that the special characteristic of medieval or feudal political structure was based on the division of land.

Many principalities or fiefdoms combined to make a kingdom and other combined kingdoms, owed their allegiance to their paramount ruler. There were many paramount rulers there at the given time.

Right from the level of principalities or fiefdoms to the top of the power pyramid, at their own levels, they were engaged in constant wars as well as fierce competitions. So, it was often that the forces who would be fighting with each other, would find themselves fighting on the same side.

In the face of the challenges from a superior power, they closed the ranks and came to each other's rescue. In such situations, the court's intrigues and wars of the successions were endemic. This is true in the respect of Kutch and Sindh also. There have also been instances when they have coveted and invaded each other's territory and at the same time they have come to each other's rescue in dire times.

After the Arab invasion of Sindh, they did not venture further into India for more than two centuries. During that period, their actual rule in Sindh remained nominal.

They allowed local rulers to rule on the condition of changing their faith to Islam as well as paying a nominal amount of tribute.

As a matter of expediency these conditions were accepted by many rulers. They would only change their names, however, their customs – beliefs, habits and manner of living, continued to be same.

With the passage of time, in order to have legitimacy with the Islamic fraternity they changed; camouflaged their true identity by changing their ancestry and aligning themselves with a mighty Iranian monarch named Jamshed.

Thus after some period, the rule of the Soomra tribe and Samma tribe as independent dynasties continued in Sindh. Not all of Samma tribes and other tribes were converted. Among those who did not accept Islam, particularly the Samma tribe, their ancestors began establishing close connections with Kutch.

Thus began their close association with Chavda, Vaghela and Solanki Rajput clans of Gujarat. The initial conversion to Islam by some chiefs of the Samma tribe was perceived only as a political expediency. However, this did not make these Samma clans antagonists towards their fellow Sammas in Sindh, who had converted. This was a fortunate circumstance when Sammas came and eventually exercised supreme power in Kutch.

Gliding to more historical events, in a book by James Burns, 'Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Sind: A Sketch of the History of Kutch', gives the account of the rulers of Kutch.

A certain passage in that element is reproduced below:

'About ninth century of Christian era, a body of supposed Moosalmans of Samma tribe emigrated from Sind, and, under guidance of five brothers settled in Kutch, of which by degrees they acquired the complete sovereignty; either by force or fraud, expelled, or subjected to their authority, the aboriginal inhabitants, consisting of three different classes, Waghelas, Katties and Waghun Chowras.

Four of five generations after their settlement, the descendents of five brothers assumed the name of Jhareja (Lieut Holland's account of the Jharejas) derived from the leader of the tribe named Jharrah. Kutch continued tranquil under their sway for many years until the murder of Hummerjee the elder chief of the tribe, by another Jhareja named Jam Rawal.'

Thereafter, it is a familiar story repeating itself of disputes over succession. While, intervening wars, palace schemes and family feuds, along with the detailed description is beyond the scope of the present study. In this period, two instances of Sindh Kutch solidarity stand out prominently. When Alauddin Khilji attacked Sindh, to restore Chanesar to the throne of Sindh, with an army of about one million soldiers, then the Ruler of Sindh Dodo (Chanesar's brother) died fighting valiantly in war, which unleashed an unprecedented popular war.

At that time, he sent royal women of his tribe to the ruler of Kutch for safekeeping. The Rao of Kutch was killed in the battle against Allaudin Khilji, but did not accede to the demand of handing over the women folk of the Sindhi Royal family back to him.

It is said that in the battle, Kutch chieftains and warriors tied their turbans cloth on to each other's waists, thus forming a human chain and later died a glorious death rather than surrendering to the enemy. Another instance of Kutchi blood being shed for Sindh occurred when Arguns attacked Sindh and Rai Kahnger mustered ten thousand Kutchi Warriors. Kutchi and Sindhi Warriors fought side by side. It is mentioned in the history books that 48 Chieftains of Jharejas were inside Bakkhar Fort. When the siege was laid for that fort, Shah Beg Argun looked to Kazi Qadan, who had switched allegiance to new ruler, for his advice.

According to that advice, on the morning of the next day, the heads of 48 brave Kutchi warriors were found hanging on the minarets of that fort.

No doubt, there have been instances of wars among Sindh and Kutch also. Kutch was invaded by Sindhis not less than four times in this period. Two of the inroads were sought to be made during Kalhoras regime in Sindh. Two campaigns were undertaken by Ghulam Shah Kalhora to enforce an article of treaty whereby he was to be given the sister of the Rao by marriage. On the second occasion, he had to be content with marrying the daughter of the chief of Khauker, whose family stood next in pretensions to the throne.

²*The Jharejas are aristocracy of the country and are all more or less connected with family of Rao. They trace their decent from Sacko Goraro, a prince who reigned in Sindh a thousand years ago, four of whose sons, Moor, Oner, Phool and Munyabhaee emigrated into Kutch, on account of some family dissensions. The last two had no issues. The posterity of Moor ended in third generation at Sacko Phoolanee, whose name is still known and celebrated throughout this province. From Oner descended the present Jam of Nuwanuggar and Rajpoot Jharejas of Kutch....There are about two hundred fifty Jharejas in Kutch. All of them hold their lands in favour from Rao, as their lineage-lord, for the services they or their ancestors have performed or if they share a relationship with family.'— (James Burns – A Sketch of the History of Kutch-P.s 231–32.)*

On quitting the Kutch, Gulam Shah left 5000 men at Lakhapt Bunder, which in those days was a small town. He also undertook an endeavour of far reaching consequences, which was building an embankment to prevent waters of Indus from flowing into the sea. In this way, a fertile plain which yielded rice cultivation worth 8 lakh cories was converted into a salty marsh.

Ghulam Shah's son Sarfaraz also attacked Kutch twice. It is needless to add that during his forays, he also left a trail of destruction and devastation. At the same time, it must be emphasized that all these attacks come at the time when Kutch was engulfed into internal squabbles and there was no strong power centred in Kutch. Although, at the last minute they would stitch alliances with some, get some mercenaries to their side and manage to thwart the aggression.

The population of Sindh and Kutch mostly share the same ancestry. Richard F. Burton in his book, 'Sindh and the Races that inhabit the Valley of Indus with Topography and History of Province', writes:

'Of the Waishya or Wani or banyan caste we find, as has been said before, there are five great divisions in Sindh. The two chief divisions are undoubtedly the Lohano and Bhatio. The Lohano derives his origin and name from Lohanpur in Multan. The date of his emigration is lost in the obscurity of antiquity.' (p.314)

Delving a little farther into the History of Lohanas – we find that in around 580 B.C., when King Bindusara ruled India, the society came to be divided into different communities based on their occupation. Lohanas at time were called Khatriyas. As far back as the rule of Chach in Sindh, it is mentioned in Chachnama, that Chach conquered the fort of Agham Lohana and married his widow. The Fort of Bhatia also illustrated Chachnama, is the sister of Dahir who was engaged to be married to the ruler of that tribe.

After facing the persecution, the people of both the tribes have taken to business and spread throughout the world as a remarkable business community. It is said that during 6th and 7th century, Lohanas held their ground in Afghanistan. From there they moved to Sindh and thereafter to Kutch, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Their wanderlust, combined with entrepreneurial skills pulled them to foreign shores in pursuit of riches, but most of them had to be content as agriculturists and small shopkeepers, to keep the wheels of economy moving, especially during difficult times.

³ Till merger with India Kutch had its own currency which was measured in Cories and Dhellas

The anthropological essences of the tribes, the Lohanas of Sindh worship the Water God in the incarnation of 'Jhulelal' while the Lohanas of Kutch continue to worship Dariya Shah. However, they follow similar rituals while giving offerings to water Gods on any water course. Bhatias all over the world worship the idol of Lord Krishna at Temple of 'Shri Nathdwara' situated in Rajasthan. Another important clan worth adding to the mix is that of Soda Rajputs. They are quite numerous in the Tharparkar district of Sindh, Jaisalmer and Kutch. Soda Rajputs have marriage alliances in Kutch, which explains the constant stream of migration and transmigration.

Among the population that Sindh shares in common with Kutch, are Memons, Khojas and Bohras. Basically, they are Hindu converts and belong to business communities. In fact Memons are said to have migrated from Kutch to Sindh. Richard F. Burton mentions the term 'Memon', as corruption of the Arabic word Mumin (a true believer), which was probably given to the people that go by that name now, when they were converted from Hinduism to Islam. There are also sectarian divisions among the Memons.

Similarly, Khojas are also divided, as one sect claims to have come from Persia while the others are mostly from Saurashtra and Kutch. They are followers of Agha Khan and are called, Ismailie. Likewise, the fisher folk or the 'Mohanas' are also converts from Hinduism to Islam and still follow many Hindu customs.

In this context, it may be mentioned that both Sindh and Kutch have a very ancient maritime tradition. It is said that when Lord Krishna ruled Dwarka, he issued a decree in favour of the overseas mercantile community of Sindh on the west coast. It is also interesting that the Jharejas trace back their own origin to Lord Krishna.

From these accounts, it would be obvious that apart from the geography the population of Sindh and Kutch share the common ancestry. This is more than just obvious in the fields of language, rich folk literature and folklore.

Most of the folktales which are prevalent in Kutch and Sindh, are very much the same, some of them are, Oomer Maruee, Sasui Punhoo, Sorath Rai Diyach, Moomal Rano and few others. The folktales have been immortalized by the Great poet of Sindhi language, Shah Abdul Latif, who in the company of Jogis (Yogis) visited Kutch. His poetry is as dear to Kutchis as it is to the people of Sindh.

His travels through Kutch are well documented by, Behrimal Meharchand; in his book *Latifi Sair* (The travels of Latif). He traces his journey to Girnar from Lakhpat, Koteswar and Narayan Sar,

Bhuj, Mandvi, Haar ranges and thence to Dwarka

There are numerous references to these places as there is a popular tale of Shah Abdul Latif to have met Mekaran, a great saint poet in his own right, who resided in Kutch during the same period and already acquired iconic status during his time in Kutch. It is also mentioned that when Mekaran went to the pilgrimage of Hinglaj Devi while traversing Sindh, he had called on Shah Inayat of Jhok Sharif.

In a similar manner, Pran Nath, the founder Saint of the Parnami sect, who was born in Kutch during the reign of Aurangzeb, has written devotional/ philosophical poetry in Sindhi and is also considered one of the earlier poets who has significantly contributed to the corpus of Sindhi poetry of Sindh in that period.

Similarly, such instances of common folk heritage and classical Sindhi literature could be multiplied more times, but that exercise is beyond the present scope.

As far as the affinity between Sindhi and Kutch language goes, its relationship has been well documented in the 19th and 20th centuries. Richard F. Burton in his well-known book, writes, "The origin of the Sindhi dialect appears to be lost in the obscurity of antiquity, but there are ample reasons for believing it is as old as any tongues of modern India....The classical or literary language, that of lar, or southern Sindh and other principal dialects are 1) The Siraki, or the language of Siro, upper Sindh; admitting a mixture of Jatkia and Beloch words. 2) The Kachi spoken in Kutch and made to approach Guzeratee, in year 1851."

Prior to the above references, an even earlier reference is from Captain James McMurdo in the Royal Asiatic Society's 'On the country of Sindh,' 1835. He writes, "Sindhi is the language used by the Sindhi inhabitants, and, indeed by mass of the population

⁴Rao Khanger set up the monastery of Moti Poshalat & appointed Manek Mirji the Saddh as its head. Manek Mirji was first in the line of Godjis (or Gurus). The monastery exists to this day among the sixteenth century buildings which Rao Khanger constructed. These Godjis are learned custodians of Royal History & receive instruction in an oral tradition under the care their Royal bards. (The Black Hills Kutch in History and Legend by L.F.Rushbrook Williams p.113)

In one of his verses, Shah Abdul Latif mentions various sects of Jogis with whom he roamed. He mentions, 'Kanakata, Kapat, Kapri, Kanotia, and Kancheer'. Mrs Marian Postons, in her book, gives interesting insight about the importance of Kaparias once every year, in accordance with the mentions 'The Rao visits the establishment of Kaparias whilst he was suffering from small pox. Vows of this nature are very common in Kutch; and it was during his mother's subsequent illness, that the Rao, vowed to build a Temple at Rohda, near Bhooj, if the Ranne was spared. Miraculously, it just so happened that her disease left her.' And a beautiful temple of Parvati was built as a embodiment of the filial affection of his Highness: year 1839)

of the Sindh proper, those of the southern desert, and with a little variation by the Jharejas of Kutch. It is worthy of remark that the Jharejas, Bhatias and Lohanas and other Sindhi tribes now inhabiting Kutch, have brought with them their language which they continue to speak in that country."

The monumental work on Indian languages was done by Garrierson, through producing a comprehensive 'The Linguistic Survey of India', in the early years of the twentieth century. Thereafter, no further surveys have been conducted. Even, after more than a century it alone remains the only book of its kind. In his book, he has characterized 'Kutchi' as a dialect of Sindhi. In this context it would be interesting to note that Richard F. Burton describes Sindhi as a 'dialect'.

This brings us to an interesting topic of understanding the relationship between a dialect and a language. Like everything else, language is also subject to constant change. Moreover, the relationship between a dialect and a language does not have any hierarchal connotation, but it is more geographical in nature. In fact, it is simply a matter of perception. In times when the literacy was a personal accomplishment and books were manuscripts adorning the libraries of some rulers and their courtiers, the role of the language was different. With advent of printing technology and mass literacy — language has acquired many additional facets. The creation of nation-states in Europe, lent to language politics and nationalist fervour, so that in time it came to acquire an economic facet.

This has led to the formation of a myriad web of emotions attached to language apart from being only a vehicle of communication. In the present state, language signifies a distinct identity. It is gratifying that Kutchi people have legitimate pride in their distinct identity.

That identity should not be diluted by relegating it to the mere status of 'dialect' In the recent past, Kutchi people have been making the most remarkable endeavour to assert their identity and in the forefront are many eminent thinkers and writers.

Prof. Mawji Sawala started his magazine, Kutch Kalam, running it for 18 years rendering a yeomen service to the cause dear to his heart — the assertion of a distinct Kutchi identity. He still continues to write for a popular daily column.

While another important name to reckon with in Kutchi literature, would be, Mr Madhav Joshi.

Overall, this movement has yielded some fruits as the Kutchi Sahitya Academy has been constituted by the government of Gujarat, which meets a legitimate demand.

CHAPTER 2



The Partition to Aftermath

"Vandey viraayey sukh paaye" which means "sharing what one has with ones brethren , gives happiness."(Jhulelal.com)

How did the partition of India come about? Why could no one foresee it? Why were there no adequate measures taken to meet the challenges that burst upon the country?

There are many questions which fall in the realm of 'ifs' and 'buts'. Yet, it is just as important to seek answers as to what and where things went wrong. It is in this spirit, that a brief recap and examination will be conducted further on, about the events that led to the swift partition of country. There is vast corpus of material available on that period in historical records and archives.

Many analysts have tried to unravel the events, but only one book keeps its focus on Sindh, namely, the National Integration of Sindhis in India by Ms. Subhidra Anand.

To start off this investigation, let's ask, what is 'India' and what does 'The Independence' mean? There was no single answer to this query. Everyone had their own understanding of the terms and they lent themselves to various meanings. It was a situation akin to the one of the 'seven blind men' describing an elephant, each in his own way. Congress was a movement like a river traversing its path along peaks, valleys, plains and plateaus. In the course of its journey, it assimilates various tributaries and sometimes flows in its ferocity flooding many shores and sometimes being reduced to a mere ribbon, like a monsoon river.

Many diverse thoughts and ideologies found its way in this current. For some it was harking back to the 'Rama Rajya.' For others, it was a vague benevolent despotism or was to be a welfare state modelled based on the Western nation states.

The question of what India was in itself, quite a complex issue.

Dating back to 1857, during one of the wars of Independence, the concept of India as a political entity was quite hazy to say the least. Moreover, in discussions of the event, it is sufficient to stress, that Laxmi-Bai spoke only about Jhansi and the soldiers of Independence who went to Bahadur Shah Zafar to re-establish the faded glory of the Moghul Empire.

The concept of 'Bharat Mata' emerged much later, which was used to invoke strong emotions. The war cry of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' was to inspire many young souls to go to the gallows and attain martyrdom with a smile on their lips. A visual presentation of Bharat Mata in chains, would invoke strong emotions of patriotism, as breaking the chains which enslaved her and sacrificing one's life would be a trifle price to pay!

However, Jawaharlal Nehru had to 'discover India' and present it to the world as a modern idiom. The idea of freedom for some, meant 'Hindu, Hindi and Hindustan', a foundation for the nationhood. For others, it was to be based on the concept of the 'trusteeship' of rich people for the benefit of the poor and deprived.

While for the remainder it represented a society that would be classless, casteless with economic equality. These dreams for and of India, after the Independence was as myriad as the people of the subcontinent.

At that time, the stark reality that no one bothered to consider was the existence of the local states, which comprised one-third of India's landmass and approximately that much of the population.

Over 500 maharajas and nawabs remained in the make-believe world that their dynasties would survive the British Paramount in perpetuity. Their beliefs were based solely on the clause that their treaties of mutual agreement had mighty power.

To add to this confusion, communal factors were introduced, which sought to divide the Bharat Mata on into two separate countries on the basis of religion. The events that followed are now a well-known history.

In the above context, it would be proper to look at the personalities in the forefront of the 'Independence movement', only to stress how different they were in every respect in their thought, upbringing, temperament and background yet inexorably bound together with the destiny of India.

In this context, it would not be out of place to perceive these epic events as 'Thumb Nail Sketches of the Persona dramatis'.

On that note, alluding to an important book that depicts this period of history, 'Freedom at Midnight' by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins.

'Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was an unlikely revolutionary, the gentle prophet of the world's most extraordinary liberation movement. Besides him, carefully polished, were the dentures he wore only when eating and steel rimmed glasses through which he peered out at the world. He was a tiny man, barely five feet tall, weighing 114 pounds; all arms and legs like an adolescent whose

trunk has yet to rival the growth of his limbs....Yet Gandhi's face radiated a peculiar beauty because it was constantly animated, reflecting with the quickly shifting patterns of a magic lantern – his changing mood and his impish humour'.

'His means of communicating with his followers were primitive. He wrote much of his correspondence himself in a long-hand and he talked to his disciples, to prayer meetings and to caucuses of his congress party. He employed none of the techniques for conditioning the masses to the dictates of a demagogue or cliques of ideology. Yet his message had penetrated a nation bereft of modern communications because Gandhi had a genius for a simple gesture that spoke to India's soul. Those gestures were all unorthodox....few of the English who'd negotiated with Gandhi had liked him; fewer still had not understood him. Their puzzlement was understandable. He was a strange blend of great moral principles and quirky obsessions.'

'He joined the congress party and his agitation on its behalf soon qualified him (Jawaharlal Nehru) for admission to the finest political training school in the British Empire: British jails, where Nehru spent nine years of his life. In the solitude of his cell, in prison courtyards, with his few congress leaders, he had shaped his vision of the India of tomorrow. An idealist in the doctrines of social revolution, Nehru dreamed of reconciling on the soil of India, his two political passions: the parliamentary democracy of England and the economic socialism of Karl Marx. He dreamt of India being freed of the shackles of poverty and superstition, unburdened of capitalism. An India in which the smoke of factories reached out from her cities, an India enjoying the plenitude of that Industrial Revolution, to which colonizers had denied her access.'

'No one might have seemed more unlikely a candidate to lead India towards that vision than Jawaharlal Nehru. Under the cotton khadi he wore in deference to the dictates of Congress...he never ceased to proclaim the horror the word 'religion' inspired in him. Nehru despised India's priests, her sadhus, her chanting monks and pious mullahs. They had only served he felt, to impede her progress and deepen her divisions and ease the task of foreign rulers.'

As regards to the relationship between the two most unlikely characters straddling for the freedom movement, Gandhi and Nehru made this observation quite pertinent.

'Between them a fascinating father-son relationship grew, animated by all tensions, affections and repressed guilt which such relationships implied. All his life Nehru had an instinctive need for a dominant personality near him, some steadying influence to whom he could turn in crisis engineered by his volatile nature.'

The third candidate that strode like a colossus on the scene was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

In the above mentioned book, Sardar is described as:

'Vallabhbhai Patel, India's quintessential politician. He was an oriental Tammany Hall boss, who ran the machinery of the congress party with a firm and ruthless hand... Like a viceroy, he was a practical pragmatic man, a hard but realist bargainers... Patel had well earned a reputation for his toughness. He had an instinctive need to take measure of new interlocutor to see how far he can push him... Patel had always been profoundly wary of his brother in the congress Khadi, namely, Nehru. The two men were natural rivals and their idea of what India should be after independence was markedly different. Patel had no use of Nehru's utopian dream of building a new society. He dismissed his visions, of a brave new socialist world as his 'parrot cry of socialism'. Capitalist society worked, he maintained, the problem was to Indianize it, to make it work better, not jettison it for an impractical ideal... He scorned Nehru's fascination for foreign affairs, the great debates of the world. He knew where the power was to be found and that was where he was, in the Home Ministry.'

The fourth and most enigmatic figure in this process during the final stage was 'Qaide Azam', the title which Gandhiji had given him earlier on and stuck to him life-long.

Mohamed Ali Jinnah 'began his political career by preaching about the Hindu-Muslim Unity. His family came from the Kathiawar peninsula. If Jinnah's grandfather had not converted to Islam for some obscure reason, the two political foes would have been born in the same caste....'

'He wore a monocle and superbly cut linen suits which he changed more than three times a day so as to remain cool and unruffled in the soggy Bombay climate. He loved oysters and caviar, champagne, brandy and good claret. A man of unassailable personal honesty and financial integrity, his canons were loaded with sound laws and sound procedures. He was according to one intimate, 'the last of the Victorians, a parliamentarian in the mode of Gladstone and Disraeli.'

'The man who would one day be hailed as the father of Pakistan, had first been exposed to the idea at a black-tie dinner at London's Waldrof Hotel in the spring of 1933. His host was Rehmat Ali, the graduate student who had set the idea on paper. Rehmat Ali had arranged the banquet with its oysters and un-Islamic Chablis at his own expenses to persuade Jinnah — India's leading Moslem politician to take over his Movement. He received a chilly rebuff. Pakistan, Jinnah told him, was "an impossible dream",'

'The turning point in Jinnah's career came after the 1937 elections, when congress refused to share with him and his Moslem League, the spoils of office in those Indian provinces, where there was a substantial Moslem minority. Jinnah was a man of towering vanity and he took the congress's actions as personal rebuke. It convinced him that he and the Moslem league would never get a fair deal from a congress-run India.'

'A more improbable leader of India's Moslem masses could hardly be imagined. The only thing Moslem about Mohamed Ali Jinnah was his parents' religion. He drank, ate pork, religiously shaved his beard each morning and just as religiously avoided the mosque each Friday. God and Koran had no place in Jinnah's vision of the world. His political foe, Gandhi knew more verses of the Moslem Holy Book than he did. He had been able to achieve the remarkable feat of securing the allegiance of the vast majority of India's Moslems without being able to articulate more than a few sentences in their traditional tongue, Urdu.'

'Jinnah despised India's masses. He detested the dirt, the heat and crowds of India.

Gandhi travelled India in filthy third class railway carriages to be with the people. Jinnah rode first class to avoid them.'

Thus, the leadership of the Congress Party in the provinces at provincial lines was also divided along the lines of personalities and policies that the leaders at the top perused.

Now coming specifically to leadership of the congress in the province of Sindh, some peculiar happenings in the not-so-distant past needed to be mentioned.

Sindh was the last province in India to be invaded by the British and its rule was limited to only 103 years. After the 'conquest' of Sindh, it was acceded to the presidency of Bombay for administrative and all other purposes. Though this was most illogical as they shared no common borders, language, culture and social mores, they all still proved to be of great significance in many others aspects.

Hindus, who had smarted under Muslim rule as a minority, were converted into the majority overnight. It automatically gave them a new confidence as well as invested them with an overwhelming sense of haughtiness. It provided unprecedented opportunities for them, which were denied to them for centuries.

At the same time Muslims owing to their defeat, as elsewhere in India, began to sulk and decided not to have anything to do with the new regime. Tragically for Muslims this applied to education as well, whereas Sindhi Hindus took to new educational prospects with

great zeal and enthusiasm, to reap the benefits it offered. Thus, Sindhi Hindus emerged as a powerful middle-class on the scene.

The social reform movements that were sweeping across India made inroads into the Sindhi Hindu society as well. As Calcutta, was the capital of the country at the time, many youths went there for higher education and returned with the commitment of eradicating the social evils of Hindu Society.

Their business acumen also yielded them enormous advantages. Some of them included the hefty investment of land ownership. At the time of the British conquest of Sindh, Sindhi Hindus had held negligible land, whereas, at the time of partition they owned nearly 40% of that land. This was done mainly by means of their practice of lending money at exorbitant rates of interest and by dubious means.

The economic power of Sindhi Hindus and their clout was disproportionate to their numerical strength. This, in times to come, brought about acute social contradictions which resulted in the bitter end. It must be stressed that on a personal level, the relationship between a Sindhi Hindu and Muslim continued to be cordial, as the Sindhi Hindu society was devoid of orthodoxy of the caste system which prevailed in other parts of India.

The bonds of language, literature and culture that had welded them together for centuries proved stronger and more enduring in spite of the wide political chasm, which was later on used to tragically divide them.

With this background, the movement for separation of Sindh from the Bombay

Presidency began. After great deliberation, the Congress Party also supported this movement based on mere historical grounds.

However, the Hindus of Sindh were against such a move except for a certain few such as, Jethmal Parsram, a prominent writer and a leading theosophist of his times.

During that time, a Hindu Mahasabha — a political organization of Hindus — were preaching militant Hinduism. Many of the Sindhi Hindus politically veered round the Mahasabha's point of view. Although, their prudence required continuously supporting the Congress, who assured the security of their future, if the Congress came to power.

At that time the actual creation of Pakistan seemed like a vague whisper. Thus, the British created Sindh and Orissa, as two separate provinces and they were the first provinces to be created on the basis of language, during the British regime itself.

All this, polarized politics on communal lines, at least in the province of Sindh. After the elections of 1937, the Muslim League became a powerful force. Although for some time Congress did manage to retain power through a coalition of various diverse interests, but that did not last for a long period.

The Muslim League soon came to power, making it the first provincial assembly in the whole of India, to pass a resolution for the creation of Pakistan, as a separate Muslim State after the independence of India. Yet, the irony is that as people had different dreams about India after independence, the Pakistan resolution of 1939 was turned on its head.

Many leaders and workers had different notions about Pakistan, whereas, Jinnah visualized Pakistan as a Muslim modern state only to counter balance the Hindu dominated India, but similar in all other respects. His vision of Pakistan was described by him in his famous speech at the formation of Pakistan wherein he stressed the secular and modern concepts of Pakistan.

However, his deputy, Liaquat Ali Khan, wanted a theocratic state based on the orthodox doctrines of Islam, where the minorities will have an inferior status and shall continue to remain there as enunciated in their holy book, the Koran.

Hence, the very foundation of Pakistan was envisaged as an example of a fundamentalist state wedded to Islam. In one of the interviews after formation of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan said, "The only reason why we and Quaid-e-Azam demanded Pakistan was to secure a homeland where Muslims could live in their own way, in this subcontinent. We wished Pakistan to be a laboratory, where we could practice the Islamic principles – the best in the world – and thus demonstrate to the world that what Islam had taught thirteen centuries ago, was needed as much now as it was then....We, that is to say, the Muslim League, are pledged to make Pakistan a Muslim state and run it on Islamic principles."

(An American Witness to India's Partition by Tabolt p.360).

Is this not what the present Taliban are saying?

Nevertheless, all this was seen as a bargaining chip and merely hot-air as no one actually believed in the viability of the state of Pakistan.

Speaking industrially, India and the proposed Pakistan were intimately linked by trade and zones of agricultural production and manufacturing sectors, which in case of division of a country would fall in different states.

At some points in time, the Muslim masses had absurd and bizarre concepts of Pakistan. Some thought that a few streets in the same

town with a Muslim majority would fall into a separate state, called Pakistan, while localities with the Hindu majority would be constituted as Hindustan.

Some thought that the river Sindhu would be brought to the Hindu state, because the Holy Vedas were written on its banks and some thought that the Taj Mahal would be shifted to Pakistan as it was built by Muslim rulers.

Nobody at the grassroots level, had the vaguest idea of what a 'new state of Pakistan' would in reality mean.

For Hindu fundamentalist the very idea of the partition of Mother India was repugnant, as the amputation of the parts of the Holy Mother which would not be allowed under any circumstances and to do so would amount to sacrilege, which made it an unacceptable thought and an unthinkable event.

In addition, there were solemn assurances by leaders of national movement that the partition would take place "over our dead bodies!"

All this made Sindhi Hindus of Sindh, along with their recent acquired sense of power which was growing finances, complacent and lulled them into a sense of false security – immune to the impending events that were to overtake the nation.

Direct action was soon unleashed by the Muslim league to test their street power. They forced the hands of British Imperialists by manipulating them and subsequently attain congress leadership to capitulate to their demands for the country's partition, which all took place far away in Bengal.

The clashes between Hindus and Muslims in Sindh over Manzilgah-Masjid were considered too trifle in nature, though to certain extent, it did manage to polarize Sindhi Hindus and the Muslim community on a political level.

It is significant that in the elections, all provincial assembly members belonged to the Muslim community and Congress members were Hindus. This did not bother Sindhi nationalist leadership, as one, Acharya Kripalani, was busy playing an important role at a national level.

⁷For this connection, it would be important to mention that in the latest book on the subject of the Partition, 'Under Shadow of Great Game', Captain Sarila –a scion of an erstwhile ruling family of Punjab, who was ADC to Lord Mountbatten during those historic days– mentions a different perspective. He avers that during the war itself the British already saw that the post-war transfer of power into Indian hands would become inevitable. In light of that event in order to counter-balance any future Russian ambitions and plans to acquire access to warm waters of the Arabian-sea, the British/Western powers needed a foothold in the region. A plan showing present boundaries of Pakistan was drafted and sent to England.

Acharya Kripalani, who from the very beginning considered himself above Sindh, was the president of the Congress and Jairamdas Doulatram was the general secretary of the Congress. It is in this background that, Lord Mountbatten was dispatched to India to negotiate the transfer of the power position with haste.

'Lord Mountbatten told his assembled governors he was not 'lightly going to abandon hope for United India. He wanted the world to know the British had made every effort possible to keep India united. If Britain failed, it was of utmost importance that the world knew it was 'Indian opinion rather than a British decision that had made partition the choice. He himself thought, a future Pakistan was so inherently unviable, that it should be given a chance to fail on its own demerits, so that later, the Moslem League could revert to an unified India with honour.'

(Freedom at Midnight, p.143)

'Patel had been prepared to concede partition even before Mountbatten's arrival. He was aging and had suffered two heart attacks. He just wanted to get on with it, to end these ceaseless debates and get down to the task of building an Independent India. "Give Jinnah his state", he argued, "it wouldn't survive anyway".

In five years the Moslem League would be knocking at the door, begging for India's reunification.'

In the same vein, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, in his book 'India Wins freedom', writes, 'I found that Patel was so much in favour of the partition that he was hardly prepared to even to listen to any other point of view. For over two hours, I argued with him. I pointed out that if he accepted the partition, we could create a permanent problem for India..I was surprised and pained, when Patel, in reply said, that whether we liked it or not, there were two nations in India. He was now convinced that Hindus and Muslims could not be united in one Nation. There was no alternative except to recognize this fact. In this way alone, could we end the quarrel between Hindus and Muslims'.

Actually, the Higher Congress echelon's leadership had quite misread the situation. To illustrate this point, only one instance would suffice. When the interim government was being formed, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, suggested that congress offer a finance portfolio to the league, based on the assumption that the Muslim league would not have anyone competent to handle the complicated portfolio as the finance ministry, it would refuse the same.

Thus, it was argued that the entire process initiated by the labour government and subsequent processes that unfolded, was a mere smokescreen and a charade. Establishment of Pakistan was already decided upon even before Jinnah became its ardent supporter.

It is said, that Sardar Patel also jumped at the proposal and subsequently this portfolio was grabbed by Liaquat Ali Khan. Congress soon realized that since each proposal of every department was subject to scrutiny by the finance department, it held a virtual veto over the entire business of government.

Maulana Azad, in his book 'India Wins freedom' writes, 'Sardar Patel had been very anxious about retaining the 'home membership'. Now, he realized that he had played into the hands of the Muslim League by offering it finance. Whatever proposal he made, was either rejected or modified beyond recognition by Liaquat Ali. His persistent interference, made it difficult for any congress member to function effectively.' (p.179)

'Now I turned to Jawaharlal. Jawaharlal spoke to me in sorrow but left no doubt in my mind as to how his mind was working. It was clear that in spite of his repugnance to the idea of the partition, he was, day-by-day, coming to the conclusion that there was no alternative.' (pp. 200-201)

For Gandhiji, it was a lone voice though a lost cause.

'On the day Mountbatten's York had left London, carrying the Viceroy and his plan back to India, Gandhi had told his evening prayer meeting: Let the whole nation be in flames: we will not concede one inch of Pakistan.' (Freedom at Midnight, p. 197)

'A few days later as Manu listened, Gandhiji had agonized alone in the darkness,

"Today I find myself alone", he said his voice so low it was a whisper to night. Even Patel and Nehru think I'm wrong and peace is sure to return if partition is agreed upon." Nehru, Patel and Prasad next acknowledged and endorsed Jinnah's 'two nation' theory in March 1947, by advocating it in resolution adopted by the congress working committee the division of Punjab into Muslim majority and Hindu majority areas. This was done by these three without consulting Gandhi, who reacted sharply and considered this to be an hour of great humiliation.' (India from Curzon to Nehru and After, Durga Das, p. 254)

During his discussions with Lord Mountbatten, Gandhi proposed to allow the whole of undivided India to be handed over to the Muslim League. In response to this, Lord Mountbatten very cunningly agreed to consider the proposal if he could carry out the Congress Party with his views.

But that was not to be.

Strangely enough, it was Gandhiji himself at the Ramgarh session of the Congress in 1940 who conceded to Muslims 'the right of

separation from the Hindu joint family. He suggested setting up a constituent Assembly based on the adult franchise and proposed that the Muslim members be allowed to decide whether they wished to live separately or as members of joint family.' (Durga Das, p.253).

Soon after the partition, was to become a reality, an angry Muslim woman accosted Gandhi and demanded to know the reason of his opposition to Pakistan.

She argued, "If two brothers were living in the same house and wanted to separate would you object?"

"Ah," said Gandhi, "If only we could separate as two brothers. But we will not. It will be an orgy of blood. We shall tear ourselves asunder in the womb of mother who bears us."

With his feet planted firmly on the ground, holding the pulse of the masses, who would be better placed to know the consequences other than Gandhiji?

And yet, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad in his book, *India Wins Freedom*, gives a graphic account of the AICC (All India Congress Committee) meeting, which occurred on 14th June 1947.

'After the first days debate, there was very strong feeling against the Working Committee's resolution. Neither Pandit Pant's persuasiveness, nor Sardar Patel's eloquence had been able to persuade people to accept this resolution. How could they, when it was in a sense, a complete denial of all that the Congress had said since its inception?

Therefore, it became necessary for Gandhiji to intervene in the debate. He appealed to the members to support the Congress working committee. He added that he had always been opposed to the partition and no one could deny this fact. However, he felt that a situation had now been created where there was no alternative. Political realism demanded the acceptance of the Mountbatten plan and he would appeal to the members to accept the resolution moved by Pandit Pant' (p. 215).

Maulana Abdul Kalam writes, that he was amazed by the brave face shown by Hindu fundamentalists such as, Purshotamdas Tandon and his ilk, in the Congress via right-wing elements. However, he notes that in the AICC meeting the members from Sindh opposed the resolution vehemently. They were given all kinds of assurances, in private discussions, but not on a public platform.

They were told that if they suffer any disability or indignity in Pakistan, India would retaliate on the Muslims in India. He said, he was horrified by this hostage theory of the minority i.e., if the minority in one country suffered, then the minority in the

other country would have to bear the consequences. It was most reprehensible and barbarous, to say the least. However, subsequent events that occurred tragically proved how fragile and meaningless these assurances were.

Thus, Sindhis were thrown to the wolves.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that no one in his darkest nightmares had experienced or imagined what was to follow. It seemed as if the power of all the natural calamities combined together— be it an earthquake, cyclone, tornado, thunderstorm or the fury of the floods of all the oceans and more. It was a tragedy which could not be described in mere words.

Yet what has been written goes something like this:

‘In bewildering fury, Hindus, Sikhs and Moslems turned on each other. If India was ever a land of extravagant dimensions, then the horror of the Punjab killings, the abundance of human anguish and suffering they would produce, did not fail that ancient tradition. Europe’s own people, had slaughtered each other with bombs, calculated horrors of gas chambers. While the people of Punjab set out to destroy themselves with bamboo staves, hockey sticks, ice picks, knives, clubs, swords, hammers and clawing fingers. Theirs was a spontaneous, irrational slaughter. Appalled at emotions they had inadvertently unleashed, their desperate leaders tried to call them back to reason. It was hopeless cry. There was no reason in that brief and cruel season when India went mad’ (Freedom at Midnight, p. 359)

This brief period saw the mass exodus of a magnitude that was never before imagined. Within a few weeks or months, more than ten million people were to cross the borders.

CHAPTER 3



Leaves Flying Towards the Storm

"Until recently, i.e., before the independence, the people of Kutch and Sindh migrated to and fro, as and when circumstances demanded. Most of the Sodha people of Sindh had their social connections in Kutch and many of the Muslims had their relatives in Sindh. In the years of scarcity and famine, people from border areas of Kutch migrated with their cattle to Sindh after the good rains returned to their land. Kutch and its people are thus interconnected with the Sindh region since ancient periods to present times and the Indus Valley Civilization had evidently developed throughout these areas, which had cultural and social ties of their own."

(Sindhu Waters and Kutch by Mahesh Thacker & Shashikant Thacker)

There is a tradition of total surrender to one's preceptor or Murshid's will, whom Sindhi's have implicit faith in. This meant, following his dictations implicitly without question.

This has been a part of the Sindhi ethos for centuries. During the freedom movement, this very attitude towards the Nationalist leadership remained a characteristic of the Sindhi masses, rank and file.

In the national movement, Sindh contributed the most ardent, devoted and dedicated volunteers. As such, there was no reason to believe that there would be a Volta face by the national leadership, under the compulsions of real political factors.

This justifies why Sindhi's felt betrayed.

The Sindhi Hindus who constituted the bulwark of the congress movement, controlled the governmental machinery at almost all levels, including the business and economy of the province since centuries, could never have visualized how the state could function without them.

They believed that the impression created by the leadership was that Pakistan was supposed to be an unviable state and would fall, sooner rather than later, under its own contradictions and inability to sustain itself.

Another factor which weighed with them equally, if not more, was that after Sindh was separated from Bombay and Hindus were again reduced to a minority, although with more power, they veered to forces of communalists who believed in Bharat Mata as an inviolable entity. They believed in the slogan, 'Hindu, Hindi, and Hindustan' and were strongly wedded to the concept of 'Akhand Bharat.'

In this way, even at an emotional level, they were not prepared for the division of the country and creation of Pakistan. All these factors were combined to lull them into complacency with a haughty attitude.

As far as Sindhi leadership goes at the national level, Acharya Kripalani had remained away from Sindh and never considered himself a Sindhi leader. He had perhaps an exaggerated self-image, to the extent of refusing to refer to Gandhiji as 'Mahatma' although paradoxically he was one of his ardent followers!

He even was made president of the Indian National Congress. However, for certain reasons he found himself redundant in the new dispensation and soon after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, he left Congress to float his own political party.

In this way, Jairamdas Doulatram, a scholar and intellectual in his own right, was acutely aware of the rules of the political game and was adept at real politics.

Ideologically, he was near Sardar Patel, and had sympathy with the far right group in congress, which never openly articulated, but harboured a hue of communal ideology.

After, Congress capitulated to the communal demands of creation of Pakistan, renounced its ideology, history of communal harmony and the indivisibility of India, to many congressmen it became clear that after the 15th of August 1947, both the countries would move on to the religious pivot.

It was only natural that if Islam was to be at the centre of all the issues in Pakistan, then logically it should be the Hindu religion which should be in the forefront in India.

Presumably, they considered Gandhiji as a failed prophet, though they ritualistically continued to be in his obedience. During the pre-partition of India, Sindhi leaders suffered from the handicap of being leaders of a minority community, while now in India they would enjoy the status of being the majority community.

This in turn freed them from carrying the burden of safety and safe-guarding the interests of the minority community. They reckoned that by their ability and qualities of leadership, they would reap the benefits of power.

Perhaps, Jairamdas Daulatram visualized the future of the Sindhi community and his own, along these lines. As a consequence, Sindhi Hindus were advised to merge their identity with the local population. However, Sindhi refugees were told that they had left their 'Matrabhoomi for Punyabhoomi'.

In the bargain, Jairamdas Daulatram reaped the benefit of being a central minister and Governor of Bihar and Assam. It was then left to Dr. Choithram Gidwani – the president of the Sindh Congress Committee, to fight for the rehabilitation of Sindhi refugees. In the process, he came in a clash with Sardar Patel who said, “Dr Gidwani has gone mad.”

He had to leave Congress, but he then fought and won elections in India after the partition and again confronted the government regarding the issue of rehabilitation of Sindhi refugees. It is significant to note that before the Independence itself, Congress had released an election manifesto which was very clear about the vision of India after the independence.

In spite of all the natural and man-made calamities of great magnitude that the country had faced after the partition, the constituent assembly soon brought the country to even keel from the storm and started its work in righteous earnestness.

In the manifesto, inter-alia stated, ‘The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for the tolerance and goodwill amongst and between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius’

‘It has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial areas within the nation to develop its own life and culture within the larger framework, and for this purpose, such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible on the basis of linguistic and cultural factors. The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic state with the fundamental rights and civil liberties for and of all its citizens, guaranteed in the constitution.’

After the partition, Sindhi Leaders thought that all the promises and manifestos of the Congress were a mere history and India would, by compulsions of real politic moves, along the communal lines, linguistic and cultural identities, had to be merged into an Indian, which meant the creation of a Hindu identity.

It is in this background and with this mindset, when the Indian languages were being listed in the eighth schedule of the constitution, that Jairamdas Doulatram the only Sindhi representative, did not feel the need to press the claim of adding the Sindhi language.

⁸*You have come from the land of your birth to the sacred land*

While all this was taking place on a national level, there were many among the Sindhi congress workers who implicitly shared the vision of the future of India and the social society, based on the congress's manifesto, for the addition of the distinct language, culture of literature and historical experience.

Amongst them, was Bhai Pratap.

Who, although, was a wealthy business man, was a nationalist to core and had been the host to almost all national leaders who happened to visit Sindh and was in close personal relations with them. Due to his overseas exposure and his multi-disciplinary scholarships, he shared the sense and ideology of Sindhis being a distinct community with a rich heritage that needed to be preserved.

It is vital to note that the government of India or anyone for that matter was totally unprepared and without any plans to handle such a mass inflow of refugees.

In the case of Punjab and Bengal, there was a landmass on both sides of the borders. The initial brunt and fury of the torrent of refugees, was absorbed by the common landmass. Frankly, at this point of time, even during the gruesome bloodshed witnessed in other parts of India, Sindh did not see the brutality, bloodshed and carnage of that magnitude.

The hordes of refugees that descended on Sindh thought of themselves as the victorious army and were hence entitled to the war pillages.

As Sindhi Hindus enjoyed comparative prosperity, it was their wealth and property that was targeted. At the ground level Sindhi Hindus and Muslims enjoyed a cordial relationship with each other, so bigotry in the local Muslim population was an aberration rather than a rule.

In the process of getting hold of the property of Sindhi Hindus, their harassment which were at the hands of the rulers and migrant populations started in a massive way. This naturally unnerved many and they feared for their safety, as no one could ensure their peaceful and dignified existence.

In fact, many of the Sindhi Hindus thought this bitterness to be only a temporary phase. They also shared the common perception with a part of the leadership at the time, which was that Pakistan was not a viable state and would sooner come kneeling for a reunification. It was under this perception, that Sindhi Hindus left their country as a temporary measure, they didn't believe that they would never return to their homes, hearths and lands ever again.

The stories of many Hindu Sindhis, having left the keys of their homes with their Muslim neighbours are too numerous to be recounted. Had this been the conscious choice they might have reacted differently.

The events of 6th January 1948 at Karachi hastened the process of migration from Sindh in a dramatic way. Economic wars were unleashed against Sindhi Hindus in Sindh, to make it rather impossible for them to live there. It is recorded that the violence first erupted in Quetta. Though it was part of Balochistan, its effects were felt in Sindh also. Nearly thirty people were killed and forty left injured. There was wide spread looting and arson.

Civil authorities requested military help. Train services were suspended and as a precautionary measure additional forces were sent to Sukkar. It is said, that the collector of Nawabshah started behaving in a rather partisan manner.

Yet Sindhis did not share any landmass across the borders. There had been a traditional land mass of Kutch, but it became unfeasible in the circumstances prevailing then as a great desert lay between Sindh and Kutch.

The only routes of escape were by train towards Marwar and by ship towards Bombay via small ports like Okha or others along Saurashtra. Sindh had been separated from Bombay only a decade earlier and many Sindhi businessmen and professionals still had live connections with Bombay.

Thus by early September many Sindhi Hindus had started leaving Sindh by air. Many planes of Bombay Airlines, mostly 21-seater Dakotas were pressed into service. Air India, Ambica Airlines and Mistry Airways all came into operation during the process of evacuation of Sindhi Hindus.

Train travel was fraught with risks and dangers therefore most of the evacuations were done by the sea-route, which was safest and comparatively faster.

The Bombay Steam Navigation Company pressed its ships for evacuation via Karachi and the small port of Okha. The SS Sonavati, SS Kallavati, SS Netravati, SS Iravati and many others were pressed into service. The United Press of India messages reported on September 8th 1947 stated that four-thousand non-Muslims were leaving daily for Mewar and other stations via Hyderabad to Sindh.

And about two-thousand people were leaving Karachi daily by various means such as rail, ship and air. After the Karachi riots, the exodus of Hindus started on a gigantic scale. More ships were requisitioned on the Karachi-Bombay route.

The Bombay Steam navigation ships, Scindia Steam navigation ships, Moghul line ships and British Indian steam navigation ships were all engaged in the evacuation business as well.

Obviously, the Government of India and provincial governments did not have any disaster management machinery at their disposal to face a calamity of such a magnitude.

In face of this crisis, an adhoc solution was adopted. At the time of the independence movement, the British troops had withdrawn and the camps left by them, although in dilapidated conditions, were lying vacant. It was decided that Sindhi refugees were to house in those camps.

Thus, Sindhi refugees were dispersed along the length and breadth of India, as packets of unwanted merchandise.

In this respect, the table reproduced by Ms. Subhadra Anand in her book *National Integration of Sindhis*, speaks volumes of the situation prevailing at that time.

Serial No	State	Population
1	Ajmer Merwara at Deoli	10,200
2	Bombay	216,500
3	Baroda	10,700
4	Bikaner State	8,900
5	Jaipur State	33,200
6	Jodhpur State	11,800
7	Madhya Bharat	3,400
8	Former Rajasthan	15,800
9	Saurashtra Union	45,500
10	Vindhya Pradesh	15,400
11	Madhya Pradesh	81,400
	TOTAL	4,52,800

Camp Population from year 1948

It may be mentioned that all those who came to various camps were not necessarily destined to remain there. A lot of the population was compelled to float across the country. Families would try to find out where their kith, kin and people known to them had settled and tried to find the avenues to eke out their living through word of mouth or correspondence.

This quest for social coherence, even more so for sustenance – started a wave of cross-migration across India. In order to be on their own feet, Sindhis did not hesitate to do any dignified work. In this period, often all the members of the family, including small children and women, would be engaged in work.

One needs to know, that most of the camps, though far from the existing towns and cities, were in comparative proximity, so Sindhis could afford to travel daily, to and fro, for the search of their livelihood. They were soon to be successful in their efforts, which in turn roused the hostility of the local trading population.

It is in this perspective, that the question of linguistic, cultural and distinct social identities was brought into sharp focus by none other than, K.C. Neogy, the relief and rehabilitation minister who said, *"An important point to remember is that Sindhis are threatened with extinction as a separate people with their own peculiar distinctive customs and qualities. Thinly spread over India with no place to call their own they cannot hope to retain their culture and language."*

All this while, the dialogue between the leaders of India and Pakistan, Congress leaders and the Muslim League continued at a higher level for restoring the confidence of minorities so as to discourage them from fleeing.

However, it was all a smokescreen, as the ground reality presented quite a different picture.

In all this, it was Mahatma Gandhi who credibly held aloft the torch of the Hindu–Muslim Unity. He could only inspire a ray of hope in the atmosphere vitiated by the unprecedented hatred and violence that was consuming their history. With this as the backdrop, Bhai Pratap approached Gandhiji for guidance.

Gandhiji told him to plan a secure but natural alternative for the Sindhi Hindu community, at a place where their identity would remain intact. He suggested Kutch as a natural choice from its historical, cultural and linguistic points of view – where there would be no threat to their natural way of life.

⁹Sourced from the book *Sindhi Culture* by U.T. Thakur

As a true disciple, Bhai Pratap started on this mission as a man-possessed. Fate transpired to bring these two men of destiny together to accomplish this unique feat, in the annals of world history.

Normally, new cities were built by emperors and in the recent times by governments, but it are rare to have a city built by the vision of one individual. That is what Bhai Pratap sought to accomplish while facing all the challenging odds set up against him.

Ironically, when Mahatma Gandhi and Bhai Pratap had already identified a natural homeland for the Hindu Sindhis – strangely enough another proposal was brought before Gandhiji. On December 2nd (year), a deputation of the Sindh Refugees' Association, apparently inspired by communal minded elements in the Congress, presented a memorandum to Gandhiji suggesting that about a million and a half Sindhi refugees should be settled in one of three following places.

a. Between Meerut and Agra.

b. Between Nasik and Lonvala.

c. Between Saugar and Nagpur.

It was preposterous, as Gandhiji had already blessed the scheme that the replacement of Sindhi would be near Kandla Port. What's more is that, Bhai Pratap, had already started the work of identifying the land near Kandla Port and had already constituted the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation.



Kandla Port (Then)

The memorandum of this corporation was printed in 1947 itself. So, one could only wonder what the purpose of such a suggestion was. The places referred to have no connection with the Sindhi language or cultural roots or their way of living.

¹⁹ Subhadra Anand, *National Integration of Sindhis*, p.75

Were the protagonists of the scheme inadvertently pleading for apartheid in reverse?

Did they have any understanding of Sindhi history, culture and politics?

It became necessary to identify such people or forces which were bent upon the annihilation of the Sindhi identity and placing these Sindhis amidst a huge population, who in case of any animosity would merely be sitting ducks!

This fact proved one point fact beyond any doubt, that from the very first days the scheme envisaged by Bhai Pratap, had to contend with an opposition that he totally and courageously disregarded, with utter nonchalance, which he became destined to pay a very heavy price for, in the days to come.

In retrospect:

‘Maharao Khangerji III (1876–1942), was deeply concerned at the difficulty of finding suitable facilities for modern shipping at Mandvi and it had occurred to him that Kandla Creek, with its well defined banks, deep water close to shore and an ample depth for ocean going ships, would offer possibilities which were well worth exploring. Unlike Mandvi, the port on Kandla Creek would be sheltered from the southwest monsoon and would have the further advantages of being quite close to the mainland of India.

Communications with Saurashtra, he thought, would be possible for passengers by travelling through the creek, without traversing the open sea at all. While the goods traffic was a comparatively short rail link to Deesa, it would give any port on Kandla Creek a considerable advantage, even over Bombay, for the trade with Rajputana.



Kandla Bandar Port (Then)

Like so many pioneers, Maharao Khangerji III was exposed to some criticism and even attacks from those who could not see so far ahead as he could. Kandla creek was a deserted spot, cut off by salt marshes from any inhabited area. Making it a fine place to set a Port!

The old Maharao, who had already been on the throne for half a century remained true to his vision. Tirelessly, he explored the banks of the creek from end to end, tramping through salt marshes and mangroves, spending days even weeks, on horseback and riding camels. At the cost of immense personal exertion, he found some sites which seemed suitable. He took the best experts advice and engaged the services of a British port engineer.

Gradually, a small settlement grew, starting with a first small settlement for workmen, followed by a small landing stage, then a customs office and a warehouse or two. Fresh water was found and supply was piped from the Viri springs to the new port. Everything had to be planned on a small scale as the Maharao's resources were strained to a limit enough to have an effect on those modest beginnings...'

These constraints emanated from Kutch's strong determination to remain outside the Indian customs union and have its own currency. After the independence, these obstacles were automatically removed and the situation evolved so that Bhai Pratap was looking for a place near the port, to replace the loss of the Karachi port to Pakistan, where new city could be built to accommodate Sindhi Hindu refugees.

Thus, while Bhai Pratap wanted a land to settle a population and build a city, the Maharao needed a population for city to live in. It was indeed a win-win situation for both sides.

On the top of that, this project had the blessings of Gandhiji, whose wishes could not but be deferred by the ruler of Kutch, after the integration into the Indian Union. In this way, after long negotiations, Bhai Pratap sent a formal letter of request to the Maharao for a grant of 15,000 acres of land on 27th January 1948 (along with the draft of a conveyance deed). On 29th January 1948, he received a letter accepting his request.

Gandhiji was also accordingly informed of this good tidings. But, on 30th January 1948, Gandhiji was assassinated.

As originally promised and planned the foundation stone could not

be laid by Gandhiji. But, on 11th February 1948, his ashes were brought to be immersed in the Kandla Creek by his ardent follower, Acharya Kripalani, who had accepted to be the chairman of the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation under pressure from Gandhiji, Bhai Pratap and other leaders.

Part of the ashes was also brought to Gandhidham and the Gandhi Samadhi was erected. Hence, in India we have two Gandhi Samadhis, one at Rajghat in Delhi and other distinctions remain with Adipur, Gandhidham.



*Remains of Father of nation Mahatma Gandhi being submerged at Kandla Port
by Acharya J.B. Kripalani and Bhai Pratap, on 12th Feb. 1948*

CHAPTER 4

Pioneering Efforts

(Tale of the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation)

"Uheyee hatha neer mein. Uheyee hatha kheer mein" in literal translation, it means, "the same hands that are immersed in water (i.e. wiping tears) are also immersed in milk, which implies that 'life doles out two tasks at the same time. One provides pain, and the other gives joy.' (Jhulelal.com)



New Sind, September 1949 : Painting on partition

So many things had to be done at the same time. Time was of the essence, which would determine the success or failure of the endeavour. Therefore Bhai Pratap plunged headlong in the work and simultaneously started working on various other fronts.

Karachi had been lost to India and it was necessary to create another port to cater to the vast hinterland of India. Bhai Pratap saw in this an ideal opportunity to establish a city for Sindhi immigrants, that would grow into a port city with enormous possibilities and opportunities which the Sindhi Hindu population would be able to take advantage of.

The main problem was accessibility. The methods of reaching Kutch were quite cumbersome. Two routes used to be open to the traveller heading to Kutch.

The first route was journeying by sea all the way from the ancient sea port of Mandvi. While the second route involved taking a twelve-hour railway trip on a broad gauge to Ahmadabad, then

changing onto the metre gauge for a slower train, for another twelve hours through Kathiawad. This was followed by either embarking at Bedi in the Nawanagar state or at Naulakhi in the Morvi state, for the shorter sea passage to the new port, which the Maharao Khangerji III of Kutch had built on a deep water creek in Kandla, which had enormous possibilities for international shipping.

Apart from addressing the accessibility problem, Bhai Pratap first had to create an institution or organization which could execute the work. As per the laws prevailing, the only option open to him was an incorporation of the Joint Stock Company. The work of preparing the legal framework stated in 1947 itself and the Sindhu Resettlement Company which was legally incorporated in 1948, had Acharya Kripalani as its Chairman and Bhai Pratap as the managing director.

Many important and eminent persons who could inspire confidence were members of the managing board. All the directors were honorary workers and no one benefited from the corporation.

From the inception itself, it was conceived as an endeavour of Kutchi-Sindhi partnership. Accordingly, Shri Bhawanji Arjan Khimji and a younger brother of Mahahrao of Kutch were also taken on the Board of Directors. In fact, as the memorandum of the corporation mentioned, this enterprise was made in true Gandhian spirit, free from any caste or community bias.

New Sind, Scriptures from February 1950, 15 August 1949 & 1950 and October 1950

آڪٽو مبر ۱۹۵۰

October 1950



— ممبران —

منگهارام - ن - ٿڌاڻي

شري اجيت پوساد جين گانڌيڌار



گانڌي ڌار ۾ هنري سڀيا لاءِ وو ڪيشتل
ٿو ڀينگر سڀينر ٻوڀا
تن ۽ ڇين ڀين جي سڀيا وٺن بعد روزگار ملندو
سنڌي ڌار وٺون ڪي سڀيا وٺون ۽ ڀوين ڌار لاءِ اڀيل
(۱۹۵۰ع ۾ ڏنل)

ڪڇين جا وڏا ڀاڱا آهن جو سنڌي ڀلي ڀلي ڪن
ڪنڊلا وٽ ٺاهي رهيا آهن
ڪڇين جو سانڌو سانڌو ڀل سڀيا اچي ساڀيا جي صورت وٺي رهيو آهي
ڪڇين ۾ لکيل قدرتي خزانن جو اسان کي پوري ريت فائدو وٺڻ گوري
(ڪڇين ۾ پاڻي جي کوٽي)

From the very inception, it was made clear that though the legal framework of the operations was with the Joint Stock Company, in spirit it would function more as a co-operative venture. Therefore, a limit was set to the distribution of dividends and the number of shares that an individual could purchase.

The company was floated with 25000 shares, with 1000 each and thus the capital of the corporation was kept at 2,5000,000.

Land that measured 15000 acres was obtained as a grant from the Maharao of Kutch on 29th January 1948.

Accordingly, the best town planners in the world were engaged to plan a futuristic city for a new and modern India. Mr. Murio Bacchlochi, from a firm of Italian town planners, was hired and assisted by a team headed by Dr. O.H. Koenigsberger, the director of the division of Housing in the Government of India, along with M/s Ballard Thomson, Mathews of Calcutta, Karchande and Rosy of Delhi.

Subsequently, the plan was revised by Adams Howard and the Greeley Company in 1952. As desired by the Indian government, the town plan was also whetted and approved by the American Town Planning organization, whose services had been obtained under the 'Truman Aid Scheme'. It was decided by the town planners that open spaces per person should be at least half the proportion as it was in the United States (this was decided taking into account the Indian conditions and resources available. Yet this was to be the best yardstick in Indian circumstances.)

The basic concept was that the town was to be divided into self-sufficient districts which were again sub-divided into neighbourhood units. Each neighbourhood unit, would have a population of about 10,000 people, its own schools, dispensaries, recreation centres and temples etc. While each district consisted about half a dozen neighbourhood units, had a district centre, consisting of markets, shopping squares, cinemas, hospitals etc.

Hence, this town was planned with big open grounds for social and recreational activities. Another challenge in the neighbourhood design was to channel the traffic on main streets, so that the traffic would not flow through the neighbourhood streets, which would have otherwise been the case with wide streets.

From the very beginning of the town planning, it was expected that the town would benefit from the port and free-trade zone activities at a later stage of its development. This planned approach had been appreciated by many around the world.

This town had the distinct quality of having the smallest address, which was initiated at the planning stage itself. For example, the

last letter X or Z stood for those who had subscribed to the shares of the corporation. X stood for those constructions which were to be given to non-share holders and Z denoted the constructions allotted to share holders. S denoted a single room, while T stood for two rooms, Th for three rooms and SDZ denoted bungalows.

Therefore, the addresses like SDX 50, or TRS 69, are common there. The end number would indicate the actual circumstance. As is human nature in the commercial age, these dwellings were later referred to on the basis of the rent paid by the tenants e.g., '2/-, '7/- and so on.

Immediate efforts were made to obtain water supply from the Shinai Lake, which had a capacity of about 400 million cubic feet. With moderate rainfall, this lake filled up enough to supply sufficient water to meet the needs at that point in time.

This source was to be augmented from Viri springs, which had an inexhaustible water supply to meet all the needs for construction purposes. However, during this juncture an important hurdle sprang up and threatened the existence of the entire enterprise.

It happened that many rulers just before acceding to India had transferred large parts of their fertile lands to their close relatives and their favourite courtiers. This last minute manoeuvre could not be accepted by the Government of India and all the grants made six months prior to accession were declared null and void.

Unfortunately, the grant of the land by the Maharao of Kutch to the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation technically fell in this category. Therefore, the entire question of the title to the land was again caught in a bureaucratic maze.

It should be remembered that all this happened when time and speed were the most crucial factors. It took 7 full years to unravel the web and come out with a scheme that had changed beyond recognition.

Instead of 15000 acres of land initially granted to Sindhu Resettlement Corporation, it was reduced to a mere 2600 acres and that too not as a grant but on a lease of 99 years. This was accompanied with crippling conditions.

In the process, the Sindhi Resettlement Corporation was in fact reduced to being an appendage of the Kandla Port Authority, while its authority was further circumscribed by the establishment of the Gandhidham Land Development Board, which had right to approve any plan in the Adipur and Gandhidham planned areas.

In light of all that happened, a question arises as to why it took seven full years to settle such a vital issue when Sindhi refugees

were facing a life and death struggle? Was it possible for the Sindhi Community to survive only on water and fresh air during this time?

It is no doubt that they resorted to the obvious, which was by settling wherever they could find employment, doing some business to make a living and beginning to gather some roots in the soil where they were already settled.

Was there a hidden hand behind all the delays? Was this a ploy orchestrating elements which were out to scuttle this scheme since the beginning, possibly to settle a score with Bhai Pratap?

Nothing can be proven at this stage, without declassifying the archives from this period to further investigate this matter.

Coming to the hero of the tale, Bhai Pratap was made of robust stuff. He had an indomitable will and unflinching faith in his vision. He was not to be deterred from such setbacks. He accepted the challenges with his characteristic courage and doggedly fought at every step and at every front.

In this respect, he argued with the government authorities and did not simply submit to their dictates. In this respect, he argued his case, which is extracted from the communications he sent to the Government of India, which he referred to as 'the meeting of 26th January 1949'.

In this, he refers to his letters dated on 22nd February 1949, which entails,

"The average holding, in fact is hardly 1.6 shares per head and the shares so far subscribed by the public, are by over 8000 persons of middle-class, who are spread all over India. Under this circumstances, holding a block of 25 percent shares in such an Institution, gives the government very great powers so that, if desired, it could wipe out the usual rights and privileges of other share holders. It was because of this that in my letter dated 22nd February 1949 I had requested the Government to desist from participating in the annual elections by the share holders of its directors and was also given an assurance in a reply dated on 17th March 1949, that the government will not ordinarily participate in the elections and removal of non-Government directors."

Needless to say that Bhai Pratap, was pragmatic and he had a knack of finding the right person for the right job. First, Gandhidham was to have rail connectivity. He set about this task in right earnest. He appointed a very important retired officer of the Indian railways for a high post in the corporation, but his actual work was to be facilitated through his contacts for rail connectivity, as expeditiously as possible.



Railway lines being laid

Another task, which did not brook any delays, was the construction of the port of Kandla, for which the contract was awarded to the German firm, Mackenzie. They had many Germans and other European nationalities, as their engineers and advisors, to cater to the daily needs of the supply system that had to be put in place. Bhai Pratap promptly arranged to meet their needs in the township, as well and a shop dedicated to their demands was also opened.

Mr. Mavjibhai Sawla in his column, 'On the fringes of Footpath' in Kutch Mitra dated 18th February 2009, gives the account of those times in the following words:

'The work at Adipur started in 1947 itself. It was during that time, that the work of Bhuj Kandla and Kandla Dessa metre gauge line was started. Prior to that, the only train that used to run in Kutch, used to be a narrow gauge between Kandla and Bhuj, which had a shining small brass colour engine on which the letters GAR ('Ghanu Jivo Maharao—Long Live Ruler — Maharao) was inscribed. It used to take 5 hours from Kandla to reach Bhuj, in this narrow gauge train. In this train, normally the labour force and engineers, supervisors would start at about 9 a.m. and would start back from Kandla at about 6 p.m.

This train came to be known as the Mackenzie train, named after the contracting company and there was no checking of the tickets of the passengers as they were all were employed by Mackenzie Co.'

He refers to the innovative methods employed during the initial construction period of the Kandla Port. In order to drive the piles, the slush would be piped out and gathered on the shore. It was difficult to remove the mounds of slush that gathered.

One, Mistry Dungarshibhai, who was earlier attached to Meraoo Metal works, procured about 50–100 bullock carts and started demolishing the slush mounds, by depositing it in the nearby marsh pits, thus bringing ditches to ground level. It is this plot of land that stands the sheds and warehouses of the Kandla port today. Needless to say, during the time, no other motorized transport could be used there.

As for the gathering of these amazing facts, Mr. Sawla had contributed a series of about twenty columns on the reminiscences of that period, as the actual archives of this period, from the early fifties, were very scarce and hard to procure.

It was thanks to two old-timers who enriched me with their memories as a form of oral history that helped create this valuable record of that time. It was integral to be placed on record, so that they are not lost to posterity.

As narrated by, Mr. Preetam Variyani, an old-timer from that period, in order to develop and build a city, various forms of work had to be undertaken and a team had to be assembled to execute it, by following institutions (mostly labour-oriented).

As Sindhi Hindus are not used to hard labour, they were employed at supervisory and intermediate levels, while the hard physical labour and work was arranged to be done by local resources.

The initial management structure is said to be as follows:

1. Shri Girdharilal Kripalani, the nephew/brother of Acharya Kripalani, who was appointed as general manager of SRC. He remained in this position for about two years.
2. Mr. Lagu was in charge of the cement pipes and electrical poles manufacturing factory.
3. Mr. Mani was in charge of the wood-works and mechanical workshop.
4. Mr. Bhagwandas Wadhwani was in charge of the stores.
5. Mr. Motiram Mirchandani was the deputy working under Gidharilal.
6. Mr. Sunderdas was looking after horticulture.
7. Mr. Kaltari was the medical health care in-charge.

8. Mr. Ramchand Moorjani was in charge of the laboratory and sanitation.
9. Another Mr. Lagu was in charge of water supply.
10. Mr. Motiram Gulrajani was looking after the chemical laboratory.
11. Mr. Doulatram Jairamdas who was the chief officer at Hyderabad was advisor to Bhai Pratap and used to look after the affairs of SRC in his absence.
12. Mr. Thakur. F. Rai (Singhani) was the secretary to Bhai Pratap.

Initially, Preetam Varyani was absorbed in the woodwork factory, but soon he was transferred to the Health Department as an inspector for health and hygiene. He said, there was a dormitory at the site where Hiru Issrani now lives. At that time, according to Preetam Varyani, the total population which had settled there was about fifty.

Mr. Nirmal Vaswani, another man from the time, said that a few Kutchi families, who had migrated to India and settled at Sindh, came to resettle at Gandhidham.

He mentions the name of Kashiprasad Vora, who was at some time the personal secretary to Bhai Pratap, while Dhaorai Buch was his accountant and Valjibhai Bhide was the head clerk.

Mr. Hadkar was a chief engineer of the SRC and Mr. Arthur Hill, an Australian man, was in charge of the water works and plumbing installations. However, Mr. Nirmal Vaswani found a serious flaw in the town planning. The town planners had not provided any space for crematoriums or burial grounds. This was later corrected by allocating these areas outside the planned city.

Going into the details of infrastructural ground-work, Mr. Valliram Kishnani said, that Mr Madhavdas Shivalomal was in-charge of Land and Housing.

The Bessar Plant, which was used for making cement blocks, was said to be the first of its kind in Asia. Meanwhile, he went onto say that an ice factory, printing press, homes for the old and feeble, unattached widows and, children were also established.

A vocational training centre was also set up. Some handlooms were also brought and the first Lal Sai temple in India was also established here. A guest house was established at the site where Hotel Midtown now stands.

Another veteran from those times, who is now very popular and, an important grand and old lady, Dadi Krishna Bhambhani, explains that, Bhai Pratap was deeply concerned about the education provided for his children.

Shri Hundraj 'Dukhayal' was specially sent to Chittorgarh to bring Ms Krishna to Adipur to start a School. She set foot there in 1951, at the time when Cheti Chand was being celebrated. She was received at an old jetty by Girdharilal (the Managing Director of SRC) and Mr Motiram.

From the Cheti Chand celebrations she was immediately taken to a site where she was presented with 13 students by Bhai Pratap, who told her to start a school. This was the way the foundation for the 'Maitri Mandal Educational Institution' was laid.

Although it started out as a school without a book or syllabus, the materials were imported from Ajmer much later. Mr Hundraj Dukhayal was soon joined by Mrs Parpati Gidwani from Junagad.



Maitri Bhawan at Hyderabad (Sindh) (Then)

In addition to this, as cited in one article, Mr S.C. Hingorani reminisces that during those initial periods, outings were encouraged and mixing with peers was maximized. Street corner picnics would be a common sight and contributory preeti bhojans were in abundance.

The Gandhidham club had also come into existence with Mr Notani, the SRC manager and head of the land department, as the motivational spirit behind this venture.

Yet, one evening in 1950, the bank of the nearby Shinai Lake suddenly gave way resulting in a flash flood. As there wasn't any proper connection with the outside world, due to lack of communication devices such as a telephone line, no outside help could even be expected.

Therefore, all the men rushed from their tenements or tents to repair the breach and spent the whole night on their feet. After this amazing example set by these gentlemen for their self reliance and cooperation, Nav Yuvak group was founded by the youth of the town.

The pioneers for this group were:

1.	Late Sri Bhagwandas Wadhwani
2.	Satish Rohra
3.	Sugnaram Ladkani
4.	Preetam Variyani
5.	Gopaldas Daryani
6.	Bhagwandas Chandwani
7.	Mohan Bharti
8.	Late Bhagwandas Abhichandani
9.	Late Fatandas Pariyani
10.	Late Harchandrai Vasandani.

Amongst these heroes, Mr Chetan Kripalani was one such dedicated social worker, who would transport the ill and decrepit to the hospital in a hand cart as no ambulances were available during those times.



New Sind, Hospital facilities in Gandhidham, 15 August 1950



While all this work was still being made at ground level, it was essential to also involve the people for whom the entire enterprise was intended. This was the calling for a massive information drive to reach out to people.

In this venture, once again, Bhai Pratap did not spare any avenue that was available. He enlisted the co-operation of Shri Hundraj Dukhayal, who had carried the message of Congress, about Gandhiji and their freedom, using his 'Khanjiri', throughout the length and breadth of Sindh, during the pre-independence days.

Using his patriotic songs — he was to carry to the people the message of the new hometown being built for them. Around 78 rpm records were also made in his inimitable style and voice so that they may be played on the gramophone so that the message may reach to the masses where he could not reach personally.

Even Hassanand 'Jadugar' , was also roped in to spread the message of the new township which was being established for Sindhis.

The services of the most popular singer of Sindh, Master Chander, was also brought forth to sing songs specially written to spread the message of new township for Sindhis.

In this entire exercise, which today may be termed as 'marketing', the written word, and print media were also extensively used. A magazine entitled 'Naeen Sindh' was launched from the Head office of SRC at Bombay, which was edited by Mr Mangahram Thadani (now Sipahimalani).



SRC Office (Now)

Many information pamphlets and other materials were written especially to propagate and promote the idea of the new township. At this stage, it is not possible to give all that appeared at that time; instead we follow gleanings which would convey the spirit of those times.

In line with that, the first pamphlet I was able to access was in Sindhi in the 'Gandhidham Ratha' or Gandhidham proposal. The cover does not bear any date or year of publication. However it entailed a message by Sant Lilashah which bears the date 25th November 1948. Therefore it may be presumed that this pamphlet would have been conceived between late 1948 or early 1949.

The pamphlet's first chapter stresses the necessity of having one's own home land. The confidence and sense of belonging this evokes are amply demonstrated by various examples.

It refers to migrations and transmigrations carried out throughout human history, therefore this idea of migration should not be considered as something unheard of. In anthropology, this it is but a necessity to adopt another land and own it to transform that sense of alienation into a sense of belonging.

Therefore, this leaflet returns to elaborate on the viability and desirability to adopt Kutch as a homeland as well as seeking to dispel the impression that Kutch is all desert and wilderness, where no progress or prosperity is possible.

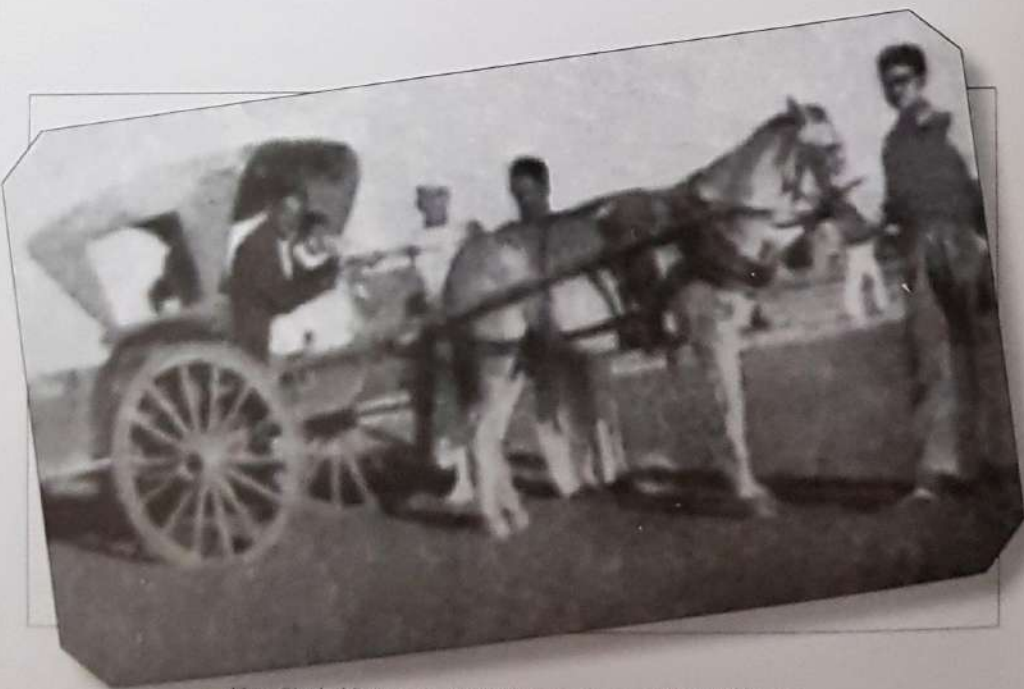
Other subjects it dwells upon include the sources of income, farming, availability of water, crafts and business, import-export, and a promise for a happy life and livelihood. Be it without the citation of an author, it is a well-argued and researched pamphlet.

Another very important and seminal article is written by Bhai Pratap himself. In that article, he seeks to inform at length, and contribute to the discussion which took place in a Sindhi daily newspaper, 'Sansar Samachar'.

He starts with the question, as to whether Gandhidham can be a new homeland for Sindhis? He dwells on the concept of what a hometown is and discusses this issue thread bare, coming out with cogent observations about the concept of a homeland, choices of selecting a new homeland for refugees, then coming to the desirability and viability of Gandhidham being a preferred hometown for Sindhis, and also seeks to answer some of the myths and misconceptions about Kutch.

As this article delves into the mindset of Bhai Pratap in his own words, it was a necessity to translate it into English for my readers to read it for themselves.

Within the same booklet, a speech by Sardar Patel followed by the Home Minister of India, is reproduced here. Enlisted are also the details of an AICC session which Bhai Pratap participated in, during the time. Amongst other subjects in the committee, they referred to this issue and said, 'Now the administration of Kutch is in the hands of the Indian Government. This has been done with a view to ensure the adequate progress of Kutch, which has been neglected so far. The Government wishes that the natural resources there should be exploited to bring prosperity to the region. This area has remained insulated from the rest of India for centuries. The natural resources on the agricultural front and mineral resources have not been utilized to bring benefit to the region so far. The Government has realized that enough resources are available. After the loss of Karachi Port, due to the partition, Bombay Port has been overburdened. In view of that fact, the Government has decided to build a big and modern port at Kandla. This work has already started. In order to connect this region with the rest of the country, the work on laying the necessary railway lines has been undertaken. Apart from all that, there is vast scope of rehabilitating refugees from Sindh. The lifestyle language etc. of both Kutchis and Sindhis are very similar. It will be easy for them to assimilate there. Within 8-10 years, the port activities and the city will develop to that extent where 8-10 lakh people will be able to lead a prosperous life due to their hard work and diligence.'



New Sind, 15 August 1950, Some scenes of Gandhidham

In same booklet, Mr Hotchand Nenumal has devoted an article to the subject, '*Gandhidham and Sindhworks*'. In this article he pointedly refers to the perception prevailing at that time. He says that the partition of the country was a temporary phenomenon and people were eagerly waiting for Pakistan to crumble under the weight of its own contradictions, so that it would be possible for them to go back to their homes and hearths.

The argument furthered to ask, why Sindhis should think of having another homeland, in such a situation?

He argued that in such a scenario, it would automatically be follow by the union of Sindh and Kutch. In the end, he urged Sindhworkis to take advantage of the new Kandla port coming up as the port city plays an important part to deal overseas.

The end of this booklet illustrated the first plan of the town of Gandhidham, together with the final town plan.

(SEE PART 2)

One booklet explaining the housing scheme at Gandhidham at the initial stages was issued, in which it was shown that 4000 two-room tenements were proposed to be constructed within a year. Each tenement would cost Rs. 3000/- out of which there would be a down-payment of Rs. 800/- while the rest would be recovered in monthly easy instalments. Thus, a hire purchase scheme was initiated. The plan of the house as shown in the pamphlet is also included.



Two Room Double Storeyed Building

Skipping a little ahead, on 10th January 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru came to visit Gandhidham. In light of the occasion, a relic which was issued in English, which is a real goldmine of information about the works accomplished in that brief period.

Interestingly, this report was written by none other than Bhai Pratap himself.

The report after the town planning, explains the various activities undertaken by SRC, and its progress in the following sectors within a short span of time.

I. Water Supply :

Apart from the water supply from Shinai lake and Viri springs, he added,

'With the assistance of the Geological Department of the Government, a large area, rich in underground water is plotted out. Five tube wells 12' to 15' wide, with a depth ranging from 250' to 300' have so far been sunk. Deep well pumps have been installed at two wells and the average discharge from each well is about 40,000 gallons per hour. The interim water supply scheme estimated to cost about Rs. 10 lakhs and having a discharge capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day has been completed. 12 miles of main pipe line of 21' to 12' diameter have been laid. Gandhidham is perhaps the only town in Kutch where water is available on tap.....'



New Sind, Oct 1959, Water supply lines being laid

II. Drainage:

'Plans have been prepared to ultimately provide underground drainage in the whole township. For the time being, main underground sewers have been laid and connected with open surface drains near the houses, underground drainage is being laid at present and flushes are being introduced. A suitable site for the model sewage farm on lines of Municipal farm at Karachi has been selected and sewage water will be utilized there'.



New Sind, Oct 1959, Water supply lines being laid.

III. Roads:

'About 15 miles of macadamized roads so far have been constructed. A link road connecting two localities has been completed. All the roads soon will be tarred. Along this as well as other roads, 10,000 shade trees, so far, have been planted. A unit of nurseries is maintained for the cultivation of these trees. Experiments are carried out also in cultivation of other plants of general interest to the whole of Kutch that might prove beneficial to its economy.'

IV. Electricity:

'All houses have been provided with Electricity. The present power supply station has a capacity of about 1000 K W's, which is being expanded to meet the growing needs of the growing city'.

V. Commercial Industrial Department:

In this, he lists the various activities which could be summarized as follows:

- Hollow cement block making factory: Had the capacity of manufacturing 10,000 blocks per day- which is enough material for about six simple houses.
- RCC spun and pole factory: Had manufactured practically all the pipes required for water supply and drainage schemes. This also employed hundreds of displaced people.
- Wood workshop and Saw Mill: All wood used in the houses constructed, had been manufactured in this unit, which employed more than 100 carpenters.
- Auto workshops and mechanical workshops: These units were working in conjunction, to supplement the needs of the above industries wherein the necessary repairs to machinery were carried out on the spot. A fleet of lorries was also maintained for transportation purposes and, hundreds of refugees had been trained as mechanics and drivers.
- A Laboratory: Of a moderate scale has also been set up.
- A vegetable farm, dairy farm and a poultry farm: had also been stated.

More importantly, the mammoth work of constructing around 4000 houses, shops and other facilities was accomplished, during that short span of time.

In the same report, Bhai Pratap emphasizes some social aspects, such as the social and educational Institutions established for the welfare of the citizens of this nascent evolving town.

- Two, primary and one secondary school had been started, where around 800 students received education. Separate kindergarten classes were also being conducted.
- Additional education for adults was also being run for the men and women of the town.
- A vocational training centre had been established in order to train the young citizens in various fields of occupation, e.g. overseer, sub overseer, fitters, wiremen, and carpenters.
- Nari shalla was also started so ladies could be taught handicrafts.
- A fully equipped dispensary had been working under a qualified doctor and trained staff to render health services.
- Social welfare organizations of, 'Maitr Mandal' and 'Nav Yuvak Group', had been started on a voluntary basis.

The Nav Yuvak group had established a school at Sardarnagar (Gandhidham) and run a dispensary at Sardar Nagar and Adipur. They also imparted physical training to youngsters of the town, and have been rightly applauded by the citizens for their efforts.

- Looking after the financial needs of the mercantile community as a cooperative bank was also established. The authorized share capital of the Gandhidham Co-operative Bank was Rs. 100,000 and it was to be raised by a share of Rs.10/-

(See Part 2 for Images of Gandhidham)

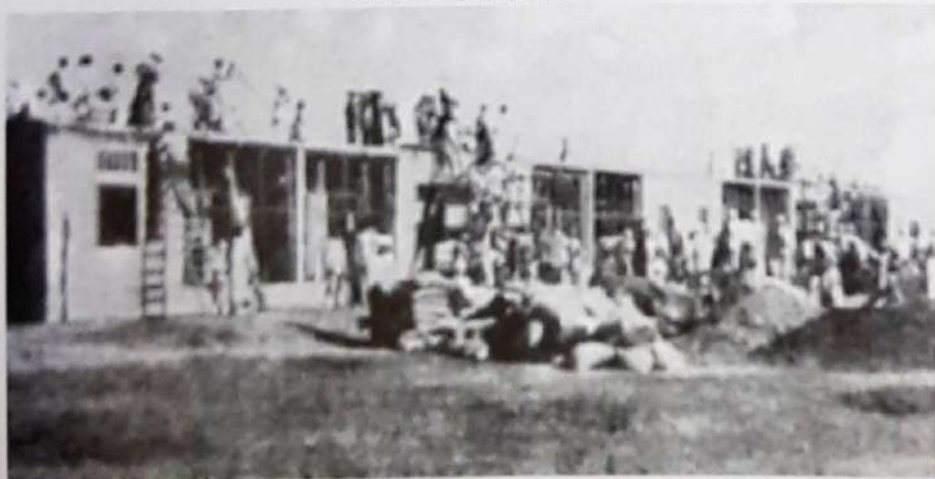
Such, was the all encompassing and complete vision of Bhai Pratap, for a Futuristic City!

(See Appendix 4: First Directors of Sindhu Resettlement Corp. & Appendix 5: Directors who attended the first meeting)*

New Sindh, 15th August 1950



*Construction works employing thousands of displaced persons,
New Sind, 15 August 1950*



CHAPTER 5

The Township Marches Ahead

(The Plot Thickens for the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation)

"Sabur jo phal mitho aahey" which means "Perseverance brings to ones destiny a fruit that is sweet." (Jhulelal.com)

All the necessary institutions and feasible employment opportunities were taken care of. The seeds were sown and now only the seedlings had to be nurtured, which in little time a city was soon expected to bloom!

But time was a big constraint. One end, the entire enterprise of converting dream into reality was caught in a bureaucratic maze while on the other end, the catch-22 was at the ground level.

The source of employment would grow only if the business grew, and the market and business would only grow if the population grew!

Inspired by the dream of their own city, many people came to gauge the business opportunities, but felt dejected by all the sand dunes in the vicinity and no possibility for growing the market.

It so transpired that for a major port status, many other existing ports in Saurashtra had laid their claims. As bureaucratic wheels moved very slowly, it took some time for Kandla port to be declared as a major port for the future.



Glimpse of various cargos handled at Kandla Port (Then)

Likewise, in this case, while some people were employed to dig the pits, others were employed to fill other roles.

In order to pump money into the economy, Bhai Pratap proposed certain incentives, such as, killing the pests from the desert such as, snakes and scorpions, with the view that it help clean the land of these pests, which no doubt abounded there and in addition to drive away the fears of these pests from the hearts of people.

This helped gain a wide currency in the publicity generated, giving the impression that the land was not safe for habitation, proved to be counterproductive.

Although, the figures of the census of 1951 are not available, the figures of the Gandhidham Adipur region are available from 1961 to 2001:

Year	Population
1961	26,448
1971	38,824
1981	61,415
1991	102,655
2001	1,511,693

Commercial properties: 10220; Residential properties: 40142; Slum Pockets: 8; with a total population of 45000- These figures have been taken from a document of Gandhidham Nagar Palika

It will be noticed that between 1961 and 1971, there was a growth of about 12000. While, between 1971 to 1981, there was a registered growth of 23000.

The sluggish growth may be ascribed to the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan, apart from the dispute along the Kutch boundary. The early growth was connected with progress on the building of Kandla Port.

But it can be said that by 1981, Gandhidham— Adipur came to the take-off stage.

After the fateful and devastating earthquake of 2001, the Central and State governments injected substantial amounts of money for rebuilding, and the industrial growth of this region along with concessions to industries and a free-trade zone at Kandla. This brought prosperity to the region and consequent business opportunities and employment.

Now, this town is estimated to have a population of about 5 lakhs, although the figures of the 2011 censuses are awaited for correct number of the population inhabiting this region.

In this entire endeavour, the SRC remained a guiding and pivotal engine for growth. Though many other institutions like Gandhidham

Land Authority, Kandla Free Trade Zone, Gandhidham Nagar Palika, and Kandla Port Authorities have also played significant roles.

Amidst all of these developments, the role of the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation needs to be briefly elaborated.

As per the directors report on the year ending 31st March 1955, the Corporation had accumulated losses of Rs. 128661/-. However, during that year, the Corporation had a meagre profit of Rs. 33,524/- thus reducing the accumulated loss to Rs. 95,137/-. Out of a total of 10,000 shares, 6023 were sold and the balance of 3977 shares still remained to be sold. Even the requisite call for money was not forthcoming. The reason for this is explained in the report.

‘Due to the stalemate over the question of the allotments of plots, there had been no turnover in the land department. This question now having been settled along with revising the lease, the land department has already started functioning more actively so that some income could start coming in. The lease deed was approved by the general body of the shareholders at their meeting held on 17 September 1955 and was executed on 28 November 1955. . . The delay in the allotment of units of the land to shareholders continued to be a serious problem in the matter of rehabilitation.’

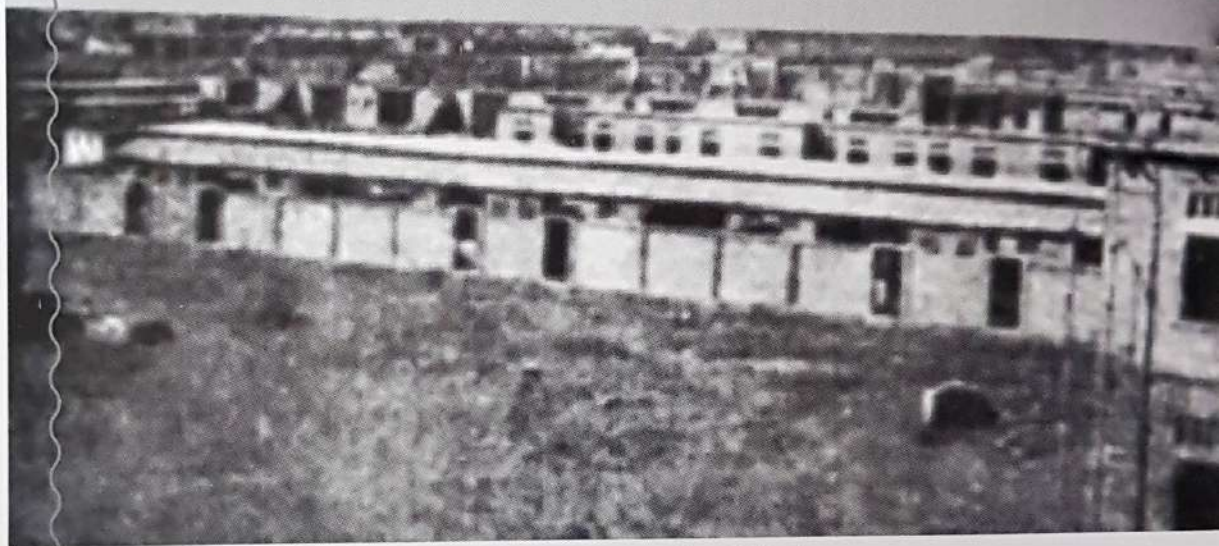
At that time, one of the partners of the McKenzie’s, namely, Henrich Butzer (India) which had been contracted to build the Kandla Port, withdrew, and the corporation increased its holdings in the company to the extent of 50%. The name of the company was changed to M/s Sindhu-Hochtif –Buzzer (India) Ltd. Meanwhile, the Minister of Transport and Railways declared Kandla as India’s sixth major port. The Bunder was declared open by the Development Commissioner, Kandla on 29th June 1955. The above factors were impetuous to growth which has been reflected in the next year’s report of 31st March 1956. In the year 1955-56, the corporation showed a surplus of Rs. 2,93,563-13-0.



Railway Office (Then)

¹⁵*This reflects Rupees, annas and paise of that time*

Even after making a contingency fund of Rs. 17,070-13-0 and wiping out an accumulated deficit, a net profit of Rs. 1,81,3569-2 was registered and a sum of Rs. 8, 84,010-0-0 was accrued in the land department. Even at this stage, the township did not have a statutory body like a municipality to look after the maintenance of the township, so it was being looked after by a body which was indigenously created by Bhai Pratap and named as 'SAMITI' instead of Municipality. Of course, it did not have its own funds and had to rely on the financial support of SRC. At that time, according to report the population had reached 40,000. In this period the government loan had also considerably reduced.



One Room Tenements (in rows of ten) (Then)

A significant event that happened that year, was a short visit by the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, who appreciated the efforts of the Corporation for the rehabilitation of refugees and creation of a new township for them. At that time, the aerodrome near Adipur was also being constructed to provide connectivity by air. It appeared that surmounting all the impediments, Gandhidham - Adipur were set for a big leap forward.

Meanwhile, the eagerly awaited residential and commercial allotments started during the year 1957. The residential ward nos. 2-B and 12-B and C and commercial wards 2B, 3B, 4A, and B were allotted at Sardar Nagar (Gandhidham). Two berths had already been constructed at Kandla Port, while the lay out plans for other areas were under preparation.



Two room houses (Then)

At the same time, The Gandhidham Development authority was constituted by the Bombay legislature. The purpose of constituting this additional authority was to ensure that the future growth of the twin townships proceeded along the planned lines.

The decision led to setting up a Borough municipality, which was also taken during this period. (Report of 1958 is not available in records)

The net surplus left at the end of the year of 1959 was Rs. 4,40,516/-. While, in the land department, a total of 3356 plots worth about Rs. 83.5 lakhs were demarcated and 1030 plots worth Rs. 30.14 lakhs were allotted. At the same time, due to an announcement made by the government regarding the allotment of Commercial and Industrial plots at the adjoining sites, as those held by the corporation, their sale was considerably affected in terms of competitive advantage.

The Government was approached to remove this irritant. As stated earlier, the Gandhidham Development Authority had been constituted by the bill of the Bombay legislature in the previous year. The Corporation and Development Commissioner's office appointed a common architect for the purpose of planning residential and other buildings, to avoid duplication and delay in the work. The civic services previously rendered by the corporation were transferred to the Borough Municipality which was constituted on 1st April 1959.



Two Room 'H' type single storied (four in a block) (Then)

The work on the national highway, linking Ahmedabad — Gandhidham and the work of connecting Ahmedabad on the Broad Gauge Railway line had commenced by then.

However, this year under review, saw unfortunate events leading to a change in the management, which owed to a pending litigation against the ex-managing director of the corporation. It is perhaps due to these circumstances that the role of the chairman of the corporation became pivotal whereas, earlier it was the managing director who effectively held the reigns of the corporation.

In the report of 1961, the corporation continued to show increased profits. In this year, due to the adjustments of the compensation refugees out of the total loan of 1.5 crores taken from the Central Government, Rs. 1.28 crores had been adjusted in addition to the payment of Rs. 9 lakhs in cash and Rs. 17 lakhs towards the accumulated interest, had been paid.

The price of the plots offered by the corporation and Kandla Port Trust had been brought on par, therefore around 88 plots valued at Rs. 4.4 lakhs had been sold to the share holders. Thus, the activity of the land department which once lay dormant had been revived. Plans of 3735 residential plots and 395 plots were submitted to the Development Commissioner for the final approval.

The construction of Bhavnagar Port, which was undertaken by the Corporation had been completed. The hospital building was also completed while, the extension work of the Kandla Port was going at a strong pace.

During the year ending 1961, the number of staff was cut-down thus affecting the savings by about Rs. 2 lakhs. The details of the profit and loss account of all the 12 activities running under the auspices of the corporation were shared with the share holders. In which, it was shown that while 8 ventures were running under a nominal loss, the rest were making good profit.

As a result of the amendments to the Companies Act, the subsidiary of the Corporation of Sindhu-Hochtiefs had become a Public Limited Company, however, the original sponsors and corporation, did not wish to become a Public Limited Company.

Therefore, it was decided to wind-up the said company and no new works were sought for them. The work on rail connectivity, expansion of Kandla port and Ahmadabad- Gandhidham Highway was progressing satisfactorily.

The Corporation had now accumulated a surplus of Rs. 6,16,750/-.

It was at this juncture that the board had appointed a sub-committee to examine the possibility of starting some industry in the growing township with a view to augment its income and provide employment opportunities.

Thus, a mechanical workshop to meet the growing needs of the township was sought to be established. During this period, Mr R.G. Abhi was appointed as the Chairman of the Board of the Directors of SRC. During the year 1962, salaries and wages were further reduced affecting the savings of Rs.4339 per month, given to the corporation.

In this year, a dividend of Rs. 10/- was declared on the fully paid up share, while further measures were taken to increase the efficiency of the corporation.

The Sheet Metal Works which had been continuously incurring losses was closed, while, the Ice factory and Usha Talkies were also given on lease. The Gandhidham Hotel was given an annual Royalty of Rs. 7,400/-.

The entire government loan had been repaid and after adjustments, the only debt that remained to be discharged was at Rs. 1.23 lakhs out of the total loan amount of Rs. 1.2 crores.

But, during this period, the demand for the plots slackened and only 25 plots valued at Rs. 1,05,84/- had been sold that year. The construction of 5 berths at Kandla port had been completed. At this time, steps were being taken to shift main office from Bombay to Adipur. The corporation had obtained a licence to establish new Industrial unit thus a company 'Gandhidham Spinning and Manufacturing Co. Ltd' was proposed to be established at Adipur, with an authorized capital of Rs. 1 crore.

In the year 1963, the office of SRC was shifted to Adipur from Bombay. The Corporation had declared a dividend of Rs. 15 per fully paid up share. The loan amount from the Central Government stood only at Rs. 85,913 which was to be adjusted. The work of the construction of the Kandala Port, as contracted by the Corporation with Sindhu Hochtif (India) Ltd., had been completed.

In this respect the total surplus with the corporation was Rs. 32,37,621/- which was converted into a General Reserve.

During this period, the Gujarat Government through Gujarat Electricity Board took over 11 KV lines and three oil installations from the SRC at Rs. 2.49 lakhs, which against the original cost of Rs. 3.5 Lakhs and balance was computed to be depreciation.

The work on the Gandhidham Spinning and Manufacturing Co. Ltd continued apace, and the new Salt works had been set up in Gandhidham. While the Government of India decided to introduce a 'Free Trade zone.'

During the year 1964, the stock of the housing stood at Rs. 22,87,869/- against the Rs. 20,63,267/- value from the previous year. The establishment expenses continued to be curtailed. The dispute of the corporation with the Kandla Workers Union for arbitration was unanimously referred to Bhai Pratap as the sole arbitrator.

Gandhidham Spinning and Manufacturing Co. Ltd, was set to become operational. Mr Dharamsey Khatau and others were also sought, to give their advice and expert opinions for setting up the venture. The consideration of setting up a forged hand tool plant in collaboration with M/S Bridgeport Hardware Corporation of USA was still in the planning stage.

In place of Mr. R.G Abhi, Mr. Hotchand Advani, a prominent barrister was appointed as a Chairman of the Board of Directors. By 1965, the project of Gandhidham Spinning and Manufacturing Co. Ltd was almost completed.

During this period, the value of the shares of SRC showed a decline. The work of earmarking the plots and the connected infrastructure development continued. In view of the Companies Act 1956, the amendments to the Articles of Association of the Corporation were brought in conformity of the above Act.

It may be recalled here, that the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation had been incorporated on 26th January 1948, and therefore the amendments became necessary and mandatory.

In this manner, a significant milestone was achieved by the Corporation, which were fulfilling their obligation to construct a new township as well as the successful construction of the most

modern port in India! In this manner, it could be said that the original dream had been translated into reality and all things were set-on 'Auto Pilot' mode.

In this context, thereafter, it would not be necessary to dwell on the corporations' reports as a year-to-year basis, but only those reports that are proven to be a watershed in one way or the other.

By 1976, The Gandhidham Spinning and Manufacturing Mills, was beset with difficulties, as the country's textile industry was undergoing a phase of severe crisis. The Corporation had to advance their loan to an amount of Rs. 10,25,000/-, which made the corporation's grand total loan at about Rs. 43,52,516/-.

The corporation made a further concession of not charging the interest on the loan advanced that year. The payment of rent for the hire purchase scheme was also going at sluggish pace and zealous efforts had to be made for the recovery of the same. The bus service and Bessar plant continued to make a nominal profit during this period.

By this time, the corporation had allotted 1754 plots out of 3375 demarcated plots. The corporation and government were both very keen to see the commencement of the construction work on the allotted plots.

By the year 1980, the value of the share jumped up from Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 2000/- and the town had grown with many modern amenities and the demand for accommodation had picked up by then. For a number of years, the corporation had surrogated the role of the state to provide the necessary services and their maintenance to its citizens.

It was during this time that the corporation planned to build around 500-1000 houses for the weaker sections of the society and also for the middle class in wards 11-A, 11-B and 3-A.



Three room houses (two in a unit) (Then)

By the year 1990, no more plots remained to be allotted. At that time the city was attracting people from across the country and looking to the educational needs of various community plots to the Kutch Kelwani Mandal and Excelsior Education Society for the construction of St. Xavier's School were allotted.

At this stage, the co-operative Housing Society's continued to play their role. At this time 629 plots were allotted to 12 cooperative societies.

During this period, the Bessar plant had become a losing unit, with a loss of Rs. 4,48,699/-. A bus company was also running into losses, therefore it was decided to discontinue and dispose them off. Though it was decided to continue, the bus service was under pressure from the worker's union for a period of one year more.

During this period the M/S Reliance had taken an interest in the Gandhidham Spinning and Manufacturing Co. Ltd and shares were soon being offloaded.

By 1995, the situation arose when the Corporation, who had to resort to the lottery system for the allotment of the plots. This was done for all of the plots allotted in 1961, including the 69 industrial plots, 22 shopping plots and 52 commercial plots.

Office Building (Then)



Officers' Hostel (Then)

In this period, further plots were allotted for social and educational purposes, also since the demand for those services kept on increasing due to a spurt in the population. Lalaram Kelwani Mandal was given about 3 acres of land and the Divine Life society was given about 50 acres to increase its medical facilities.

The Adipur Youth Circle i.e. the Adipur Nav Javan Mandal was given .07 acres and the Shree Swami Narayan Temple was given 2.23 acres for school purposes. The Kutch Kalyan Sangh and Satsang Shiksha Parishad were also given land for educational purposes. A 25-acre sports complex was also allotted to Sports authority of Gujarat for a token consideration of Rs.1/- only.



Primary School Building (Then)

Consequently, during this period, the construction of 20 MIG Houses, 60 Ajanta houses and 14 bungalows were also a work-in-progress. At this point, the net profit for the year was about Rs. 15,67,587/-.

The Gandhidham Spinning & Manufacturing Company had been declared a 'SICK Unit' by the government and by that time the cost of the land had increased by a manifold. So, the Corporation stood to gain substantially by disposing off some and accordingly this decision was taken.

As backup investment contingencies, in case there were virgin shares held by the subscribers, a wide publicity campaign had been launched. This was a final opportunity given for the allotment of the plots which yielded good results according to a report ending on 31st March 2000. It was decided that thereafter no allotment would be made, thus the allotment projects had been completed by the year of 2000.

The Corporation continued with developmental activities with regards to infrastructure, i.e., laying of drainage water supply lines and making of roads. Some of the roads continued to be asphalted during this period hence an expenditure of Rs. 384.74 lakhs had been incurred on these activities.

During this period, after 128 houses were completed, further construction was underway for more houses and the allotment process for those houses had also commenced. Simultaneously, the beautification of the Gandhi Samadhi and Adisar Pond was also taken up as a Public Utility Project.

In the year 2005, the corporation declared 6% as the highest permissible dividend under the rules of incorporation. There were greater demands for residential accommodation, due to the growth of the township in various sectors. So, land was allotted to various co-operative Housing Societies and self-financing schemes were encouraged.

This resulted in the construction of 312 houses/tenements in the year 2000 alone!

The net profit of the corporation stood at a staggering figure of Rs. 4,94,36,512/-. The Corporation received Rs. 6.15 crores by the sale of Gandhidham Spinning & Manufacturing Co. Limited Assets.

Further calamities struck as one of the most devastating earthquakes in India's memory struck the Kutch region which wrought devastation and destruction all around, in the year 2001.

The rebuilding of the Kutch region demanded super human efforts. Once again, with determination, unyielding will-power, perseverance and hard work the miracles could be wrought. This applied to the Kandla Gandhidham and Adipur region, also threw up formidable challenges. The township also rose to the occasion and converted a calamity into an opportunity. In rehabilitation efforts, the Corporation generously granted land at a nominal rate to the Sadhu Vaswani Mission, Dubai Textile Merchants Trust and Jain Samiti for the rehabilitation of weaker sections of the society.

It also extended financial help to the victims of the earthquake disaster including a financial sum of Rs.10,000- 15,000/-.

In its bid to reconstruct the region and the Kandla Port, the State and Central governments announced a relief package as well as providing concessions to give the industry, commerce's and other activities there a lift and shift. This resulted in huge investment opportunities which were aptly seized.

گاندھي ڌام

سنڌين لاءِ نئون وطن

Gandhi- Dham



سنڌو ريسٽورنمينٽ ڪارپوريشن لميٽيڊ



The construction of the Sindhu Bhavan consisted community centres and a Bhai Pratap Memorial Club. The development of infrastructure has commenced and its maintenance remained high on the agenda of the corporation. Notwithstanding some instances, they even tended to the work which was supposed to be carried out by the Gandhidham Municipality.

Taking to the future, in their 2010 report, the corporation had also taken a forward looking and eco-friendly gesture of investing in alternate energy resources. The corporation had decided to invest Rs. 625 crore in the Wind Power Project of Suzlon Energy Ltd.

Now, a decade or more after, the towns of Gandhidham, Adipur and Kandla present an exemplary success story.

From the very inception, many respectable personalities had contributed to the growth of this unique township, which was envisioned by a single, inimitable individual by the name of Bhai Pratap. Those that were connected with the growth of this township from its infancy and brought this venture thus far also deserve mention.

Apart from Bhai Pratap and Acharya Kriplani, the initial team consisted of :

Nihchaldas Vazirani, Gobindram Hassaram, Purshotamsingh Bajaj, Bhawanjibhai of Kutch, and Premjibhai, who had migrated from Karachi with a vision to make good with the loss of the Karachi Port, by helping build the thriving port of Kandla into one of international importance and save the vast hinterland of India.

They all deserve a place in the memory of creating this unique township, which today is multi-ethnic and multi-religious in character and symbolises the true spirit of India without social, religious or caste based tensions.

It is indeed a City of the future of India!

Education Creates New Futures

"Jahaan jeeyu tahaan sikhu" meaning, "There is no end to learning, and that while one continues to live, one continues to learn." (Jhulelal.com)

In the grand scheme of things, even at its grimmest hour, the Sindhi community had realized that the future could be only secured through the education of the future generations.

The community immediately set about the task of resuming education wherever Sindhis settled. Education was the first priority after or rather along with food and shelter. As Bhai Pratap was undoubtedly an enlightened person; who else but he would give the utmost priority to setting up educational institutions.

He scouted for experienced and dedicated persons for this purpose and set his eyes on Krishna Bhambhani. She had worked on the national movement in Sindh and was attached to the educational institution in Sindh itself.

A special kind of relationship had developed between her and the national poet of the Sindh Hundraj Dukhayal. So, he was sent to persuade her to come to Adipur and take charge of the education. She remembers that she had reached the Kandla Port, which was only a small jetty at the time. Her ship could not even come directly to the Kandla Port, so she had to disembark from her ship onto a smaller boat to reach Kandla.

She said:

'It was Cheti Chand day sometime in March. As soon as she reached Adipur, after the celebrations, Bhai Pratap took her to the makeshift school where he handed over 13 children to her and told her that they were under her care. She collected them and started singing songs and nursery rhymes with them, as neither she nor the students had any books.'

Therefore, the foundation of 'Maitri Chain of Schools' was laid. Even at that time, it appears that the relationship between teacher and student morphs a friendship, although it is still considered a modern concept in today's world of academia.

It is obvious that apart from Bhai Gandhidham, Maitri Mandal also had the advantage of garnering the support and guidance of Hundraj Dukhayal. It was a vehicle devised to serve the educational

¹⁶ Maitri, which means 'friendship', was the name of the residence building of Bhai Pratap at Hyderabad Sind.



Maitri Maha Vidyalaya

and cultural needs of the rapidly emerging township. The institution fulfilled this role creditably.

At present, Mandal run four higher-secondary schools and taught the Science stream in English and Hindi. It also run four Primary schools, five Balmandirs, one children's doll-house, yoga mandir, gymnasium, t.N.R. public library and a reading room, Bewas Vani Mandir, Bhai Pratap Memorial, Dada Dukhayal Smarak and the Dada Dukhayal college of Education. It also runs Colleges of Arts, Science and Commerce besides Polytechnics. They are being run under the auspices of Gandhidham Collegiate Board formed in 1967.



Vidya Bhavan-A view of the school at Adipur

The education in the schools is imparted in Hindi, except for the 9th Grade subjects of Science and Math. For Sindhi students, the primary level classes are conducted in Sindhi using the Devnagiri script, while Sindhi is a compulsory subject for those from 5th grade onwards. However, classes for the nursery and pre-primary schools are also conducted in English.

These facilities were also available for many non-Sindhi students. Initially, the Polytechnic school started in 1962 and was named a Vocational Training Centre which ran classes for Mistry and overseer courses for a year.

Meanwhile, construction activities provided important career opportunities in this field during this time. Not long after, due to the untiring efforts of the late Hari 'Dilgir', a prominent Sindhi poet and renowned engineer, and Mr Premjibhai, a 2-year course and 3-year diploma course was also started.

Later on the responsibility of Higher education was supported by none other than, Kaka Pribhdas Tolani, as he was fondly called. In addition, separate educational institutions with the same ideals came into being to take Higher education in this township to greater heights. The teachers of the Mandal's schools had accolades at both National and State levels.

The Mandal had been running the following activities/institutions

Kum. Jethibhen Sipahimalani Adarsh Kanya Vidyalaya	Jaslok Adarsh Maha Vidyalaya
Kishinchand Shahani Adarsh Kanya Primary School	Shyamdas Mulchand Shroff Auditorium
Acharya J. B. Kripalani Kanya Primary School	Shyamdas Mulchand Shroff Boys Primary School
Kanya Maha Vidhyalaya	Kishinchand Shahani Maitri Maha Vidhyalaya
Vishnu Chulani Shishu Vihar	Parmeshwari M. Vaswani Doll House
Kala Hotchand Bal Mandir	Ishwaribai Jiwatram Buxani Mahila Swasth Jeevan Yoga Mandir
Krishna Dewandas Godhwani Adarsh Bal Mandir	Parvati Hasomal Bhiryani Bal Niketan
Durgashyam Bal Niketan	Narayan Rose Petal Nursery
Prof. N.R. Malkani Public Library and Reading room	



Kanya Maha Vidyalaya - A view of the school at Adipur



Gandhidham Collegiate Board-Tolani Group of Institutions

It was the year 1962...the foundation of the Township of Gandhidham Adipur and the ground base for meeting the cultural educational needs of the township had both been securely laid. The time had arrived when a greater need for Higher Education was acutely felt.

Maitri Mandal had already made some efforts in this direction, but to carry it further, the services and finances of another dedicated personality was required. It was at this time, that Hundraj Dukhayal and Hari Dilgir thought about their old associate in the freedom movement, Kaka Pribhdas Tolani, who had fared quite well from a financial point of view, through his shipping business since the time of the partition. During the freedom movement, while in British jail, they had seen him dreaming, that if he got the opportunity, he would devote all his wealth and energies towards the cause of education. They went to awaken his dream which lay dormant for nearly 30 years.

Once he was inspired and revived, he lived true to his dream and dedicated himself to the cause that was always dear to his heart. Today, the fruit of his efforts is visible for all to see and admire! Thus, in 1967 Gandhidham Collegiate Board came into existence.

This institute had very humble beginning. In the year 1962, the old Polytechnic building was subsequently shifted to ITI building near the Market.

Mr M.N. Tolani, an ex-Registrar of the Rajasthan University, was its first principal. It had just 19 students in the first batch 17 in the new pre-University class and two in the inter-class.

The polytechnic started with 9 faculty members. At this time, the institute did not get any financial assistance from any government agency. Therefore, financially it was in the dire straits.

However, it was at this juncture that Kaka Pribdas Tolani entered the scene in 1967 and was destined to bring about far reaching changes. He upgraded the Institute to a Polytechnic for Civil and Mechanical courses. The Science faculty was added in the year 1969 and the Tolani College Institutes started functioning in the new buildings equipped with all the required and modern facilities.

He was especially concerned about the education of girls. He was able to inspire many of his associates and thus started on the mission of turning Adipur into a University Town. He had the foresight and a clear vision. Accordingly, he soon embarked on making a Girls' hostel and college for home-sciences in the year 1984.

He believed, 'If you educate a girl, you educate an entire Family'. In the same year, he established the Tolani Institute of Pharmacy on the same campus. Educating the future generations was in fact his 'Sankalp' i.e. an article of faith.

In the last two decades of his life, Kaka became visually challenged. Yet, he spread the light of education to more than 7000 students, especially from Western Kutch, covering 5 Talukas out of 10, such as Rapar, Bhachau, Anjar, Gandhidham and Mundra.

Gandhidham Polytechnic-Tolani Foundation





Maha Laxmi Hospital being run by Rotary club

Many new branches of education were made available to students with the passage of time and as the need arose. The courses for computer-aided costume designing, management and law faculties have now been added. Many students of this institution have done them proud by securing positions among the top-ten ranks in the entire state of Gujarat.

As it often happens with the passing away of a leading spirit behind any institution, things start to stagnate and ultimately wither away. In 1988, after the demise of Kaka such a situation stared at this institution in the face. But fortunately, this was not to be.

It was at this critical juncture that the vacuum was filled by none other than the daughter of Kaka. Mrs Jamvanti Kanal, the eldest daughter of Kaka, was passed the flaming baton and she took it with all her courage and dedication. Under her stewardship, the college added many new faculties to its already manifold existing institutions.

During this period Tolani Institute of Management Studies was set up in 1995. It was an institute which offered post-graduate diplomas in management studies, which now boasts good campus placements at leading companies across India.

New buildings were constructed for Tolani Institute of Pharmacy, new hostels for boys and girls, a Learning Resource Centre (under the World Bank Scheme) Water Harvesting Project, Post-Graduate Centre for Arts and Science Colleges, Professional courses like CA, ICWA, Open University(IGNOU) and the Dr. Ambedkar Centre are some are achievements of this period.

This really gave it a character of a full-fledged university that Kaka had visualized in his life time.

However, just when everything appeared to be a 'dream come true', the devastating earthquake of 2001, proved to be so destructive that it razed down the edifice he so assiduously built. For a while, it appeared that everything had crumbled, yet by a dint of sheer will-power, the institute rose like a phoenix from the ruins.

At this juncture, the youngest daughter of Kaka, Mrs Anjana Hazari, who had settled in the US for thirty-years, left everything to be with her sister and stand shoulder-to-shoulder to give her and the institute a new source of energy and support.

With her strong moral support, the institution weathered the crisis. After the death of her sister in May 2004, Mrs Anjana Hazari continued to keep the flame of the institution burning brightly.

After the 2001 earthquake, many organizations like the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Times Foundation, Akhil Bharat Maheshwari Samaj and many others, contributed to rebuilding of the devastated institution.

At present, the institute is training students for all types of competitive examinations such as MAT, CAT, GMAT, GCET, TOFEL, PMT, JEE, AIEEE etc. This campus is spread over 43 acres and has a resource library worth about 65,000 books.

It would be apt to conclude the tale about this institution, with a quotation from its honourable founder, Kaka Pribhdas Tolani.

In his inaugural address for the celebration of the Tolani Commerce College in 1973, he said, 'We do not believe in haphazard planning or merely constructing half a dozen or dozen buildings to house the institutions. In fact, our aim is to make Adipur a centre of attraction in the field of higher education, with as many educational institutions as would, in due course, to establish a small university.'

So...the road that lies ahead is yet to move on...on...

Reverting back to the pioneering times, it may be recalled that the SRC gave priority to the establishment of educational institutes at Adipur, but some felt that in this effort the educational needs of the Gandhidham Township were being neglected and that vacuum needed to be filled.

At that time, a few youngsters, namely, Preetam Varuyani, Sugnomal, and Bhagwan Abhichandani, got together and started a school in Gandhidham.

Soon this school was taken over by the SRC.

All the above institutions were imparting Sindhi education in the Devnagiri script, but majority of the Sindhis all over India felt that it was unnatural and ill-adaptive to use the contemporary Sindhi language, and for historical reasons continued to impart education in the traditional Sindhi Arabic script.

The late Mr. Bhagwan Abhichandani also felt strongly about this issue and established the Dr. Choithram Gawain High School in Gandhidham while braving many difficulties and crossing many obstacles in his way with great determination.

In the mid-eighties, a band of dedicated writers, intellectuals, and educationists realized that to preserve the Sindhi language, literature and culture was possible only in Kutch as that was the natural land for Sindhis.

The language and literature or culture could not survive without a land compatible with its genius. With this end in view, The Indian Institute of Sindhology was established. It had a comprehensive and wide ranging vision and Sindhi education was a vital part of its vision — thus came bringing to existence, the Sadhu Hiranand Navalrai School.



An academy of the Indian Institute of Sindhology

The school was named after the pioneers of Sindhi education, which showed their commitment to their roots. It was a symbolic gesture, indeed. But, during this period, the society saw a paradigm shift in attitudes. While education was considered as a mission and a vehicle of social awareness before, it was now the market force that came to dominate every aspect of life.

Thus, it proved to be a challenging task to move against the contemporary stream of thought. The education of Sindhis was the sheer anchor of faith for them, which was the reason they had to face many challenges, which they faced courageously without faltering in their determination.

After a long struggle, it began showing results. Though this venture still needed to be nurtured with care, all the same, its impact was felt.

It was the 'ASSRO TRUST', which rendered important service in this sector. It was dedicated to the service of mentally challenged children. The managing trustee of this institution was, Ms. Tulsi P. Ananadani, who with a band of important social workers was giving selfless service.

Services Offered by this Institute included:

- Special education
- Skills-training
- Individual and family counselling
- Genetic counselling
- Medical services
- Speech, physical and occupational therapy
- Vocational guidance and counselling
- Individual and group activities
- Drama, music, yoga and recreational activities

In the year 1984–85, The Rotary Club, Gandhidham Chapter organized two medical camps in collaboration with Mata Lachmi Hospital of Sion, Mumbai,

Many children with hearing impairments were found in Kutch. In this way, through the efforts of Dr G.J. Khanchandani and with the support of Mata Lachhmi Trust, the 'Latchhmi Rotary School for the Hearing Impaired' was started.

At present there are about 62 schools in Adipur and Gandhidham to cater to the educational needs of a wide cross section of the society. They are listed by the Marwari Yuwa Manch.

CHAPTER 7

Hues of Humanity Knit Socio-Cultural Patterns

*"There are so many, who can believe only one thing at a time.
I am so made as to rejoice in the many and behold the beauty of the One in the many.
Hence, my natural affinity to many religions; in them all,
I see revelations of the One Spirit. And deep in my heart is the conviction that I am a
servant of all Prophets."
(Sadhu Vaswani from book 'I Am a Sindhi: The Glorious Sindhi Heritage /The Culture
and Folklore of Sind' by J. P. Vaswani)"*

In comparison to other cities and towns, Gandhidham to Adipur were quite recent in the timeline. Yet, astonishingly, within such a short time, they have emerged with distinctive socio-cultural features and institutions which all combine to give it a truly national character.

This is different from other regions, where there is preponderance for any one regional culture. However, this place could boast a Sindhi Youth Association just as much as a Bengali Association.

Residing at Gandhidham-Kandla, established for having a separate identity, an association was setup way back in 1952 and was later given a formal shape in 1975. Gujarati Samaj: Mr Praveenbhai of Gandhidham Studio, avers that it was Bhai Pratap who encouraged the Gujarati community members of the time to install 'Garbi' and celebrate Navratri. The Sindhi Nav-Jeevan Mandal was also established, while a Punjabi Sabha, Muslim Association named 'Anjuman' Malyali Association and many others also came into existence.



Entrance to Swami Lila Shah Ashram

In the initial years, when the city was under construction and it was meant to attract displaced persons from Sindh, at that time the Sindh Resettlement Corporation took the responsibility of meeting their socio-cultural needs.

Starting with the path of faith, Bhai Pratap established the first temple of Jhulelal at Adipur. He also established a unique Nat Mandir and invested the deity with yet another attribute of 'Nirvateshwar', to fill the despondent community with a faith that there was a God, especially to look after refugees thus offering them a much needed solace and hope for a bright future.

He brought the, Holy Guru Granth Sahib from his household, which was in the family possession for generations and installed it in the Guru Mandir. He created a nucleus for physical activities as well.

During the pre-partition of Sindh, the social life, activities and identities were organized along with the geographical parts of Sindh based on where a person hailed from. Similarly, the panchayats were also built along those lines, often on the basis of sub-identities of the communities were largely in the vogue. This practice continued in many parts of India including in Gandhidham-Adipur.

For example, the regional identities such as, Hyderbadi, Larkana, Sahiti, which were brought with the immigrants, were still strong.

However, with the passage of time they have been largely eroded and have become redundant for all practical purposes, although their remnants could be found in various places.

Moreover, it is noteworthy that the Gandhidham Sindhi Samaj had published a directory of Sindhi families residing at Gandhidham. This entailed the personal details of each family member of all the residing families with details such as, age, education, marital status, occupation addresses, both residential and business, and above all, their place of origin in Sindh. Overall, it encompassed about 1200 entries or more.

The picture has now changed considerably. Gandhidham can boast of a 'Ganesh Bhavan', with a one-of-a-kind auditorium in the entire district of Kutch, a 'Durga Bari', and Malyali Samaj, especially for celebrating festivals such as Navratri and Onam with its complete traditional gaiety and gusto. It also has organizations like Radha Swami Satsang, Sadhu Vaswani Mission, Satya Sai Institute and many more.



Interiors of Swami Lila Shah Ashram



Meanwhile, the Agrawal Samaj in Gandhidham was also rendering valuable services to the people of the city. It was established on 16th September 1972, when the members of Agarwal community in Gandhidham were a mere forty-six in number. Since then, the population of this community has increased to about 445 and most of them are engaged in business activities. They hold health camps and have donated an ambulance to the Eye Hospital. This Samaj also had its own bhawan and a housing colony.

They were now building a multi-speciality hospital, which would be of international standards and is expected to attract health tourists in large measures.

More so, Adipur and the Gandhidham town-ship were blessed by a saint like Swami Lilashah, who besides being a spiritual Guru, was also a great social reformer. He devoted most of his life fighting against the social menaces of ostentatious and expensive marriages as well as dowry that was to be given to the groom along with their daughters at the time of marriage.

He organised a group marriage ceremony, where many couples of lower, middle and economically weaker sections of the society could be united in holy matrimony without any burden of dowry and unnecessary expenses.

In this venture, many philanthropists came forward to lend them a helping hand and the couple was presented with a bag containing essential items to set up a new household.

The Samadhi of Swami Lilashah had become a place of pilgrimage and an annual fair was held where tens of thousands of devotees congregated from various parts of India and abroad.

After the passing away of the respective Swamiji, many additions had been made to his humble 'kutiya' for the benefits of his devotees. The affairs of the establishment were said to be handled by a trust, with the main trustee being, Mr Hemant Tolani.

When contacted about the information about the formal composition of the trust, he was quite reticent. He also did not disclose any information as to how the funds were channelized for the social work. He mainly disclosed information that the trust was now busy developing the Sant Lilashah's dilapidated ashram at Nainital.

Another significant institution to be mentioned would be the 'Indian Institute of Sindhology', which was established by some dedicated writers and scholars of the community in the year 1989. Apart from running the Sadhu Hiranand Navalrai School, it is engaged in the cause of preservation and continued survival of the Sindhi language, literature and culture.

Many literary and cultural events are organised by them, which have won international acclaim. The institution has one of the most, well-equipped libraries of Sindhi Books and has become a sought after reference resource centre for the scholars of Sindhi language in India. It published a prestigious literary magazine, called, 'Rachna'.

A unique venture undertaken by this institute was the construction of a residential colony for writers, artists and educationists, which was named as 'Maleer'.

Maleer symbolizes the 'native place', in the immortal 'Sur' of Shaha Abdul Latif which relates to the tale of Maleer. It embodies the pure sentiment of love for one's land. It is no wonder this small village can boast 4 Sahitya Akademi award winners in the same compound! In fact, the small town of Adipur also features 5 Sahitya Akademi award winners. It would be difficult to find so many important poets and writers, singers and educationists, in one compound anywhere else.

On an international level, Gandhidham and Adipur also sport some international service organizations, such as the Lions Club and Rotary Club, which are rendering a yeomen service to the community through various organizations.

The Rotary club chapter of Gandhidham was established in 1958. Even during the pioneering phase of the township itself, it had only 25 members and now it has more than a 100 fellow Rotarians.

In line with the international credo, this organization has also contributed to the social service sector in many important ways, and has also has risen to the occasion when such needs were felt.



Sadhu Bela Ashram

Apart from the usual ongoing projects, their main accomplishments may be cited as follows:

- During the China War in 1962–63, it took various steps to boost the morale of the Jawans and the Border Security Force.
 - Flood and cyclone relief was provided.
 - Constructed and dedicated a children's park named 'TOTS LOT' (Hathi Baug) under the leadership of Late Rtn Prof Hari Dayani.
 - Since 1975, it has been conducting many rural medical camps in nearby villages to benefit thousands in the remote areas.
 - Land was acquired in 1976–77 from the Kandla Port Authority, to construct own their community centre during the tenure of the chairman at the time, Mavji Sawla.
 - In 1979–80: Cancer detection camps were organised in collaboration with Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai. At Adipur, this camp was conducted with the help of a Divine Life Society.
 - In the years 1983–84: The foundation stone was laid for the Rotary Bhavan.
 - In the years 1984–85: In collaboration with Mata Lachhmi Hospital, Sion Mumbai, a school for hearing impaired children was also started.
 - In 1994: the construction work on the building for this school was started.
 - In 1989–90: A 'Physio-Therapy Centre' was established.
 - In 1998–99: 'J.V. Sethia Blood Bank Research and Diagnostic Centre' was set up.

¹⁸ Well known as Sindhi Poet, Hari 'Dilgir'

- In 1999–2000: 'Rotary Nagar' was constructed, consisting of low cost houses to accommodate people affected by the cyclone. In this venture the government of Gujarat also lent support.
- In the year 2002–2003: A reading room and library for the citizens of Gandhidham was provided.
- Around 80 Cataract operations were performed by Rtn Dr Sunil Masand.
- In 2003–2004: the Zonal Review Polio meet was organised.
- In 2004–2005: 100 Trees were planted at Sardar Sarovar Site.
- A school for the children of Salt workers was started at Jawharnagar Village.
- In 2006–2007: Rtn Mitesh Dharamsi Club joined with Jain Sewa Samiti and started a diagnostic centre with X-ray, sonography and laboratory.
- The Lions Club of Gandhidham was established on 28th June 1965 and got its charter from the Lions International on 9th January 1966.



*Gandhi Samadhi (After Rajghat at New Delhi
this is the only Samadhi of Gandhiji in India)*

At Gandhidham it has its own building off Tagore Road with a huge community centre, a large parking space and has built an impressive 'Lions Park'. It had a membership of over a hundred and was providing services to the community without any distinction of caste, colour and creed.

It has also added a Lioness club and Leo club in the orbit of its activities.

Some of the activities they render include:

- Tricycle distribution
- Eye-checkups and operation camps
- Lions' Hall since 1974-1975
- Sapling distribution
- Services of Shav Vahini
- Community bus stops
- Mobile garbage collection vans
- Refrigerated morgue
- 'Navratrai Mahoutsav' since 1988
- Eye donation
- Blood donation
- Provided dialysis machines to Jiwatram Mangnai Hospital in Adipur
- Walking sticks for the visually impaired

After the earthquake, it has provided shelters for 50 families with the help of Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF).

Apart from the health services offered by social organizations, there are quite a number of hospitals run for the benefit of the society by philanthropists along with many private hospital nursing homes and number of doctors in various disciplines.

A comprehensive list of various NGOs, schools and colleges, as given by Marwadi Yuva Manch, is under Appendix 6: Gandhidham NGOs, Appendix 7: List of Schools at Kandla Complex.

Thus, it is evident that within a short span of time, Gandhidham and Adipur have taken rapid strides in every direction and were emerging as a well-balanced society which in fact foreshadows their wellbeing for the future of India as well as its immense potential to become a model city for the rest of India.

CHAPTER 8

Building Life from Ground Up (Infrastructure of the Future)

"Jeko daadho so gaabo" which means, "He, who stands his ground, eventually wins." (Jhulelal.com)

It has already been stated that the twin township of Gandhidham and Adipur was conceived and planned to supplement the need to fulfil the vision of the Late Maharao Khangerji III who had built a rudimentary port at Kandla Creek, far back in 1930. His dream didn't realize one of element, which was that any thriving port city required a developed port. Traditionally, Kutch being a sparsely populated area, not many was willing to opt for this new venture. The partition of the country changed the situation dramatically and there was also a population which was desperately in search for accommodation, land and wanted to be settled somewhere.

On the top of it, the population spoke nearly the same language and shared the historical and cultural ties since time immemorial. Bhai Pratap seized this opportunity and with the blessings of the father of the nation and set on the mission of building a new township, for which Maharao very generously granted the required land without a second thought. Thus, from the very inception the growth of the new township and Kandla port were to be inexorably interlinked.

Though a small port already existed at Kandla, its growth is linked to the growth of the new township. Therefore, the growth story of the Kandla port forms the basic building blocks of Gandhidham and Adipur. The township could not exist without some institutions rendering civic services. Therefore, the story of the establishment of the Gandhidham Municipality is of basic nature and also constitutes a basic building block.

After New Delhi, Gandhidham and Adipur were the first planned cities in independent India. The Gandhidham Development Authority was established to ensure that the future growth is not vitiated and the city continues to grow on the planned lines. Thus, the authority so constituted, is one of the blocks of the foundation of the entire enterprise.

It has been mentioned that initially 15000 acres were granted to the Sindhu Rehabilitation Corporation by the Maharao of Kutch, during that time.

And what transpired later has already been dealt with before. It came to pass in the year 1955, that the SRC was given only 2600

acres of the land allotted on their 99 years lease and all the powers in respect of the said land were vested in the Kandla Port authority.

One of the conditions of the land lease was that, 'All approvals, consents, intimations, and notices will be given by a Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, in the Ministry of Surface Transport and all powers of the government under the revised lease may be exercised by the Development Commissioner of Kandla, the now Chairman Kandla Port Trust (C1.10)'.

All aspects, including access to the hinterland, which was lost due to the loss of the Karachi port to Pakistan, were to be restored. There were many other ports in Surashtra that were also in contention for being considered for the development.

Some of the factors that weighed in favour of Kandla were:

- Best situated geographical position to replace the Port of Karachi.
- Lesser distance between Kandla, Delhi and Hinterland compared to Karachi.
- Deep water sheltered harbour in close proximity to highland.
- Located about 5 miles from the entrance of the Kandla creek and sheltered from monsoon winds.
- Scanty rainfall and only occasional storms during the south west monsoons.
- Low cost of reclamation.
- Little dredging
- Considerably shorter railways lead to Delhi, Agra and destinations of hinterland.
- Vast land available for port and back up support activities.

Taking all these factors into consideration, the committee constituted for the purpose, after weighing the pros and cons arrived at the following conclusion vide its report submitted on 30th April 1948.

- (1) The need for the port is immediate and imperative.
- (2) The major Port should be located at Kandla.
- (3) All the ports of Kathiawar should be placed under one port commission.
- (4) Rail connectivity between Kandla and Hinterland should be provided.

The Indian Ports Act was made applicable to the Port of Kandla on

1st April 1950.

The foundation stone was laid by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in 1952 and then the Minister of Transport, Shri Lal Bhadur Shastri, declared it as a natural harbour.

The Port of Kandla was declared as a major port by the Government of India from 8th April 1955. In the year 1963, the Parliament of India enacted 'Major Port Trust Act' and the Kandla Port Trust Board was constituted on 29th February 1964.

The Union of India delivered the possession of the land admeasuring 344.4 square miles of submerged land of Kandla Port Authority. This land has been reclaimed periodically for the purpose of creating infrastructure as per the requirements of the development of the port.

The Kandla Port Trust has two types of classifications of land

- (i) land for the Gandhidham township
- (ii) land for Kandla

At present, Kandla had 12 cargo berths. The berths were a quay length of 2268 meters, out of which 1987 meters are in a straight line, while the remainder 281 meters were at an angle of 18 degrees.

- Six oil jetties.
- Two single point moorings installed at Vadinar with a handling capacity of 21 MMT, capable of catering to vassals of 300,000 DWT and of length of 355 meters.
- Total custom bonded port area inside the customs fencing was 183.3 hectares.
- One deep draft mooring and four moorings in the inner harbour area.
- Covered storage capacity of 2.63 lakh MT inside the port area for dry cargo.
- Open storage capacity of 16 lakh MT inside the port area for dry cargo.
- Modern-level buffing wharf cranes of up to 20 MT capacities.
- Seven weigh bridges from 40 MT capacities to 80 Mt capacities.
- 8 Tugs up to 3 tons bollard pull.
- 20 other crafts including launches, fire float, heave-up barrage, pilot launches, mooring launches, harbour tugs and oil cum debris recovery vessels.

Apart from its commercial activities, the Kandla Port had been

aware of its social obligations to its employees and society at large. In this connection water recharging schemes have been launched. The widening of the National highway No.8A, and tree plantation work in Gopalpuri were undertaken in a big way.

And on the educational infrastructure side, a school in Gopalpuri was also being run by the KPT. Rescue and reconstruction work was arranged due to the aftermath of the earthquake of 2001, the KTP organised the Kandla Earthquake Relief Fund and rendered services to those affected by initiating relief efforts in co-operation with other social service organizations. The KTP played a significant role in the restoration of water supply, clearing and repair of drainage works, repair of damaged roads, and development of green spaces repair and restoration of public institutions such as, Tolani Educational Institution, was wholly involved in many rehabilitation ventures.

The navy activities had plans already underway to set up a satellite port of Tekra near Tuna for handling Affirmax/Suezmax vessels which drought up to 17.5 meters. This facility will be developed in two phases, at the cost of Rs. 12000 million, with a handling capacity of 20 MMTPA to handle multifarious cargoes.

The work of the port authorities were an ongoing one at this point. The process of the maintenance and development was also ongoing and continued. By the time these figures emerged, quite significant milestones may have already been crossed.

It was a matter of constantly challenging the capacities of the organization and constantly changing the goal posts to go further and further ahead.

Kandla Special Economic Zone:

Kandla's Special Economic Zone (KSEZ), Asia's first export processing zone was set up in 1965. Actually, the Prime Minister of India then, Lal Bhadur Shastri, laid the base step for this on 7th March 1965. It is the largest among the seven zones set up in the country. Being 9 km away from Kandla Port, the zone was aimed to setup industrial units for export production/export trade.

Initially, the objective of the zone was to earn foreign exchange and generate employment in the industrially backward Kutch. Eventually EPZ (Export Processing Zones), EOU (Export Oriented Unit) and other SEZ schemes owed their inspiration from this Kandla experiment.

The zone had a total area of 700 acres out of which 620 acres had already been developed by the year 2003. It had a good infrastructure of roads and other amenities.

According to the export promotion council as per the figures of

2008, Rs. 40000 crores of SEZ exports were set to cross the mark of one trillion rupees. Thus, these units are legitimately referred to as growth engines of the Indian economy.

As far as the Kandla zone is concerned, exports had trebled by 2008. The FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) had doubled. The export growth was more than 38%. A wide range of products were being manufactured and exports which included a wide range of products from light and heavy engineering goods to drugs, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, toiletry products, body care products, toothpaste, readymade garments, sports goods, processed food and auto ancillaries etc.

The employment had increased to about 19000. With at least a 20% increase in the secondary and tertiary sectors in the economy, the employment was going to increase further with the passage of time. About 50 units were on the approved list which had an investment potential of 851 crores and export potential of 3493 crores.

The Export-Import Policy ensured smooth support services such as import-export clearances to the units in terms of central excise and notifications issued for the SEZ operations.

Development Commissioners had also been delegated with automatic approval powers and all approvals were issued in a time bound basis. The development commissioner had been assigned suitable staff for efficient discharge of his duties.

The zone administration, headed by the Development Commissioner, implemented incentive packages which were quite attractive as they included the following:

- No duties on imports from preferred sources, including procurement from the domestic market.
- Domestic market purchases were to be on par with exports and were eligible for DKB or DEPB or DFRC (Duty Free Replenishment Certificate).
- No central excise duties were to be made on goods procured from domestic market or goods produced in the zone.
- 5-year utilization period was to be issued for duty-free goods.
- No central sales tax.
- No Service tax.
- 'Writing-off', of unutilized export bills.
- Special Fiscal incentives to offshore banking units.
- Liberal external commercial borrowing terms



*Kandla Special
Economic Zone*

- A special corporate tax holiday

The State Government had also has offered many incentives, for example, an exemption of local sales tax or a 10 year exemption from electricity duty which was given as a single window clearance system.

As stated earlier, the performance of this enterprise had been more than satisfactory. In the year 2008-2009, the exports were about Rs.242038.18 lakhs, and one could look forward its expansion in future, which may prove to set an example for the rest of India.

Encouraged by the results, so far around 300 acres were achieved with additional land to be sought or acquired for further expansion activities.

Thus, the zone was destined for a significant growth in the near future.

Gandhidham Development Authority (GDA):

It was created in the year 1958, to prevent and control the haphazard development of the upcoming township. The area over which the control was to be exercised was about 13 miles from the Kandla Port and covered an area of 170 sq. miles (i.e. 108,800 acres).

In the last 50 years of its existence, the GDA had contributed tremendously towards the development and expansion of the Kandla Gandhidham complex according to proper planning mainly in the Master Plan area.

In the post-earthquake period, lot of development was taking place outside the Master Plan area, which was a challenge to the GDA. Accordingly, the GDA had declared a zoning for many areas outside the Master Plan.

The new town of Gandhidham was located in the direct vicinity of the major Port of Kandla. The master plan for the above was prepared by M/s Adams Howard and Greeley, American Town Planners who were under President Truman's Point Four Program. The planning had been based on the concept of the neighbourhood units and there were separate and distinct zones for the light and heavy industries, offices and businesses. The plan covered an area of 5600 acres and it was approved by the Government of India under the letter No. 3-PJI (4)/51 dated on 20th July 1951.

In between Gandhidham, the nearest town of Anjar and other villages there were vast agricultural lands, which had certain sale transactions that took place after the development started at Gandhidham. This is likely to cause haphazard construction of buildings and lopsided development of the township. It was,

therefore considered necessary to undertake the legislation for preventing and controlling this haphazard development. The bill was passed by the Bombay State Assembly in the year 1957.

The Authority was constituted by the State Government under their Resolution No.TPS-3858 (a) dated 8th August 1958 published in the Bombay Government Gazette part IVB, Extraordinary issue dated 11th August 1958. While the GDA was created on 08 August 1958.

The purpose of creating this act is reproduced below:

On the periphery of the area covered by the Master Plan, there were virgin and agricultural lands. Early in 1957, certain sole transactions were noticed in respect of these lands. An attempt to change the users of the agricultural land to non-agricultural for the erection of buildings, and to set up factories thereon, was also made. It was feared that these conditions might lead to haphazard construction of buildings and a lop-sided development of the township.

Gandhidham Nagar Palika:

Prior to the formation of Gandhidham Nagarpalika, in the early years of its foundation all the activities required to be done by the municipality were being discharged by a citizen's 'Samiti' created by Bhai Pratap under the auspices of the SRC.

All the necessary services were rendered by the 'Samiti' and maintenance works were also undertaken by them. Prior to that, in the year, it was brought a municipality.

Now, Gandhidham Nagar Palika looks after twin townships of Gandhidham as well as Adipur. It is mentioned in the work of the maintenance of the township that was taken over only in the year 1980 to 1985, very reluctantly from the SRC.

In its 'detailed project report' for the Sawrnim Jayanti- Chief Minister Urban Development Scheme, the following facts emerged.

The work of providing infrastructure facilities like water supply, sewage lines, roads, storm water drains etc, was executed by the SRC about 40-50 years ago. The entire system, due to an aging process had started to demand more maintenance efforts and costs, making the funds for such maintenance quite inadequate.

To maintain 325 kms of road and 50 kms of storm water drains required large funds which were not available with the municipality. Therefore, the poor civic services were obvious for all to see. This entire system of roads, water supply and storm water drainage had almost collapsed due to the earthquake of 2001.

This entire system was crying for a complete change. The Gujarat Government had awarded the work to be done, at a worth of



Sindhu Resettlement Corporations New office

Rs.10 crores and an additional Rs.6 crores through the Gujarat Urban Development authority.

Other purposes that they spent for included the gradation of the natural slope of the townships towards the sea and the highway passing through this area was constructed at a level which was higher than the internal roads by about 2.5 feet.

This resulted in water logging, therefore the asphalt roads had to be replaced by concrete rods. During the above referred, 'Swaran Jayanti' occasion, Gandhidham Nagarpalika was allotted Rs. 10 crores.

Hence, some of the projections were given as follows:

- 25% of the amount was to be sent to the slum improvement projects.
- The balance 75% i.e. Rs 7.5 crores were to be spent for the construction of the RCC roads in wards No's 1,2,3, of Adipur and in wards No's 5,7,8,10,11,12,13, of Gandhidham.
- Tar roads in ward No. 13 and from SDX 1 to 80 (North).

Road widening work of Gandhidham in ward No. 11 B to Gau Bhagat Shambu Maharan Road was done, while, other projects such as, electricity saving lights and paving some streets with tar were also undertaken. Some statues were also sought to be beautified.

But, all this was not going to be sufficient to bring the city to the expectations of creating a world class city, till a massive dose of money was injected. It was likely, that the multiplicity of agencies such as Kandla Port Trust, Gandhidham Development Authority, SRC and Gandhidham Nagar Palika, tend to pass on the buck and at some time tend to step on each others' toes. Therefore, with the passage of time and the experience gained in the interest of the growth of township, it had become essential to create an even playing field for all these agencies, with countervailing cheques and balances. The collection of 50% of difference in the original cost based on the now prevailing market price of the land, had become a contentious issue, which also needed to be resolved soon.

CHAPTER 9

Wheels of Fortune Turn from Industrial Power

"No man can attain to enlightenment by his own efforts. Enlightenment cometh to man by the grace of God. Strive for enlightenment – yes. But like the peasant who tills the soil and sows the seed – then turns to the heaven for chandi ka gola (the silver drops of rain)" (SadhuVaswani.org)

As mentioned earlier, in the initial years, Bhai Pratap had to grapple hard to come out of the catch-22 situation. Employment opportunities would attract a population and the population would create markets and further employment.

Slowly the situation changed and after a certain time, some important and big industries saw the advantage of being near the port and seized the opportunities that this virgin land had offered.

Thus, the establishment of various industries in this area gave a big boost to the development of this region. Therefore, it is essential to delve further into some of the core industries to illustrate how it actualized and contributed to the success story of these quaint towns.

A. Agriculture, Farming & Verdure

One of the pioneers in this respect was the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO). IFFCO had started its journey on 3rd November 1967 and stated its venture at Kandla in the year 1975. As far as Kandla was concerned, this company was now a youthful contributor to its development for 35 years.

IFFCO, Kandala



To keep with the pace of the increasing food production targets every year. The base of this venture had more than 38000 societies. It was meeting the increasing needs of fertilizers and in the year 2007, it produced 969 lakh metric tonnes NPK/DAP and 70 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizers (37.86 lakhs Metric Tonnes Urea and 32.26 lakh MT of N.P.K/DAP {Diammonium Phosphate}).

IFFCO in its vision of 2010, kept the following objectives prior:

- Annual turnover of Rs. 15000 crores.
- Diversification apart from the fertilizer sector, to give more benefits to its members.
- Backward integration was made to meet and feed stock requirements such as Phosphoric acid etc.
- Generation of Power
- Production and marketing of micronutritions, seeds, bio fertilizers, pesticides etc.
- Value addition to agriproducts and marketing
- Information Technology and its enabled services.
- Establishment of a retail chain in urban and semi-urban locations.
- Diversification into a new growth area such as mobile telephony and communication technology in rural areas.

When forming commercial connections, the IFCI was one of the major clients of the Kandla Port Trust and Western Railways for decades and it remained a significant growth engine for the area for more than 35 years.

It has proven to be a catalyst for the creation of employment in various sectors. It was not only in the economic field that IFFCO had contributed, but it had not lagged behind in its discharge of social responsibility, where its relevant contribution is evident.

On the ecological awareness front, it has planted more than 50,000 trees and plants at different locations which included 25000 trees in the IFFCO township of Udaynagar and 4000 trees along Tagore Road, (Gandhidham – Bhuj Road) in Gandhidham.

In 2004-20055, tree guards and saplings were distributed to Rambaug Civil Hospital and at Rambaug. The Green belt was developed at Rambaug Road.

The IFFCO had also provided sewage treated water for the development of greenery in the sectors 1, 2, 3, 4, at the citizens' council of Gandhidham.

The same facility had been provided at its housing colony at Udaynagar. It had also constructed a water recharging pond which helped in reducing salinity and improving the underground water table in the township and the surrounding areas.

Though it's IFCO Kisan Sewa Trust had collaborated with the Government of Gujarat to provide dwelling units, repair of houses, dispensaries, water tanks, bus stands etc. It had donated Rs. 10 lakhs for purchase of dialysis machines for the use of the Nephrology Department of Nirmala Hospital in Adipur, and donated Rs. 2 lakhs to the Divine life society for maintenance works.

Therefore, apart from being the backbone of the economic sector, the IFFCO had significantly contributed to the cultural and spiritual developments of its employees and society at large.

B. Timber Industry in Gandhidham - Kandla complex:



Timber logs at Kandla port.

Kutch had no forests yet. The Gandhidham- Kandla complex provided employment to more than 30,000 people to the wood and timber related industry.

In the year 1985, the Government of India accorded permission for the import of timber under the open licence category, as environmental concerns demanded that the cutting of trees in India had to be severely curtailed.

The first shipment after the announcement of the new import policy, in respect of timber, had arrived at Kandla port on an experimental basis measured about 7000 CBM from Malaysia. There had been no looking back since then.

In 1987, the 'Kandla Timber Association' was formed. Soon more than 300 saw mills operating in the region. Prior to 29th October 2002, 172 licences were issued for saw mills and about 20 licences for plywood/veneer units were issued by the Gujarat Government.

Supreme Court put an embargo of issuance for any more licences. A committee was formed to look into the entire matter. They empowered the committee at Delhi and after prolonged deliberations, the CBC directed the Forest Department of Gujarat state to issue some more licences for the units.

On this basis, the Government of Gujarat constituted a Special Imported Timber conversion zone which consisted 4 talukas, namely, Anjar, Bhachau, Gandhidham and Mundra.

Soon 110 more licences were issued and in the year 2007, 115 more applications were pending clearance. The Timber Industry in the region was gaining a fast pace.

From the time, the first experimental ship arrived with 7000 CBM, the end of 2008 the imports were expected to cross 30 lakh CBM. With the growth of domestic consumption going up, this industry had diversified its imports and now it imported from diverse sources such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Africa, New Zealand, Australia etc.

There was no doubt that this industry would go a long way and make goals into ever shifting new goalposts, and shall be a mainstry of employment opportunities for the greater population.

C. Salt Industry:

Salt is essential and so common that we normally take it for granted. It is also known as the sixth element of nature and one of the earliest minerals.

In a way India owes its freedom to the Dandi March of 1930, which was a well-known Salt Satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi.

In fact from the dawn of civilization, salt has been the key factor in economic, religious and political development. Salt has often been the subject of superstition, folklore and warfare, and it has even been used as a currency.

Salt is known for more than 14000 applications. Apart from food, the usefulness of salt is also in the manufacture of caustic soda and soda ash, which were the two basic chemicals for hosting of downstream chemicals. India is the third largest producer of salt in the world, after China and USA.

With a coastline of about 1600 kms, Gujarat holds the longest coastline in the country. The Tropic of Cancer passes through northern part of Gujarat where one of the largest districts of India,



Salt Pan

It was no surprise that the climate there was particularly favourable for salt production. Therefore the salt industry in Kutch was one of the biggest industries there. Gujarat produced about 75% of the total salt while the Kutch district contributed about 40% of Gujarat's total production.

The Free Development Zone had given an impetus growth to the salt industry in this region. Out of the total 543,990 acres of salt manufacturing area in the country, Kutch alone had about 45,719 acres, where salt was cultivated only in the 321,679 acres of the country.

The Government of India had launched a nationwide Iodine Deficiency Programme with a view to reduce IDD to less than 10% in 2010.

Gujarat played a key role in this national programme and as a result Kutch had iodine factories and refineries set up.

IOD plants:	88
Capacity :	17.92
Refineries:	9
Capacity:	22.66.

**The figures above are shown in lakh tonnes*

Gujarat contributed to about 64% of the total iodised salt and out of this, 41% was from Kutch itself. India had made a dent of the salt export in the world market and Kutch was playing a significant role. In 2006, out of the total exports of 18.74, the contribution in exports by Kutch was, 15.35 lakh tones. In 2005, out of the total exports of 38.04 lakh tonnes, Kutch accounted for 30.18 lakh tonnes.

Among the salt producing states in India, the quality of the salt production in Gujarat was well above the standards fixed under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act. (PFA) salt and that of Kutch, was superior in terms of sodium chloride and other soluble and insoluble impurities.

It could well be remarked that Kutch played an important role not only meeting domestic salt needs of the country, but also significantly contributing to its export quantities.

D. Welspun:



A view of the school at Adipur

Welspun is one of the fastest emerging Indian groups, with a turnover of more than 1.5 billion dollars a year. By this time, it might have crossed the 2 million dollar mark. Welspun India Ltd was one of the top 4 largest producers of terry towels in the world.

The company supplied home textile products to 12 retailers of the world and to fashion labels such as, Nautica, Ralph Lauren, Chaps, Wal-Mart, J.C. Penny, Bed, Bath and Beyond, IKEA, Sheridan, M&S, Debenhams etc.

Welspun has diversified into the field of manufacture of steel pipes and Welspun Gujarat Stahl Rohren Ltd had a capacity to make 1/2' to 100' diameter pipes and supplied these pipes for the world's deepest offshore applications in the US.

The company was also the first in the world to produce the highest recognized line pipe grade X80 and it has a creditable list of clients that are unmatched. It has set up a new plate mill facility at Anjar as well, for which the obvious facilities of Kandla port were being used for the operations.

Welspun was also a well-known name in the financial market as a leading lender and investor.

Some important points in Welspun's score card in 2006-2007 were:

Turn over:	Rs.42300 Million
Exports:	Rs.22450 Million.
Employee strength:	18000 (both direct and indirect)

E. Road Transport & Roads:



Transport & Roads (Now)

Kandla provided good road connectivity to the port and its city Gandhidham. It cannot be denied, that road transport had a big stake in the life of the nation, as it was the veins and arteries for any country to function.

The survival of the society in general and the business & industry in particular had a large dependence on transport. Everyday more than 4000 transport vehicles entered and went from Kandla Port, bearing the needed cargo into and from the hinterland. The road cargo was vital for the ports' survival.

The growth of Kandla port, IFFCO and KSEZ and other trades such as salt, timber, edible oil and other merchandise was brought

in and taken to the hinterland destination by road transport. This had proven to be a pivot on which much of the economy moved.

In the initial decades, the entire fleet consisted of more than 35000 vehicles which by now must have crossed the 50,000 mark. This sector alone would provide jobs to nearly a million people. The road transport handled almost all kinds of commodities and operated all over the country.

Road transport had been able to attract some of the high profit yielding commodities, which were earlier being carried by railways, like iron scrap, industrial salt, petroleum products, etc.

Due to competitive freight structures, this further ensured reliability and reduced transit time.

The main areas of operations included:

1. Internal movement inside the port
2. Movement between godowns located outside and inside the port.
3. Internal movements within the salt farms and from farmsite to the loading site, e.g. railway sidings etc.
4. Movement for PDS local and destinations across Gujarat.
5. Movement of lignite from Pandharo to cities across Gujarat.
6. Petroleum and edible oils.
7. Wood and Timber.

The commodities with a high takeoff could be identified as lignite, cement and clinkers, POL/chemicals, bauxite, timber logs and plywood etc.

This has led to establishment of ancillary industries, mainly around Bacchau and has given spurt to industries such as hotels, automobile workshops, and trading spareparts.

The process of upgrading the roads and highways was a continuous and on-going process, which also involved a significant participation of the labour force, apart from the use of modern earthmoving and road building machinery.

This led to an increase in the safety element and operational efficiency resulting in saving of precious fuel and providing a speedier transport.

As an ongoing process, with the passage of time, this sector was poised for significant growth. The tax collection also rose substantially.

F. Hospitality Industry:



Fun Food Hotel with all modern amenities at Gandhidham.

The Kandla Gandhidham-Adipur complex was a big centre for business in the entire Kutch district. The concentration of the commercial activities was therefore mainly confined to this area. The businessman and others associated with commercial activity from across the country and from overseas

needed a star hotel with modern facilities, which was available elsewhere to such people. This gave rise to hospitality industry.

Here hotels came up with the required comfort level and facilities such as, conference halls, part plots, business centre, and facilities for audio-video presentations and were to provide video conferencing facilities as well, in the near future.

Most of these hotels that came up in the Gandhidham-Kandla region had a 4-star and some 3-star standard, besides having a number of good hotels and guest houses providing necessary comfort and luxury. The number of rooms in the star-class hotels with air-conditioning etc. would have been more than 300.

The conference hall was up to the capacity of 150 persons, with all the requisite facilities available. Part plots where the guests of about 3-4 thousand, could be entertained were also available. In this regard, it would be pertinent to name a few selected venues, which had recently come up as hotels and resorts.



Grand Hotel At Gandhidham

- (A) **Sharma Resorts**, a 4-star hotel.
- (B) **Shiv Regency**, 3-star standard hotel.
- (C) **Madhubhan**, 3-star standard hotel.
- (D) **Holiday Village Resort**, with 3-star standards.
- (E) **Hotel Chandan Gokul and Natraj** also had 3-star facilities.

The basis of their service credo was a peculiar mix of Kutchi-Indian cultural forms.

G. Banking:

Gandhidham Co-operative Bank Ltd.



Gandhidham Co-operative Bank Ltd.

In the initial phase of establishing the Gandhidham Co-operative Bank, it has since then, continued to play an important role in the furtherance of the business industry and catered to the needs of the common population of the township. Now, it is running in the sixteenth year of its existence. All the while, it has been weathering vicissitudes from which this township has passed.

Looking at its performance report by end of the year 2010, one could be proud of its achievements. The bank registered a profit of Rs. 3.36 crore during the last year.

During the year, the share capital was added by Rs. 626,540/- thus aggregating to Rs. 50,052,050/- which was held by 9121 shareholders. The year saw a growth of 44% profit compared to the last year.

During the year the deposits increased by Rs. 19.78 crores, thus totalling to Rs. 145.41 crores. The bank had adopted various ways and explored the avenues for profitable investments of its assets. During the year, non-performing assets were nil but the total aggregated NAP (New Annualized Premium) remained at Rs. 505 lakhs.

As per the Reserve bank of India's directions, all the primary co-operative banks had to maintain a CRAR (Capital to Risk Assets Ratio) at 09% and this Bank had maintained this at 43.89%. The bank declared a dividend of 15%.

This Bank was poised to make headway in Technology Banking which would ensure better services for the depositors and other

²⁰ Before the deduction of the income tax

clients. The bank was engaged in the welfare activities for the benefit of its members as well as common citizens.

The medical aid and encouragement, as well as scholarships were provided to deserving students. The bank also continued to extend the help to social and religious institutions, thus staying dedicated to its social responsibilities.

The Gandhidham Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd.

During the 90s of the last century, in the wake of the globalization of the Indian economy, the need to cater to increasing banking facilities for the business community and industries was acutely felt.



Gandhidham Mercantile Cooperative Bank Ltd.

Responding to this crying need, the Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industries, took a lead to establish the Gandhidham Mercantile Cooperative Bank.

The late Mr. Bhomrajibhai Jagani, enlisted the co-operation of 15 of his friends and they as promoters, got this bank registered. The bank started its operations on 9th April 1995.

The bank was inaugurated by the former Chief Minister of Gujarat, Mr. Sureshchandra Mehta. Since then, the bank has the distinction of serving about 50,000 clients.

In the year end of 2007, the bank had already crossed deposits of Rs. 90 crores and advances of the Rs. 65 crore mark. With the paid-up capital of Rs. 10.51, the total reserves were above Rs. 15.63 crores.

The bank's CRAR had remained at 31.83% against 9% as required per norms set by the Reserve Bank of India. This bank was also taking care of its social responsibilities quite well to bring wealth and welfare to the weaker sections and to meet the needs of deserving social causes.

At present, all nationalized and most of the international banks were operating in this complex to cater to the commercial needs and requirements of common citizens.

In a nut shell, it could be surmised that this sector was one of the most advanced ones in the country.

Gandhidham Chamber Of Commerce & Industry:



President Mr. Nirmal Vasvani, Gandhidham, Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Welcoming Visiting Business Delegates

The Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industry also owes its reign in the initial phase of the founding of Gandhidham-Adipur – Kandla complex. In fact, it was a part of the vision of founder Bhai Pratap. Established in the year 1953, its creation involved the co-operation of various agencies e.g. Gandhidham Grain, Seeds & Oil Merchants Association, Indian Oil Corporation, Caltex and other companies which were then operating in the area.

Over a period, this organisation had rendered a remarkable assistance to the business community and had always remained dedicated to their social obligations and carried them out quite efficiently.

The Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce and Industry had come to be regarded as one of the most dynamic and proactive Chambers of Commerce, in the whole Gujarat State. It had promoted and represented collectively, for the common interests of business by becoming a partner of this area at all the levels. The great mercantile traditions of high standards and a positive attitude had been upheld and guarded zealously by this chamber. It had adapted itself to the evolving needs and changing patterns of commerce and industry in this long period.

It was well-poised to meet the post-globalization changes sweeping across the continents and created many mile stones in the sphere of

²¹ As the figures quoted are from 2007, by this time it was expected that the figures must have changed dramatically for the better.

social services and efforts to face the severe water crisis, by launching a scheme of 'Recharging Boofre Wells'.

The formation of KERF & Sankati Nivaran Society, its efforts in the cause for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the aftermath of the killer earthquake of 2001 cannot be adequately described. The contribution to the brave soldiers of the Kargil war was also very much appreciated.

In future it is set to play an exemplary role.



Showrooms of Luxury cars.

CHAPTER 10

Geology & Further Dreams into the Future

"Turt daan, Maha kalyaan and Turt kam maha punya", which means, "If you execute your duty promptly, it is equivalent to performing a good deed." (Jhulelal.com)

As individuals dream and plan for their future and future of their children, people as a nation also have a vision about the future of their country in a similar vein. It is natural for citizens to have some vision for the future of their own city.

This is more so in the case of Gandhidham, as it is a planned city from the very inception. From a wilderness, this area had bloomed into a vibrant city with various cultural hues and shades, to embody the essence of their Indian nationhood.

Therefore, it would be interesting to observe how the citizens of this city, which became a virtual financial capital of the entire district and region, visualized the growth trajectory for next 25 years.

Before the citizens could dare to dream and plan the future in tandem with the rest of the state, they began to realize that besides being just a dry desert alone, they resided upon a hidden treasure trove of natural resources which could pave new grounds for their future.

Satellite images have shown that the region of Sindh in Pakistan, of the Thar desert, had one of the largest coal deposits in the entire world. Since Rajasthan and Kutch desert formed a part of the same geological formations, this brought immense possibilities of finding similar resources there and making use of them.

For further verification of similar findings, we may need an image data analysis from space scientists, meanwhile we can list the resources already known.

Many different types of minerals were found in Kutch. It had deposits of Agate, Bauxite, Gypsum, Sandstone, China Clay, Silica Sand, Lignite, Limestone etc.

All these mineral resources were controlled by the Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation. So far, the activities of the state government that went in the direction of exploitation have been rather negligible, one of the reasons for this may be an old understanding of the strategic location of Kutch being a border region, but space age technology has changed all these concepts. Therefore, in a not so distant future, Kutch can see a tremendous surge in this developmental aspect.

Gandhidham being a financial capital of this region, it is bound to

immensely benefit from any economic development in Kutch. All these developments were ultimately bound to benefit Gandhidham, Adipur and Kandla in no mean measure.

Lignite:

Lignite is found in abundance in the Kutch region. It forms about 95% of the mineral resources of Kutch. It could be put to use as a fuel to tap as a energy source. It is a brown coloured substance found in the regions near Nakahtarna, Lakhpat and Mandvi.

The Kutch Thermal plant of 140 MV capacity, at Pandharo, is based on this mineral. It is expected that this will be only a pilot project and more such projects will soon be operational. Furthermore, this means that Kutch would have a greater potential of harnessing natural elements such as, sun, tidal waves, and wind to explore and exploit alternate energy resources such as, solar, wind and tidal energy.

Limestone:

Kutch had vast reserves of limestone which were large enough to meet the cement needs of the Middle-Eastern countries, which were furiously engaged in construction activities and thus it had a potential of increasing exports and even meeting the demands nationally. The Aanghi Industries had already established the cement plant, Abadasa Taluka, in the Kutch district.

The possibilities of using this national wealth for setting up Soda Ash plants could also hold lucrative prospects.

Bauxite:

Bauxite is also a metallic mineral. It contains 50% aluminium-oxide. The precious aluminium is extracted from this mineral ore. If a desalination plant is commissioned to solve the water problem of this region, convert the arid desert into an exemplary granary of India; and if an aluminium plant was set up, as has been done in Dubai, many additional benefits could be accrued. It is needless to emphasise that there are various uses to which aluminium could be put.

Bentonite:

The sodium based Bentonite has various applications. It is used in steel plants, oil exploration, medicines etc. The export of Bentonite from Kutch was more than 50 thousand MT per annum. Bentonite has an almost greenish colour and can also be found as a brown coloured mineral. It is found in Bachau, Rapar, Anjar, Bhuj Mandvi and some other areas as well. It is also known as a 'weathered basalt'. In Kutch two varieties are found, one is predominantly sodium and the other is predominantly calcium.

China Clay:

China clay is also called kaoline. It is mostly used in potteries and ceramics, but its other uses are in paper, paint and pharmaceutical industries. It is found in Bhuj, Lakhpat, and Rapar.

Gypsum:

Two types of Gypsum are found, one is marine and the other is mining gypsum. Gypsum is used in plaster of Paris, manufacturing paints, crayons, paper etc. It is also used as a natural fertilizer, surgical plaster, dental plaster and cement manufacturing plants.

Lime Stone:

Lime stone is found all over Kutch. It is specially found in abundance near Lakhpat and Abdasa Talukas. It has traditionally used for building purposes and it can also be used for cement and as a flux in the metallurgy industry, for manufacturing calcium carbide, and calcium cyanide etc.

Silica:

High-grade Silica sand and glass silica sand are found in Anjar. Silica is the mineral of the 21st century. It is found in many places in Kutch. This mineral resource has enough potential for the entire transformation of Kutch and Gujarat.

Ochre, Petroleum and Laterite are other minerals found in Kutch. Survey indicates petroleum reserves in the Abdasa taluka. While low grade Bauxite contains more iron and is called laterite. It is also used for cement manufacturing.

With such a vast range of minerals and natural resources, the future of Kutch can only be imagined! It needs meticulous time bound planning to unlock these resources for the benefit of the region and country as a whole. It is hoped that the people and government, in spirit of public & private partnerships, would come together to reap the benefits of this natural bounty sooner than later.

Travel & Tourism:

Besides these natural mineral resources, Kutch holds a lot of potential in the Tourism Sector as well. For example, there are only two salt deserts in the world and one of them is in Kutch, which during the winter season becomes like a solid ground and presents another worldly sight at night-time. Recently, the Government of Gujarat has woken up to this fact and in two years they had been organizing a 'Winter Desert festival', while showcasing the rich folk culture of the region. Ms.Subhadra Anand, had been pursuing her plan to make a futuristic Jhulelal Memorial or Temple Complex with all the modern attractions. With that project materialising, that would also considerably add to tourism pull of the region.

Academic Institutions & Fields:

Adipur could also boast good educational facilities by Tolani, Maitri and many other institutions. With the potential of becoming world class learning centres and attracting students from overseas, even particular avenues of distant education could be explored to enlist the services of the best teachers across the world to upgrade their institution.

Adipur can be converted into an educational city of International Standards with a reputation, as in olden times, it was enjoyed by Cambridge and Oxford and now it is being enjoyed by the Howard Institute worldwide.

Medical Wonders:

The existing eye hospital may be brought up to world-class speciality standards so it may enjoy a similar reputation in the international sphere as the Heart Hospital situated at the far South of India at Velore.

People, Places and Pursuits:

Kandla had already added two satellite ports, Tuna, and Vadivar, to decongest its activities. They are all set to expand further and the rudimentary township was to cater to the needs of these areas and come up so they would soon attract more of an incoming population. The need was to settle that population in a planned manner.

The Township of Adipur-Gandhidham was planned townships and it was necessary that the emerging new townships may be integrated with them. The aim should eventually lead them to be model, modern and futuristic towns that march towards metro political townships as an example for others to follow.

All these are not unrealistic aims and dreams to pursue and the township had enough potential for growth.

Most of the houses in Adipur had at least a one person who is settled abroad in faraway places such as, Dubai. Emigrants from Gandhidham and Adipur even celebrated 12th February as Gandhidham Day, every year and organized impressive meets and functions. This was started by Mr. Bhatia and was later taken up by Mr. Chetan. They had strong feelings towards their township and they will be more than willing to contribute their mite.

Such has been a tradition throughout the centuries and it will not fail this time.

It is really heartfelt to see the children of various schools celebrating 12th February as Gandhidham day. Thus, a feeling of belonging is inculcated in their childhood itself and brings a ray of hope.

SO, YES, WE MUST DARE TO DREAM BIG!

CHAPTER 11

Personalities that turned Dreams to Reality

"I must follow my people, for I am their leader" (Mahatma Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi: Quotes and Facts by Blago Kirov)

Hundraj Dukhayal



Abode of Hundraj Dukhyal now turned into a memorial as 'Dukhyal Daru'.

Hundraj Dukhayal was a person whose life and works adorn the annals of history. He was born as Hundraj, son to Lilram Manek at Larkana (Sindh) on 16th January 1910. At a tender age, he started composing devotional songs and by the age of 13, his first publication, 'Krishna Bhjnawali' was published.

He studied only up to 7th grade. And before anyone could realize, the Freedom Movement swept him off his feet and he found himself in the thick of the Freedom Struggle.

As a young, enthusiastic songster, he would move like a roving mistral of the Freedom Movement with his 'Khanjri' and sing multitudes of songs on freedom, wherever any public meeting of the congress was to be held. He put his whole being into his voice and his pen, which Movement. Thus, he came into contact with Mahatma Gandhi and many other prominent leaders of the movement.

He did not aspire for any post or position during that time or in Independent India. He was drawn towards constructive and social programmes of Gandhiji. Even in Sindh he started educating illiterate peasants (Haris) in his spare time.

His song 'Tuhinje Ait Jo Awaz', he described Gandhiji and his spinning wheel, which was a tune on everyone's lips in Prabaht Pheris, during the Freedom Movement.

He became such a popular singer, that a gramophone company recorded nearly 200 songs of his and they were sold like hot cakes. When he was forced to leave Sindh, he hid this 'treasure' in a wall of his house, replastered it with the thought of returning to retrieve it. With many others, he also believed that leaving Sindh was only

a temporary phase and he planned to come back to Sindh with Gandhiji.

When he met Gandhiji after the partition in Delhi, he instructed him to look after the needs of the displaced persons. In this way, he became co-worker with Bhai Pratap, who was busy building a very new township at Adipur and Gandhidham.

After the death of Gandhiji, he was very much disturbed and quite shaken. He wanted to identify himself more closely with the constructive work, left unfinished by Gandhiji. At that time, one of the ardent followers of Gandhiji was Acharya Vinobha Bhave who launched the 'Bhoodaan' movement, to bring about the non-violent revolution and eradicate the perils of poverty.

This movement was based on the concept of Gandhiji that the 'rich' are trustees of the wealth and property for the benefit of the disposed. They are not the owners of the property that they hold. They were to be persuaded to handover their lands willingly and voluntarily to poor landless peasants.

This found a much awaited echo in the heart of Dukhayal, and he pledged his life for working for this movement. Soon, many stale warts of the Congress joined this movement and 'Dukhayal' would follow Vinobhaji on his foot-march wherever the path took him.

A severe earthquake had then struck Anjar, a place very near to the upcoming town of Gandhidham and Adipur. Vinobhaji released his lifelong pledge with the words,

'Your own people need you more there and there is a need for constructive work there. Go back to your people and serve them.'

He returned to Gandhidham in the midst of his own people and continued to serve them till the last breath of his life. He was courageous and fearless for he did not ask any favour for himself. He was totally selfless. It is said that once he went to Bombay where the meetings of the directors of SRC were held. He was made to sit outside the cabin if directors for the entire day, while the meeting was going on inside as everyone had forgotten about him.

As the meeting ended, someone recalled that Dukhayal was sitting outside, all the while. He was ultimately called inside and the Managing Director asked him,

'So, you have come to ask for the plot of the school? Do not worry you will get it.'

He retorted, 'Plot? No, I do not have any children to be educated. I ask for the school for the students of the community residing in your town.'

This had a desired effect and eventually a school came up. He continued with his literary activities. He edited a paper called 'Dharti Mata', as a vehicle to propagate the ideals of the Bhoodaan movement.

The great educational institutions of Maitri Mandal and Tolani Trust who are doing a splendid job till today, all owe their inspiration and pioneering efforts to him.

He never sought any power, or recognition, but the work he did brought an unsought recognition. He was given the Padamshri award by the Government of India in the year 1984. For his literary works, he also won many accolades but he was the one who was untouched by all those prizes, because he truly had his feet on the ground, on the soil which he loved so much.



The Patron Saint of Gandhidham - Swami Lilashah



He was a verdant preacher of high calibre, born as Lilaram in Hyderabad District. At the young age of 10 years, he lost his parents and was brought up by his nephew. As per the practice prevalent then, he was assigned to look after the grain shop. He had no interest in worldly affairs as he was inclined to seek the 'TRUTH'.

He was made the gadisar of Bhagat Ratan Durbar, which he soon forsook to leave in search of that 'TRUTH'. He became a disciple of Vedanta Acharya Shri Kesharam.

After watching him in his spiritual growth, he called him 'Lilashah', a name which stuck to him for the rest of his life.

He left for Haridwar, visited Utter Kashi Kashmir and Tibet to pursue his quest on a mission in search of the vision he strived for. He meditated in the caves of the Himalayas to find an inner awakening. Though he renounced everything, he retained within himself a pure concern for others.

When he saw many of the pilgrims dying in attempt to cross the Ganges, he collected money from his followers and built three wooden bridges over the river to ensure their safety. This social concern was to be a hallmark for the rest of his life.

Though ascetic himself, he emerged as a powerful social reformer, who had a large number of people devoted to him, as a saint as well as a social reformer. He started teaching Yoga and started classes for women's education by teaching them to read Hindi, so that they could read scriptures firsthand and may not be deceived by charlatans who were masquerading as sanyasis.

He worked for Harijan uplift and got wells dug for them. He helped during famines and natural calamities without any distinctions of caste and creed. Like most of the countrymen, he was also influenced by the Freedom Movement and started wearing Khadi.

After the partition, he saw the suffering of the Sindhis and brought solace to them through various welfare activities and zealously preached social reforms particularly against the dowry system and ostentatious, expensive marriage ceremonies. Instead, he encouraged group marriages and sacred thread ceremonies, which are conducted till this day at his Kutiya at Adipur.



Swami Lilashah Residence

He visited many countries such as, Hongkong, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore etc. to preach his message to his followers. He established many institutions in India and abroad, but his main residence was at Kutiya at Gandhidham. The town he adopted as his hometown, after the partition of the country. It is this Kutiya that acts as the headquarter of all the activities of all other institutions that are monitored and guided.

A new Trust 'Gandhidham Collegiate Board' was formed to cater to the needs of the higher education in the Kutch region.

The science faculty was added in 1969. Kaka was not just passionate and dedicated to the cause of education, but he also inspired many others and created the team who shared his vision just as passionately.

He was an ardent advocate of Girls' Education, for he believed if you educate a girl you educate the entire family. In this way, the Girls' Hostel and college for Home science came into existence in 1984.

In the same year, the Tolani Institute of Pharmaceuticals was established. He was completely devoted to the cause of education and plunged into it. He realized that the medical facilities for eye ailments were quite rampant in the district of Kutch due to its natural environment. Therefore, he established the Tolani Eye Hospital and Research Centre in 1982. This hospital was his characteristic response to his personal disability of being totally visually impaired for the last 20 years of his life.

Later, he bequeathed this town as a sprawling bustling centre for Higher education, spread over 34 acres of land. He left in 1988, a legacy which has been nurtured by his able daughters till this day.

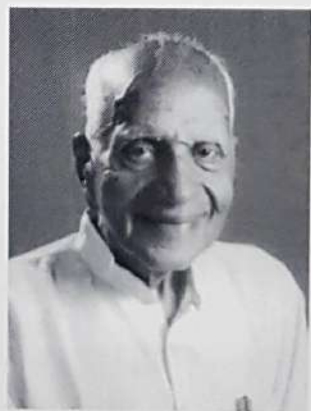
Hari 'Dilgir'

Hari 'Dilgir' was born on 15th June 1915 at Larkana, Sindh. His father's name was Gurdinomal Daryani. He stated writing poetry at an early age and was educated to work and eke out his living as an engineer.

A queer combination of different disciplines indeed, one calling was for a flight of imagination and the other demanding him to dig deep into the earth to lay the foundations of great edifices.

He accomplished both creditably and left Sindh more than a decade after the partition of the country. This was why he was spared from witnessing the grim tragedies that the entire community had to face immediately in the aftermath of the partition. He decided to make Gandhidham his hometown, whereas he continued to build dams and bridges in Sindh till he came to India.

In India, he was catapulted altogether into a different field. Teaching in an Engineering Polytechnic, for which he had no experience at all.



True to his sprit and determination, he excelled in that field as well. It was due to his and Shri Dukhayal's efforts that Kaka Pribhdas Tolani was persuaded to come to Adipur and take charge of the higher educational needs of the community.

The present position enjoyed by this institution is in fact due to his pioneering efforts.

Onto his more literary pursuits, his first book of poems 'Maak Fhura' (Dew Drops) was published along with the poems of another eminent Sindhi Poet, Narayan Shyam, in the year 1953, while he was already in Sindh. He has about 20 books to his credit and a collection of poems called, 'Pala Pala Jo Parlao' (Echo of every Movement).

He was awarded by the Sahitya Academy in the year 1979 and was Chairman of the Sindhi Academy of Gujarat for the period 1994-95.

He was not a poet with the stereotypical personality of being a recluse. In fact, he took his social responsibilities just as seriously. For one whole year, he was the Chairman of the Gandhidham Municipality in 1965, was connected with the Rotary Club of Gandhidham and was also its chairman a year.

He enriched the social, cultural and literary societies of Gandhidham. He was a chairman of the Sindhi Advisory Board of the Gujarat Sindhi Academy from 1994 to 95.

His son is also following in the footsteps of his worthy father and is associated with the Tolani Education Institutions of Higher Learning and with the SRC as a Director.

Krishna Bhambhani



Ms. Krishna Bhambhani was the reigning queen of Gandhidham, along with an ever-present smile on her face. Her dynamism and dedication to the cause of education still continues to inspire many souls. She was a young lady of 45 + 45 (91) years, who continued to bewitch the town. Her life was a saga of unique dedications which took more than one form.

At a very tender age, when she saw Hundraj Dukhayal singing his Kanjari songs of Freedom for the Bharat Mata she was completely overwhelmed. Initially, it may have been a simple

infatuation, but the deep commitment that they shared for the cause, led to a life-commitment. With a dedication to a vision they both cherished and lived to turn into a reality. That was just one element that seamlessly showed that they were made for each other.

They continued to live their life of togetherness, braving all social odds against any such arrangements which did not have any social sanctions. As Hundraj Dukhayal was already a married man and they could not living together were not allowed by social norms. She was brought to Gandhidham in the initial years by Dukhayal and was entrusted by Bhai Pratap to look after the educational needs of the growing township. She has remained true to her dedicated field of work, since then without any pause.

Now she heads the Maitri group of Educational Institutes and is also connected with institutions of higher education which are run by the Tolani Education Trust.

Krishna Bhambhani is the trustee of the Gandhidham Collegiate Board and the Tolani Foundation Gandhidham Polytechnic. She has been a teacher, Principal of The Gandhidham Maitri Mandal (GMM) schools and has spent all her life looking after educational matters.

Presently, she is the active President of GMM and has a wide range of interests in social and cultural issues concerning the Adipur-Gandhidham Township.

Due to her efforts, GMM has been able to start a college for teacher training i.e., Bachelors in Education which is conducted in Hindi, in the Adipur-Gandhidham township.

Anjana Hazari

Mrs. Anjana Hazari, the daughter of the revered Kaka Tolani, and currently the President of the Gandhidham Collegiate Board and Tolani Foundation, was born on 15th November 1932 at Larkana, Sindh, Pakistan.



After the Partition of India, in 1947, she came to Bombay, pursued her further studies and completed her Bachelor of Arts in 1953. In the days, when girls' education was considered secondary, her father inspired her to continue further studies. She then completed her Masters of Arts Sociology.

In 1957, she got married to Mr. Bulchand Hazari and then moved to U.S.A. in 1974. In 1980, the Hazari couple moved to Indonesia. While in Indonesia, Mrs. Anjana Hazari had an opportunity of working as an English teacher at a School for mentally challenged children.

In 2000, Mrs. Anjana Hazari returned to India and took up the work of the Gandhidham Collegiate Board and Tolani Foundation into her hands.

She spent a considerable amount of time in the community wing of the Tolani Foundation, Gandhidham Polytechnic by moving around in villages like Satapar, Nagalpar, Khambra, Ratnal, Varshamedi, Tuna, Khedoi etc. and spread the use of technology called 'Smokeless Chulah'.

Mrs. Anjana Hazari has now taken up the task of introducing new institutes in the Vidhya Mandir Campus. Recently, due to her efforts, the Tolani Institute for Excellence was established with the objective of providing training for professional courses to the students of Kutch. The Tolani Institute of Commerce was established as a self-financed English- medium college. And in June 2006, the Tolani Institute of Law was established to offer the Law degree courses.

Her ultimate aim is to keep the light of knowledge as bright as it was when her father first lit it, so that the rays of knowledge could illuminate and spread to all.

Nirmala Gajwani



Born to the Keswani family in Rohri, Sindh, on 28th December 1928, Dadi Nirmala Gajwani took her education up to the first year of Arts, but left studies to an early marriage to Dr. Hassanand Gajwani, an eye-specialist.

In 1960, Dadiji established the Mahila Gruh Udyog Co-operative Society at Bhuj, to impart training to women for the art of embroidery, sewing and handicrafts, to enable them to be their own breadwinners.

In 1967, Dadi Gajwani was elected onto the Gujarat Legislative Assembly when she took up various issues related to scarcity of water, education and medical facilities and set up the industry in the district.

Some are as follows:

- Construction of Tappar Dam
- IFFCO Project at Kandla
- Hospitals and Educational Institutes
- She was taken as a Board Member of the Gandhidham Collegiate

Board in 1973. In 1975, Dadiji received the Best Social Worker Award from the Central Social Welfare Board, the only person from Kutch to receive such an award. Dadiji established a Working Women Hostel with all the basic facilities, on a 2.0 acres land in Gandhidham. She also established the Sadhu Vaswani International School in 1966.

Dadiji has been actively associated with the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation since then and has been the chairperson of the Corporation for many years. She has been able to create a team of dedicated workers under her leadership and has taken the corporation to great heights. She has also been associated with the Gandhidham Collegiate Board as a Member on the Board of Trustees for more than 30 years. Even at this age of 78 years, Dadiji has been actively participating in the proceedings of the Trust for the cause of providing the best education facilities to the children of this growing township. Dadi Gajwani is also associated with the Divine Life Society, a leading medical Hospital in the twin township of Gandhidham-Adipur. Dadiji is growing in age but not in her thoughts and ideas. She is still full of energy and strength and still possesses the skill to undertake and accomplish the projects of development activities.

Bhai Pratap

As one gets down from a journey, from Mumbai to Gandhidham, before entering the city of Gandhidham, near the station, there is a statue of Vallabhbhai Patel, whose greets are bathed in the early morning glow. It is a real tribute to a person who made great contributions to the creation of this township.

As you move on to Tagore Road to Adipur and enter the environs of a sleepy township rearing to get up from its nocturnal slumber and come to grips with the new day's struggles, you see a freshly painted wall and you are informed that you are passing through Gandhi Samadhi, which is the only other second one in India, with the most famous one being at Rajghat at Delhi. What is an integral sight to see on one's itinerary to see the distinguished personage from all over the world, the one at Adipur seldom attracts any tourists.



Even the people outside this township are not even aware of its existence, but adjacent to the Gandhi Samadhi, nestled is an inconspicuous structure of the Samadhi of Bhai Pratap.

Inside is an imposing statue of Bhai Pratap, stoically gazing at the township in the morning mist, reflected in rainbow hues as if unravelling the dream vision of the township as conceived by him, and by some magic wand transforming it into a reality.

But, Bhai Pratap did not wield any magic wand, in fact it was his undying determination, all consuming passion and hard, hard work which went into making of this township. The account of which, this book amply bears.

Much has been written on Bhai Pratap, but he was truly a fabulous man. A man who left behind a trail in the popular memories and they burst forth as fables of vocal history. The coming and decision to build a township in this region itself has inspired various accounts.

Mr Shyam Hingorani, a senior government official who retired as a cabinet secretary and was editor of the official magazines and publications for a decade, writes,

‘Dr. Miss Meharbano, granddaughter of Dadabhoy Nawroji, the founder of Indian National Congress and medical practitioner at Bhuj in 1947, was an inspiring spirit behind Bhai Pratap’s vision of the Kandla Gandhidham Complex. Let us hear the story in Bhai’s own words: way back in 1947.’

‘I left by air, hurriedly from Karachi for Bombay via the Bhuj flight as that was the normal route. I was sitting morose and brooding upon the social future of the Sindhis, who were leaving haphazardly. A young and beautiful Parsi lady, Dr. Meharbhanu, a decedent of Dadabhoy Nawroji, who was sitting by my side looked curiously at me and asked about the reason. When I explained my predicament to her, she retorted, “you better get down here and now, at Bhuj-Kutch, it will be an ideal place for your brethren.” ’

In another version, the true to character of the fables is a lady persona, who is changed by Mr Lakhmi Khilani to Mrs. Sarabhai, perhaps the mother of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, a great atomic scientist.

An old timer I had spoken to recalls that, when this was only a labour camp the first marriage was solemnized between two workers where Bhai Pratap played the role of the father of a bride and as per custom, performed the rites of ‘Kanyadaan’. Bhai Pratap knew the importance of a barber, cobbler, washerman, and tailor and their importance were recognized as in Plato’s idea of the ‘Ideal State’.

A fellow barber, to whom I went for a haircut, said my father used to work for Bhai Pratap in Sindh. He narrated, ‘He sought him out

in India and brought him to Adipur and told him to ply his trade there. My father was totally at loss.

Hesitantly he asked Bhai, "But where is my shop? I should at least have a barber's chair!" Bhai told him, "Have patience. Everything will come here. As for your barber's chair, pick up four cement blocks and put them one on top of the other."

He called someone from the passers-by and they all arranged the blocks which became a sorry excuse but improvised chair. Bhai himself sat on the blocks and told my father to cut his hair in the open. He told me when people see me cutting my hair in this fashion, surely others will follow and you would get your clientele. Such was ingenuity of Bhai.'

I also met the son of the first cobbler in the town. Now the son himself has become old and does not make new shoes for the reason that now everyone is using artificial leather probably, don't know the difference between real leather and artificial leather.

Real leather is very costly and no one wants to pay for it. Why should I compromise with my vocation? Instead it is better to repair old shoes! At least I shall be spared the pain of lowering my standards. He had many tales of Bhai's fine taste in the matter of footwear, as if he was speaking about a benevolent ruler of the olden times.

Next, I visited a tailor's shop at Adipur. The descendants of the first tailor of Adipur had inherited the tales of the fond memories spoken of by their parents about Bhai Pratap. They said, 'Bhai Pratap was a multifaceted personality. He had all the qualities of an aristocrat of the bygone eras of landed gentry. He had a mind which was multi-disciplined as well as sharp, he had a heart which was sensitive to subtle nuances of cultural expression and it's complexities at the same time also bore an iron will. He was a business man normally considered 'bourgeoisie', but not typical of that class. He was aptly called 'A Prince Businessman.'

He was as adept at running a business and calculating costs, expenses and profits within seconds, at the same time he was also skilled in studying astronomy and measuring the distance between stars, or peeping into the past with his interest in History, Archaeology, Anthropology, or natural sciences such as Botany.'

Mr. Nirmal Vaswani, who was one of the few select people chosen to receive Bhai Pratap on his second homecoming, after being pardoned by the Governor of Maharashtra at the time, Mrs Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, had this to write,

'On entering Bhai's compartment I was struck by a serene face and flowing beard, which added the lustre to his personality.

He appeared to be a yogi or sanyasi of the yore. During the 45-minute journey from Bachau to Gandhidham, Bhai talked about so many things and enquired about as many things with a unique depth to him. I was too young to participate and was a mere listener and spectator.

But, one thing that registered in my mind was Bhai's enquiry from Mr. Sunderdas Chandnani who was a horticulture officer with the SRC. On the way, he asked about what plant it was that ran along the tracks of the train, pointing to 'Gando Baval' or the prosopis Juliflora. I distinctly remember Sunderdas fumbling and then Bhai narrated the whole story how and when Gando Baval, an Australian plant, entered India and Kutch. My latter extensive studies on the plant vindicated his information. On reaching Gandhidham, our eyes beheld a unique scene of an overwhelmed public who came to see and if possible approach Bhai.

In my 45 years of stay at Gandhidham, I have yet to see such a scenes at the Gandhidham railway station! All gates were thrown open and there was no question of any checking at the platform tickets. While Bhai was coming out of the gate at the station, an old man standing in the corner, was afraid of being shoved. Bhai spotted him, and thereafter he travelled with Bhai in the same open Jeep.

He was Nanabhai a friend of Bhai, who had travelled all the way from Hyderabad, Sindh, to bear witness to the occasion. Near Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's statue an old lady with something in her hand, was trying to approach the jeep but was not being allowed to come closer. Bhai stopped the cavalcade and asked the old lady to approach. She had brought some milk for Bhai, which he gladly accepted and drank. The gratitude on the old lady's face had to be seen to be believed.'

It took more than five hours for the welcome procession to reach from Gandhidham to Adipur, so profuse and spontaneous was the welcome that it accorded to a local hero who due to technical transgression of law had been 'found guilty and sentenced', but as a consequence of natural justice had been pardoned.

Soon after, he sought out Satish Rohra. Mr. Satish Rohra said 'he asked me about present activities. As he knew that I no longer served in the school of Maitri Mandal, he did not dwell on that subject. Instead he started discussing the script of Egypt in archaeological findings and possibilities of the Indus Valley script. He found the place to be too noisy and we retired to the residence of Mr. Dukhayal. At last, he said our conversation was not concluded and we shall meet again to discuss further.'

Thereafter, under the auspices of the Rotary Club, he delivered 4 lectures on Egyptology, which many would gather to eagerly listen

to as that provided them interesting information. Old timers would recall that he had a telescope and on a clear night, he would show them distant stars and constellations and would initiate them into the basics of astronomy. Mr. Dhirubhai of Raj Studio of Adipur, informed me that Bhai had a movie camera in those days. He would call his boss and be assisted on the editing table. He recalls that whenever he was in Adipur, he would visit the market and enquire about the current conditions and find out if they had any problems. He kept an open house where anyone could go to address any of their grievances or any demands!

It goes without saying that Bhai had a very dominating personality. His style of functioning was also moulded in the workings of the Sindhi mould. In which all powers are concentrated in the hands of the owner. In such a manner of working, it often happens that due to the briskness, the ego of someone is hurt. This consequence of the hurt ego led to a grave problem. An ordinary business practice which transgressed onto a thin line of the law, was used against him to award him an 'exemplary' punishment. On an occasion such as this, the forces were that were inimical to him always wanted to see to that.

In those difficult times, those who derived power from him, were their own creatures and they distanced themselves from him and left him to his fate, while some even gloated over his suffering. But, a proper case was made by an eminent lawyer, Mr. L. Mishra, an ex-Advocate of the General of Uttar Pradesh, prepared a case for his pardon, which was granted.

His youngest daughter Mrs. Aruna Jagtiani, had this to say about those times.

'He felt abandoned, but he did not harbour any bitterness. My mother knew no other resource other than prayer. At that time, when the advocate L. Mishra approached my father and told him that he had nothing to pay him with, advocate Mishra told him, "I am convinced that you are innocent and there has been a grave miscarriage of justice, therefore I will do your work free of cost. I only need a place to stay in Bombay till I work on your case." A house was provided for him and he came and stayed with his family for about three months. When the pardon was granted he went back to his place.'

She ended the conversation on very emotional vein and then continued to say, 'When the end was near he held my hand and said, "I have no wealth to bequeath to you I am going with a clear conscience and am freed from any blemish, I bequeath to you only the cleanliness of my soul.'

All I can say is, what a proud daughter!



*Therefore,
I stand before
his statue which
glistens in the
day light and
salute him,
for being a man
that dared to
dream and make
it happen.*

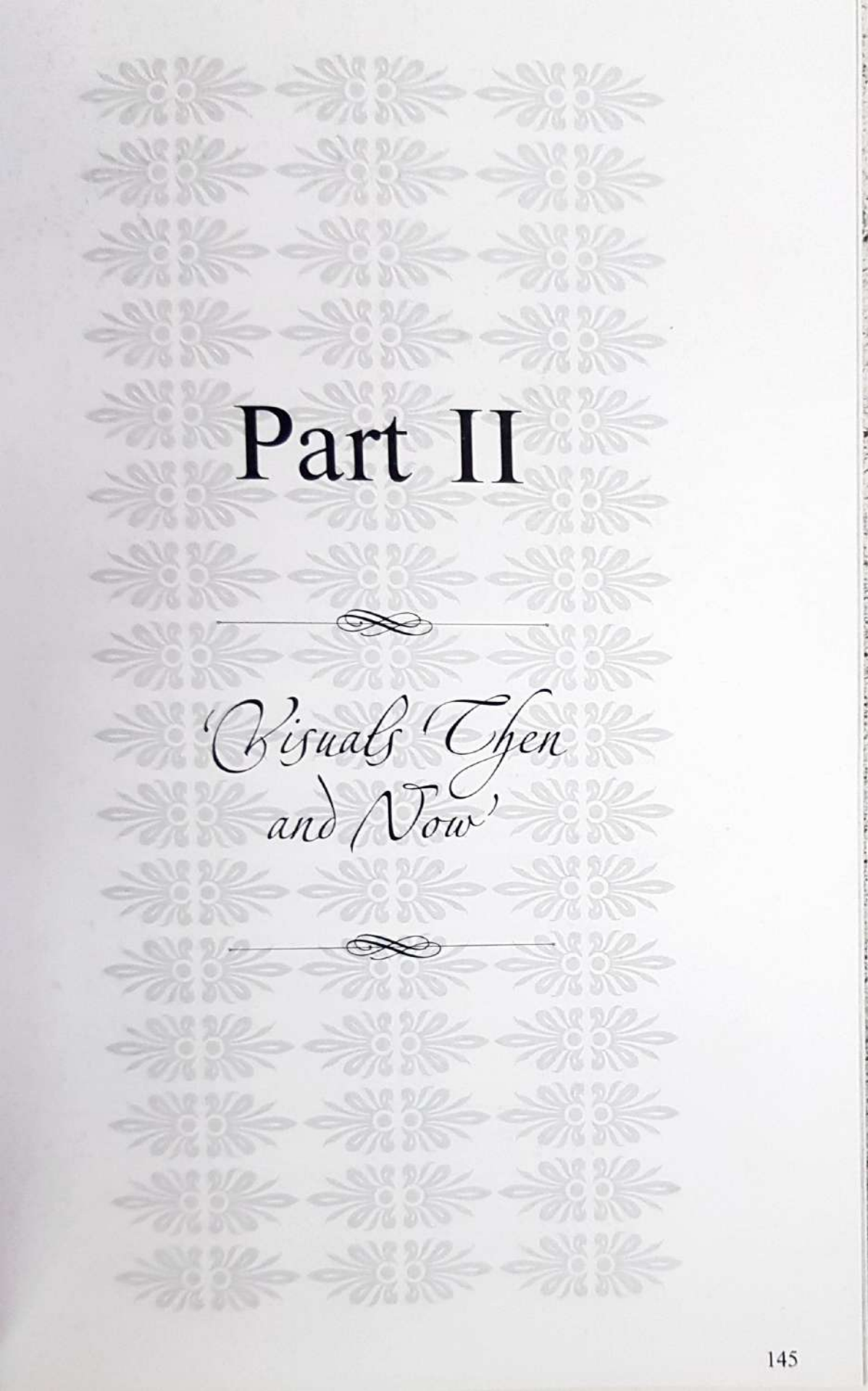
Bhai Pratap with Gandhiji



House of Bhai Pratap

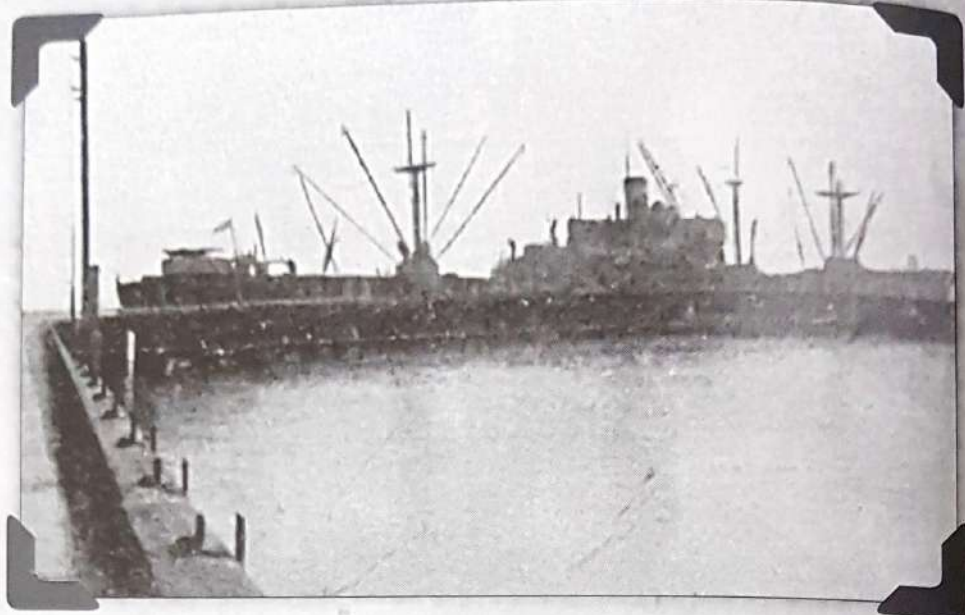


A memorial to Bhai Pratap



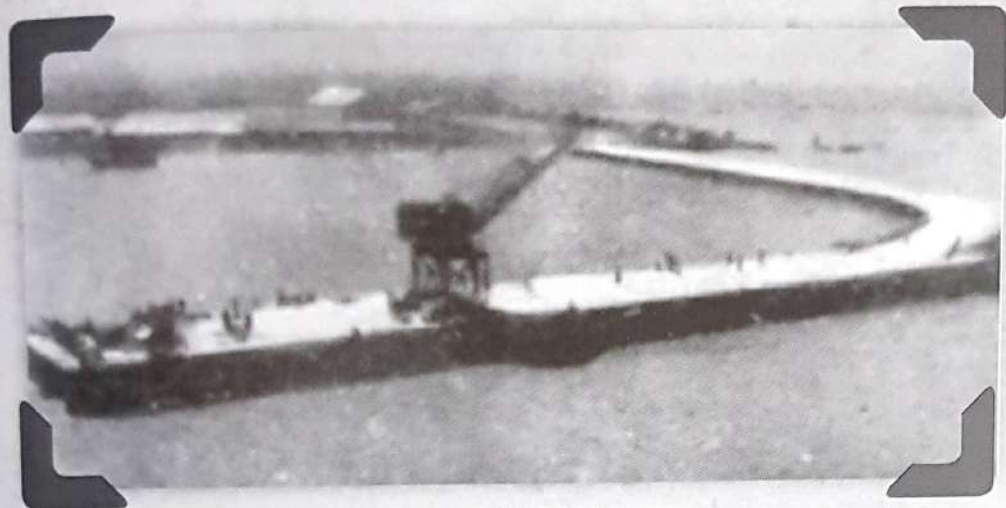
Part II

*'Visuals Then
and Now'*



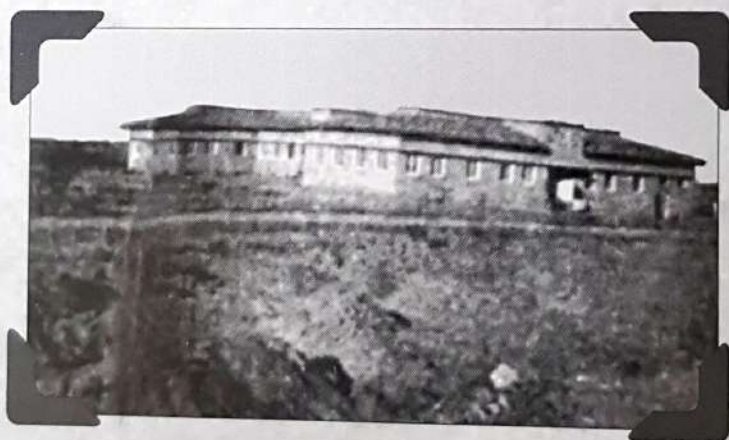
Kandla Port Yesterday And Today







*Guru Mandir Then
And Now*

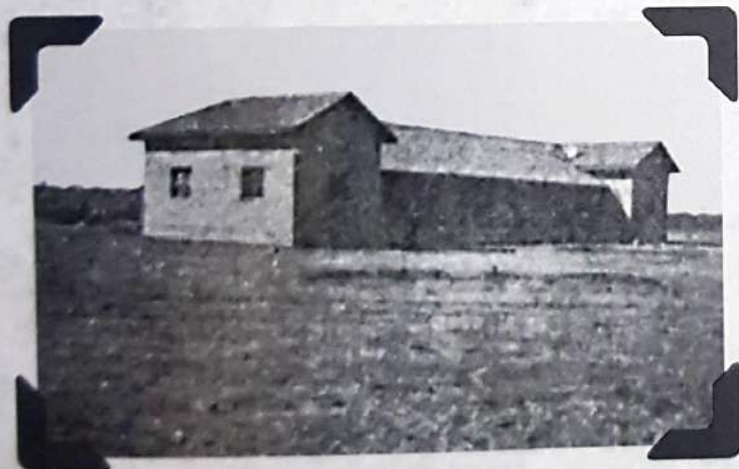


*Src Building Then
And Now*





*Shri Lal Sain Mandir
Then And Now*



*Primary School-
Yesterday*

*Delhi School
Building- Now*



Gandhidham Now





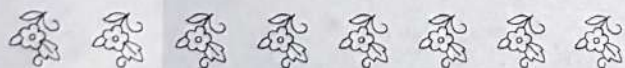




Green Gandhidham

These photographs of "Green Gandhidham" are taken from the many resorts that have come up near the townships of Gandhidam and Adipur, to dispel the popular perception that Gandhidam is just a desert, but not anymore.









آڪٽو مبر ۱۹۵۰

October 1950



سهيال ڪو

منگهارام - ن - ٿڌاڻي

شـري اجيت پرساد جين گانڌيڌام ۾

گانڌي ڌام ۾ گانڌي جينتي تي اُتساه ڀريا نظارا
ڊاڪٽر چوڻٿرام گدواڻي ۽ پارليا مينٽ ميمبر گانڌيڌام ۾

سنڌي جانيءَ جو اڳيون اوج ۽ هستي گانڌي ڌام
۾ ئي قائم رهي سگهندي.

گانڌي ڌام ۾ پاڻيءَ جي ٿڌجيءَ بابت اڻاڙيل موٽا ڊاڪٽر بي بنياد آهن.
ليکڪ: شري نهچلداس - سي - وريواڻي

گاندھي ڏام ۾ هفتي سڀا لاءِ ووڪيشنل

ٽريننگ سڀڻو ٻوڙيا

ٽن ۽ ڇهن مهينن جي سکيا وٺڻ بعد روزگار دلندو

سنڌي ڏان وٽن کي سڪائڻ ۽ قرضن ڏيڻ لاءِ اڳيل
(هونديج "نڪايل")

سنڌي ٻولي ڪيچ پوانٽ ڪانسواءِ ٻيو ڪٿي به

زندگي رهي نه سگهندي

سنڌي ۽ ڪيچي ٻوليون ديوناگري لباس ۾ هڪ ٿي وينديون

شخصي ورتو وساري نئين وطن اڏڻ لاءِ اڳيل

گاندھي ڏام ٽرسٽ سان ڪراچي جون سکون ٿيون لهن

سنڌين کي نڪتڻي ڇڏي گاندھي ڏام اڏڻ ۾ مدد ڪرڻ گهرجي

ليکڪ: - ڊاڪٽر مولچند - اي - سڪواڻي (احمد آباد)



New Sind, October 1950, Dr. Choithram Gidwani at Kandla Airport



*Pandit Nehru and the present Maharao of Kutch,
His Highness Madansingh Ji, at present
Indian Ambassador to Norway,
(This photograph was taken at Oslo in 1957)*

APPENDIX I:

Article of Popati Hiranandani on Bhai Pratap

Bhai Pratap

A Visionary for New Sind

Intensely an Indian and more so a Sindhi and that too a Sindhu-varki Bhaiband, Bhai Pratap Daldas was an era in himself with his oriental grandness, graceful traditions and Sindhi business man's magnificent living standard.

His commanding personality, with his piercing eyes, glistening forehead, broad shoulders and authoritative voice had an immediate effect on those who happened to see him. Tall and stately, he inspired awe and with a mischievous look in his eyes, he radiated wit and humour. When he lost the temper, silence fell all over and when he laughed even the walls resounded with his mirth and merriness.

Pratap belonged to a family known for its affluence, who owned jewellery that was disposed of by the Indian princes. His brother Bhai Narain was the man who established a perfumes factory in Paris the land of lavenders and perfumes. It was he who first brought a car in his home town, Hyderabad. Pratap was a man of taste, Maitri Bhavan his residence in Hyderabad Sind, had galleries and balconies like those of Moghul palace, Havan Kund like that of an ancient hermitage or Yagna Hall in the palace of a royal sage in the middle of the drawing room. It was decorated with temple bells, life size paintings, sculptures and statues dug out from the centuries old caves. A connoisseur of fine arts, he was the most cultured man of his times among his fellow businessmen.

The sudden death of his elder brother Narain, had an adverse effect on the academic pursuit of Pratap as he had to give up his studies at college and address all his energies to the sole concern of redeeming the family business to a fixed standard, making it one of the most prosperous firms - "M. Daldas & Sons", established as it was on the foreign soil. The fame he acquired at so early an age at twenty-five earned him the enviable epithet of the Merchant Prince.

His signal services as a patriot deserve a no less mention. Acharya Kripalani the Sindhi Cincinnatus has spoken about Pratap thus: "In his own way he did much in Sind to further the activities that came under Gandhiji's constructive programmes such as Harijan uplift, Hindhi prachar etc. He not only gave them financial support but brought good deal of enthusiastic personal participation into these activities. The real opportunity for taking part in politics came for him during 1942 - Quit India Movement. He was associated with a secret A.I.C.C. office which functioned mainly from Bombay. By his warm and enthusiastic support, not only did he help in raising Funds during those difficult days, but with a batch of his young and fashionable

friends, who never took part in politics and who would be least suspected by the police, he reached the literature and messages to the various state units. This in those days meant great risk for him and his companions."

All the luminaries of the National Movement horizon found a ready shelter in his house. He had the privilege and pleasure of housing as his guests noted political figures of yore like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad etc., whom he used to provide with funds, transport, volunteers, and other requisites. When Aruna Asif Ali and other revolutionaries had gone underground, it was he who hosted them. It was his idea to stamp "Quit India" words on one rupee notes and distribute those notes in order to make Indians aware of the Quit India Movement. Be it the tickets of the air flights or the food for the volunteers, he was ready and his benevolent hand turned unceasingly to make these available for the national leaders.

After the partition of the country, his empathetic heart leapt out to the cause of amelioration of the refugees uprooted from their settled life and he endeavoured to sooth their agonies in many ways. He used to donate two hundred blankets for the destitute women of kurla camp, refugees of akbar camp etc. He was the first who donated for the National College at Bandra, Bombay and for the "Hindustan" daily, yet another instance that lent proof of his large-heartedness.

The Sindhis were now uprooted and scattered throughout India this set him thinking of a homeland for them.

"He was greatly concerned about the future of the Sind-refugees and conceived of the plan of having if not a homeland, at least a hometown for the Sindhis at Kandla in Kutch and worked ceaselessly for the furtherance of this project", says Acharya Kripalani.

Pratap met the then Maharao of Kutch who was the descendant of a Jadeja Sindhi clan. The Maharaja of Kutch donated eighteen thousand acres of land which was nothing but a mere endless stretch of miles of terren, infested with snakes and scorpions. Not a tree was to be seen nor a well in the area for miles and miles together. Pratap lived in tents, invited german engineers, sat with architects, offered two annas for killing a scorpion and eight for killing a snake, arranged for the growing of trees on both sides of his proposed roads and made the government of India expedite the work of building Kandla Port. He laid stress on having an important port in the west of India after losing the port of Karachi to Pakistan due to the division of the country. Everybody was laughing at him but he was determined to lay the foundation of a new town.

Years of toil and hand work bore fruit and a town was built in the midst of desert sand. An airport, a railway station and a port were built and developed. A colony for the Harijans where they could

live free, cheap houses with a rent of Rs. 2, 8, and 17 for the poor refugees, temples in the midst of residential areas, houses with trees of fruits and vegetables in the backyard, arrangements for having their own cow or buffalo-every effort undertaken, venture some and foolhardy though it may seem at first sight- spoke volumes of his marked sense of dedication, which ultimately was brought to the stage of consummation.

But Alas! The petty politics and the jealousies! Gujratis were afraid that the ports of Gujarat will be left behind. Even Maharashtrians did not like the idea of building Kandla port with modern and advanced techniques thereby making Sindhis competent and efficient tradesmen. Hence restrictions were imposed on the development of the port and Kutch was merged in Gujarat. The possibility of Kutch blooming into an advanced and modern region was thwarted. The plan of the politicians successfully made the hope of Sindhis having their own home-town vanish into thin air. Sindhis who had settled in Kutch could not get the means of their livelihood and Bhai Pratap was trapped. He became the victim of politics.

It shocks one's sense of human love to record that such a man suffered unjust incarceration, that too in a "C" class imprisonment! Never in the history of crimes in India has a businessman of Pratap's status suffered such an indignity, let alone the harshness of the treatment. Bhai Pratap was sentenced to five years' rigorous imprisonment.

When Vijaylaxmi Pandit became the Governor of Maharashtra, she released him after he had undergone two and a half years of imprisonment. But the scandal cost him health and eventually his life. He died a sick and lonely man- a defeated man!

*"Yesterday, his word might have stood;
Today, there is none so poor to do him reverence."*

- Shakespeare (Julius Caesar)

When his end was near, nobody cared for him. He had spent lakhs of rupees on the realization of his dream - the hometown for Sindhis and had invited the wrath of his family members. His friends were turned into his enemies because they were scared to come near him. Sindhis were told to forget about him because he was a 'bad character.' Thus ended a colourful and dedicated life of colossus and one is tempted to remark "Cut is the branch that would have grown full straight". The man who planted the seedling of Sindhi Homeland lived not to see it took shape and grew a sorrowful end to a glorious beginning.

Jini kan muyas, se kandhi thiyaram keen ki
- Shah

They, for whom I died, did not attend my funeral.

APPENDIX 2:

*Translation of an article from Sindhi to English,
written by Bhai Pratap in the year 1948*

Whether Gandhidham can become new homeland for Sindhi Hindus?

A plan by Sindhu Re-settlement Corporation.

In a Sindhi daily Sansar Samachar of Bombay, a number of articles have been appearing on the above subject. Many points have been raised and many pointed questions have been posed. All the discussion is welcome provided it is conducted in a healthy spirit free from anger and ego related problems. It is necessary to shed light on the many genuine issues raised. It is in this spirit that this exercise is undertaken to explain some important features of the scheme.

Will it be possible to make Gandhidham a new home town for Sindhi Hindus?

This question is an important one, but to answer this question, it is essential to examine a basic question, whether Sindhi Hindus who have migrated to India need a home town of their own? After the creation of Pakistan Hindus and Sikhs had to leave their ancestral land and migrate to India. About 35 lakhs of people had to leave Punjab and about 10 Lakhs Sindhi Hindus had to leave Sindh. About 25 lakhs of people who migrated settled in the eastern part of Punjab itself. In this way they lost their material possessions but did not lose their natural home land. In eastern Punjab their language, culture etc are intact and will flourish. The Government of Punjab is looking after their interests wherever they are in minority they are not being looked down upon or discriminated because the state governments at other places know that if they misbehave with them Punjab Government would always be there to raise its voice against any such a move. This does not apply to Sindhi Hindus who have migrated. They do not have any piece of land to call their own. This state of helplessness had rendered Sindhis vulnerable to hostility in other states of India the news about such a dangerous situation and hostile occurrences find their place in the newspapers daily.

What is a Homeland?

Now the question arises, what is a home land? The home land is a place where the language and way of life, culture, and customs are your own or at least like your own. Where you can effectively participate, in the political process and financially he is able to rehabilitate himself. A person without a land is everywhere is rootless and unwanted, till he merges his identity with the local masses which process takes centuries to accomplish, till then he is subject to untold humiliation and hatred. The plan to build

Gandhidham is designed to answer all above concerns. The success achieved so far is a pointer in the direction that this is not impossible to achieve.

One and half year ago when Sindhi Hindus started leaving their homes for India during that time a plan was to emerge in my mind and started exploring all the possibilities and weighing all the pros and cons of various alternatives. Some may still remember that in October 1947 itself I had sent a circular letter to many of my friends and public persons about such a scheme. No doubt at that time it was not yet clear as to exact which place such a township would be established.

Where is our new homeland going to be situated?

Where the new home land should be adopted for that I had set some criteria. I visited many parts of the country to see which part is most suited to fulfil the criteria like climate, language, customs and culture which may not come in clash with our inheritance and lifestyle. I realized that in provinces which are already populated and developed there is possibility of creating some settlements but there one could not have own homeland as the other historical factors were not conducive for such an endeavour. For example, in Uttar Pradesh where the population is already 5 crores, even if 10 lakh Sindhis decide to settle there, the population in the entire state would at the most be a negligible minority. In city like Bombay where the population is already 40 lakhs a colony or cluster of 2 or 3 lakhs would be only considered Sindhi neighbourhood, as in some of the cities of United States there are Chinatowns, or Jewish ghettos.

All this does not mean that I am against the coming up of Sindhi colonies in various cities across India. They will be necessary tributaries in the economic development of Sindhi society as a whole, but the roots have to at some secure place which one would be able to call as 'his own home land'. The branches would in turn nurture the roots and trunk and this process will be reciprocals.

Thus the tree and branches would remain evergreen.

Now let us take stock of the situation in Kutch where a new township for Sindhi displaced persons is sought to be established at Gandhidham. Let us find out the pros and cons of the proposition.

Comparison of the climate, language, and culture of Sindh and Kutch;

Kutch is geographically contiguous to Sindh. Language is same. It confirms mostly to climatic conditions of Sindh. Before partition moves were afoot that Tharparkar district where Sindhi Hindus had a majority of about one percent should become part of India. Had

this move succeeded many Hindus of Sindh would have moved there instead of being scattered throughout India and face untold miseries. It was due to the practical political need of the British that Kutch's separate entity was maintained otherwise Kutch would have been part of Sindh. At the time of partition Kutch and Thar would have automatically become part of India by Sindh also being divided as was done in the case of Punjab and Bengal. The situation in that case would have been same as between West and East Punjab

Population, mineral wealth rain and lakes:

The population of Kutch is sparse. It is about 4.5 lakhs. This area can accommodate the population many fold. Kutch being under personal rule and due to historical circumstances the mineral and natural resources of Kutch are yet to be unlocked. As regards agriculture is concerned though Kutch does not have any river flowing through it but the rainfall is twice or thrice the quantity that Sindh received every year and there are more than one hundred and twenty five reservoirs where the rain water is collected. This way more than 3/4 th of the land of India does not have Advantage of rivers yet the regions have good agricultural yield. Recently Government of India had sent a committee from its agriculture department and that committee has submitted a very report about the agricultural potential of this region. Government has sanctioned 2 crore rupees for this purpose and within 5 years the water bodies of this state will be upgraded and repaired. It is expected that this would yield the similar results and benefits as the construction of the barrage over Sindhu had brought. Kutch is rich in minerals like Steel, Coal, Mica, Gypsum and Bauxite etc; which reserves are lying untapped and their opening up will bring untold transformation in the region.

Ports, Railways and Property:

The most important factor is that a new port is being built to replace the loss of Karachi port due to Partition of the country. The work of rail connectivity has also stated by two agencies, to connect the port with vast hinterland. On these projects government is pledged to spend 20 crores which open up employment opportunities for thousands of persons. To connect Kandla by rail has been accorded top priority and Kandla will be linked to rest of country by railways within a year or at the most within a year and half. This news has been broadcast on All India Radio. In Jaipur, Congress Sardar Patel has also averred that the development schemes undertaken for the Kutch state would open it up for the settlement of 8 to 10 lakh people who have been displaced from Sindh.

Administration of Kutch:

Administratively Kutch is an independent province directly under the governance of Central government through a chief commissioner. It is expected that within 3 years this region will enjoy the benefits of democracy. At this period of time the population of Kutch is merely 4.5 lakhs and Sindhis will not get any better opportunity than the present one to adopt the land as home land.

Dispelling Some Doubts:

Some people have some valid questions and their doubts need to be addressed.

Is Kutch all wildernesses?

Some people tend to think that Kutch is all desert and wilderness. Actually Kutch is mountainous region. It in many respects is similar to Karachi district. Even now the greenery here is more than in many parts of Sindh. After the efforts at agrarian reforms are implemented, the situation will dramatically change for better. Particularly the eastern region of Kutch where Kandla Port is situated is as developed as any part of Kathiawar or west Gujarat.

There Is No Water For Gandhidham:

People ask if there is sufficient water for Gandhidham. To this it could be categorically said, 'Yes, Gandhidham has sufficient water supply. About a year back when the Government of India had decided to construct the Kandla Port the empowered committee had gone in details into this aspect. According to survey conducted by the engineers of that committee the Gandhidham even at present have water resources to sustain a population of about 10 lakhs. It may be recalled that Karachi city used to meet its water needs from Dalmoti wells. If anyone inspects the Viri springs in the vicinity of Kandla port he will be convinced that Viri springs have much more water than the Dalmoti wells which used to meet the water supply of Karachi. Viri springs can supply one and half crore gallons of water every day. Even if we assume that on an average one person will use 30 gallons of water a day the water is sufficient to support 5 lakhs population even today. These springs are not dependent on the vagaries of rainfall therefore the question of the water supply being depleted does not arise. We have weather record of last 80 years. In this area near Kandla about 14' rainfall annually is recorded. The minimum of consecutive 2 years at any time is not less than 5'. During some years the rainfall of even 25' to 35' been recorded.

This is only situation in the near vicinity of Gandhidham. If one would go a little further the availability of the water will be found in abundance.

Is There Any Danger From Pakistan?

As Kutch is a border area, is it vulnerable in case of war with Pakistan? This question was also raised by some people. This is wrong assumption. Actually this question itself, in way smacks of cowardice. Sindh was also a border state where our ancestors lived for centuries. In event of war India has nothing to fear from Pakistan. Yet in the opinion of Military Strategists the sandy stretch of about 9000 miles constitutes a natural defence and on the top of it for about a half a year it is submerged in water. The Gulf of Kutch which is about 100 miles makes Kandla port very secure. In the similar manner other ports like Bombay and Cochin do not enjoy such natural defence. By air Kandla is at the distance of 300 from Karachi and Bombay is 600 miles. In today's world this difference of 300 miles does not carry any importance, actually today even the distance of 3000 miles would not matter much.

The Need To Be Self Reliant:

I feel that the above arguments are sufficient to allay the doubts and fears of some well meaning persons. In spite of all these explanations if some of the giving still persist it should be borne in mind that this catastrophe which has struck us uprooting us from our soil and scattering the community, dividing brother from brother, all across country, thus threatening our existence, is there any better alternative? More than a year and half have elapsed, since this grim tragedy struck us. Still lakhs of our brethren are leading a miserable life in camps. If we have to have a home land we have to work now and we have to work hard, we have to be self reliant, no government or even God will help us if we do not help ourselves. I know the road is not easy one. We will have to work hard and with perseverance. I am sure if we are determined the government and God will surely help us. To think that all the problems would be solved automatically would be unrealistic. If we want to have our home land there is no substitute for hard work. Take the example of Jews they were scattered throughout the world and faced worst persecution from time to time. When they decided to set up their home land they did not opt for any developed western country but chose to resettle in their country of origin in Palestine which itself was sheer desert. With the dint of their hard work and faith in their destiny they have started building their home land anew so that in future no one should be able to look down upon them as landless people and they would no longer remain vulnerable to atrocities that they have faced as a consequence of the people without any land to call their own. They can occupy their position in the community of nations with honour.

Soon after partition I had thought of a scheme whereby Sindhis could be settled in sizeable number at one place. During last one hundred years Sindhi Hindus had taken rapid strides in all directions, be it business, agriculture, education, literature and culture and thereby had contributed to progress of their province.

In face of the storm that unleashed in wake of the partition of the country everything crumbled and was destroyed overnight.

Most of the Sindhis belonged to middle class. They did not have any labour or peasants or big industrialists like Marwaris and Gujaratis among them. The standard of living was higher than of any other Indian province. They were businessmen and in services. This made it difficult for them to survive. Had they been workers they would have survived anywhere by their toil. If there would have been industrialists among them they would have provided employment to many.

In this grim situation the only ray of hope lay in the unique character of Sindhi Hindus, if their qualities were to be channelized on planned manner, there was certainly a possibility of its phoenix like emergence from its ashes. This was the only possible way.

In comparison to the people of other parts of India Sindhi Hindus are endowed with the qualities of head and heart which set them apart. They are hard working, intelligent, enterprising and courageous. They have an ancient sea faring tradition. They crossed many an unknown seas and amassed wealth in foreign countries and enriched their own homeland. They through education occupied high in administration of various rulers.

Through their income and pensions they used to spend crores in their home land. In the recent upheaval they have left their home land but their skills are still intact and some of them have already found the source of their income. I had calculated that in pre-partition Sindh about seven crore rupees were infused in Sindh's economy every year by these enterprising Sindhi Hindus. If any plan is envisaged whereby even if the fraction of that amount is invested in a particular region many people would get livelihood.

At the same time such a region should be selected where an institution be established which may initially generate its core capital and start various enterprises to generate employment through commerce and small industries. Sindhi Hindus are imbued with the spirit of adventure, they have a tradition of going out and their families have continued to live in their homeland. If we have new homeland where the families of those Sindh work is could live in peace and security, it will attract many a needy among them to come and seek their living. At the same time it will ensure that

our social, religious, cultural and educational life which has been disrupted can resume again. Same schools and colleges could be restarted which would continue to impart quality education so that the students who emerge from there are able to find suitable employment in government or other enterprises.

Our scholars, elders, and religious saints could settle here and continue to serve the society. This tragedy may prove blessing in disguise so that we may be able to rid ourselves of the evils that have bedevilled our society.

Now the question arises, how to go about it. Whenever I broached my plan to my friends and well wishers they agreed to its need but were not sure as to its practicability. In order to give a concrete shape and make it possible and practice Sindhu Resettlement Corporation was incorporated as a registered organization.

It has authorized capital of Rs.2,50,00,000/- (Rupees two crore and fifty lakhs).

At present it is proposed to raise a capital of Rs. One crore through 10000 shares of Rs.1000 each. The subscribed capital towards one share at present has been Rs. 500 only. The purpose of this corporation is not to make profit, but it has been constituted to serve a particular cause, therefore some restrictions have been self imposed. No one can buy more than 25 shares and the dividend will be restricted to 6% any profit in excess of the 6% dividend be used for social and charitable purpose.

Thereby, many schools and Dharamshals and centres of social good will come up. The establishment of this corporation has resulted in many other benefits.

We have been able to obtain a vast land of 15000 acres near Kandla Port which is coming up very fast. We expect to get aid from government also, in fact the Government of India has already sanctioned Rs 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs) for building houses. We expect to build about 4000 homes and settle about 30,000 persons in the first year itself. By 1950, this town will be connected by rail and thereafter the pace of the development is expected to gather more momentum.

In the initial stages, there might have been some misgivings about the success of this plan, but looking to the success so far achieved by the corporation leaves no scope of any doubt.

Let us look at this scheme from commercial angle. Initially one has to invest only Rs. 500/- and has to take responsibility of paying further at later dates.

The corporation has now even more assets than the capital which is sought to be raised. A place where government is committed to build a new port and bring about rail connectivity has a potential of immense growth in respect of Industries and business of every type. The very fact that Sindhi refugees will be settled and will work here in itself is a positive factor. There is possibility of profit and not any loss in this investment. Investors will get return of 6% on their investment and besides every share holder is entitled to get one plot where he may build his own house. Plots are not sold at any profit only the expenses incurred on creating an infrastructure is being collected. It goes without saying that looking to development activities of port being built and rail connectivity and resultant business opportunities the rate of the land will naturally increase.

It is said that this scheme is envisaged only for rich and poor are sought to be kept out of this. This is totally incorrect. In fact this plan is primary for poor section of people but the capital is being raised from affluent section to help poor. Building of port and railways will generate employment from labour, white collar workers to engineers. These will be the persons, who will be first beneficiaries. In fact the construction work has been planned in such a manner that any one by investing only Rs. 1500/- can purchase home. If anyone even cannot afford to invest that much amounts, the scheme of Hire Purchase is available for them.

The first priority is to build simple houses, as those of our poor brethren who are still living in the camps they can come and resettle here immediately. Those who can afford to invest, for them it is a good opportunity to build the houses here and rent them out to those who cannot afford to purchase the same. They would get adequate return as a rent and besides their proper value also would considerably increase.

The purpose of this scheme is also to bring together a social mix of poor and rich section of the society which due to partition has been polarized which situation may in the long run prove detrimental. Rich have to help the poor in this hour of need. All those questions which required clarification have been addressed here to the best of my ability. I hope that now many misconceptions in this regard must have been removed. I plead my inability to convince those who have already made up their mind to oppose this scheme due to prejudice or ego problems. I can only say that even the best of plans and schemes are liable to be criticised and nothing can be done about it.

On a personal note I venture to offer an explanation. Though I am reluctant to do so but nevertheless I have to dispel some misgivings in this respect. It may be assumed that as a managing director of the corporation I may be taking a handsome remuneration. I have to say here very categorically that I am purely an honorary worker of the corporation and I do not draw any direct or indirect monetary benefit from the corporation.

In the past one and half year, I have spent all my energies and time for this corporation with utmost dedication.

Here I would like to clarify one thing as we are not very much aware of the working of the corporate bodies. Should such an institution be run by honorary workers or by qualified professionals who may be appointed to carry out the job in which they excel?

Through my experience I have learnt that such an institution can be run by honorary workers efficiently and in disciplined manner. If the work is entrusted to honorary workers after the initial flush of enthusiasm wanes, the work is apt to be left in the lurch and it will fail to deliver desired results. Often this leads to ego clashes as the honorary workers tend not to bow before any authority. It is necessary to have a disciplined work force to execute the scheme of such a magnitude. We require qualified engineers, architects, managers at various levels and clerks and other subordinate staff. This enterprise has to run as a business and in a businesslike manner. In this they are entitled to their just livelihood. To deny them their fair compensation would tantamount to exploitation of the poor for the sake of the profit of the share holders. Furthermore, this is not a practice and just proposition. I take this opportunity to appeal to our people to have faith. They should not view everything through tinted glasses of scepticism and suspicion. This enterprise has not been initiated with any selfish motive nor does the structure of this scheme admit any selfish gain.

APPENDIX 3:

*Original Letters by Bhai Pratap to Maharao of Kutch
& his Honourable Maharao of Kutch granting the land.*

27th January, 1948.

To,

His Highness The Maharao, of Cutch.

May it please Your Highness,

I, Bhai Pratap Daldas, Managing Director, the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation beg your Highness's permission to submit that complete lawlessness prevails in the Province of Sind. That state of affair has existed since some months.

Your Highness must have read in the press that on the 6th January, 1948, some hundreds of Hindus and Sikhs were slaughtered in Karachi, the capital city of Pakistan territory. It is impossible for any Hindu or Sikh to live in Sind. We have, therefore, to turn to some other territory and adopt it as our homeland. Naturally, our thoughts have turned to your Highness, territory as nearest to Sind and climatatically it is also similar. Besides, linguistically and culturally, we are more akin to Cutch than to any other place. In fact, many Sind Hindus have migrated from Cutch to Sind and similarly, many Sindhi families went over from Sind to Cutch and settled down there. It is therefore, that we approach Your Highness and we are indeed very highly indebted to our Highness for having received us with open arms. With your Highness's permission, we beg to submit the following facts and make specific prayers for your grants to enable us to put up a decent town at Kandla Port.

Prominent and duly representative Sind Hindus have formed a Corporation for the purpose of resettling the Sind Hindus. It is known by the name of The Sindhu Resettlement Corporation Ltd. Your Highness is aware that, Sind and Kutch territories, were once known by the name of Sind Savvih. The Corporation's authorised capital is two and half crores of rupees. For the present, the shares would be issues for the sum of one crore only. The Government of India have accorded their sanction for the issue of capital. We hope to have one crore rupees shares fully subscribed within a short time. Acharya Kriplani has kindly consented to be the Chairman of the Board of Directors. Every other director also is a gentleman of importance and influence. I am the Managing Director and it is in that capacity that I am addressing Your Highness.

Your Highness, we have very ambitious schemes. The Corporation that we have formed is free from any profit-making motive. So one can purchase more than Rs.25,000/- worth of shares and the dividend is restricted to 6. The profits over and above 6 are required to be utilised for public utility works. The bulk of our shareholders have commercial interests all over the world and are cognizant of the up-to-date town plannings.

We propose to put up a modern city with wide metalled roads, with a system of water distribution by pipes, and complete drainage and flushed systems. We also intend to put up High Schools and Colleges and if, practicable, a fine residential University which could be the pride of the whole of India. Happily, Kandla situated where it is, can be one of the most important Ports of the world and have intentions of making the Port city one of the best. We need not mention that such a city shall benefit the whole State of Kutch. We want the fullest co-operation of your existing subjects and we shall be happy if they share our adventures and labours and also the benefits of the model city and Port. They would be welcome to purchase shares in our Corporation and have all the advantages appertaining to such a status.

We pray that in order to enable us to achieve our object of making the city an ideal one, where Sind Hindus can also be accommodated and in order to enable us to meet the various costs of manufacture of roads, parks, making arrangements for internal distribution of water and for putting up drainage works and their maintenance in good order and establishing educational and other public utility establishments and carry out various other works in order to make the city a model one, Your Highness may be graciously pleased,

(a) To grant to The Sindhu Resettlement Corporation Ltd., an area of land as per sketch attached, which shall roughly cover an area of 15,000 acres, free of occupancy rights, with power and authority to the Corporation to have it divided into plots of residential, industrial and agricultural purposes, and sell or lease them out at suitable terms. Most of the area asked for is unoccupied and lying waste. Some area however is being cultivated by tenants directly under the State. Such tenants have, we understand, paid no occupancy price to the State. The State can allot to them other alternate sites for cultivation. However, if the State awards any reasonable compensation to them, the Corporation shall pay that reasonable sum of compensation.

Your Highness would also observe that a portion of Galpadar estate is essentially required for the proper layout of the town. The area required from this estate is roughly about 2,000 acres. Most of this area required is lying waste and appears uncultivable. There are only a few cultivated patches. This area of 2,000 acres may also be required and the Corporation would be prepared to pay reasonable compensation.

In fact the good cultivated area of the estate is not being touched. Besides the constitution of the new Town would benefit very considerably the remaining area of the estate as there would be ready market for the garden and other agricultural produce raised in those lands. That fact may kindly be borne in mind while determining the amount of compensation to them. The fact of the improvement of the remaining area is always borne in mind in Town planning Schemes in determining the net compensation payable for the land acquired and we request that fact be borne in mind of this case also.

(b) The very first essential requirement for the Port and New Town is adequate and reliable provision for supply of water. At the present, the water supply are not properly developed and there is dual control. Your Highness can well realize that dual control creates many complications. Besides water works require to be expeditiously constructed with up-to-date machinery also considerable cost which is estimated by your Engineer-in-Charge at about 15 lakhs of Rupees. We, therefore, request that the present site of the Viri Springs reservoir, the Viri Springs and the upper proposed reservoir land may be required for construction of a plant site for the proposed reservoir.

Page 3.

-and the New Town limits for the purpose of the construction of conduit and putting up of pipelines etc., be granted to the Corporation free of any charge. The Corporation would have the necessary water works constructed and the Corporation undertakes to supply water to the New Township; and in addition to supply water to the Port of Kandla for all the Port requirements at reasonable water rates.

(c) Your Highness can well appreciate that very substantial quantities of lime-stone as well as building stone, concrete sand, murrum and jungle would be required for the construction of roads and building thousands of houses etc. Your Highness's State has unlimited resources in this respect and we beg that Your Highness be pleased to order that no royalty be charged on the materials required in the New Township for a period of ten years. We are mentioning a period of ten years as we well know that such a period would be necessary for the development of the Port and the Town.

(d) There is one more point also. It would be essential for the proper lighting and running of the New Model town, that the arrangements for generating electricity be in the hands of the Corporation. We understand that the Kutch Development Co. has the right of first refusal to put up all electrical works. We request that an exception may kindly be made in the case of electricity energy required for this town. That would be almost the first enterprise of ours for this New Town. We would naturally be anxious to have the electricity producing plant fully inhabited. Our Corporation would not mind to bear some loss in the first few years. It would be our concern to see that electricity energy is supplied for home and industrial consumption at as cheap a rate as possible. We request Your Highness, to kindly get us this concession for the Development Co.

We hope Your Highness's Cutch State would join Indian Union as regards the Customs. In any case, we request that neither should the customs nor any other duties or charges be levied on goods imported to Kandla for the construction of roads buildings, etc. We shall have to import vast quantities of cement, timber, steel, machinery etc.

Thanking Your Highness in anticipation.

I subscribe myself as Your Highness
Most obedient servant,

(Sd.) Pratap Daldas,
Managing Director,
The Sindhu Resettlement Corporation Ltd.

27th January, 1948.

APPENDIX 4:

First Directors of The Sindhu Resettlement Corporation

Chairman	Acharya Jiwatram Bhagwandas Kripalani
Managing Director	Bhai Pratap Dialdas
Directors	Bhagwandas Basantsingh Advani Shewakram Kishinchand Hotchand Gopaldas Advani Ramchand Lilaram Gobindram Hassaram Manghram Jiwandas Assandas Khushaldas

APPENDIX 5:

Directors present at the meeting held on 28th August 1952

Acharaya J. B. Kripalani
Bhai Pratap Dialdas
K.Mitter
S.A. Ghatge
P.N. Singhal
Hotchand Advani
Bhawanji Arjun Khimji
Kalyanji Dhanji Shah
D.H. Hiranandani
Mrs. Savitri Pardasani
Purshotomsingh L. Bajaj
Gobindram Hassaram
Mr. Premjibhai Thacker & Bhai Vaidya-representing Kutch State's advisors to the Chief Commissioner.

APPENDIX 6:

Health facilities at Gandhidham, Adipur

Gandhidham N.G.O. list as of 1st December 2010

Name Of Organisation

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Agrawal Yuva Samelan | 30. Lohana Mahila Mandal |
| 2. Adipur Lohana Samaj | 31. Lohana Yuvak Mandal |
| 3. Agrawal Mahila Sanghtan | 32. Lower Sindh Panchayat |
| 4. Agrawal Samaj | 33. Maa Vaishnodevi Jagran Trust |
| 5. Agrawal Seva Samiti | 34. Manav Seva Trust |
| 6. Akhil Kutch Mahila Utkarsh | 35. Manavata Group |
| 7. Arya Samaj | 36. Marwadi Yuva Manch |
| 8. Brahad Jain Samaj | 37. Marwadi Yuva Manch, Jagrati |
| 9. Braham Samaj Mahila | 38. Matiadev Seva Trust |
| 10. Dev Smriti Trust | 39. Muslim Welfare Trust |
| 11. Gaints Club | 40. Omgayatrimata Educational |
| 12. Gayatri Mahila Mandal | 41. Patanjali Yog Samitee |
| 13. Gayatri Pariwar Trust | 42. Raghuvanshi Social Group |
| 14. Gim Chamber Of Commerce | 43. Raj. Jain Navyuvak Mandle |
| 15. Gim Lohana Parker Yuak Mandi | 44. Rajabhai Ima Blood Bank |
| 16. Gim. Lohana Mahajan | 45. Rajeshtan Youth Association |
| 17. Gim. Taluka Muslim Samaj | 46. Rajesthan Seva Samaj |
| 18. Gujar Shatriya Samaj | 47. Ramkrishna Seva Trust |
| 19. Gurudwara Prabadank Commerce | 48. Rotaract Club |
| 20. Indian Medical Association | 49. Rotary Club |
| 21. Indian Red Cross Society | 50. Rotary Club Adipur |
| 22. Innerwheel Club | 51. Rotary Club Midtown |
| 23. Jain Seva Samiti | 52. Sindhi Seva Samaj |
| 24. Jain Social Group | 53. Sindhi Youth Circle |
| 25. Jhulelal Mandir Trust | 54. Sindhu Prem Trust |
| 26. Kandla Timber Association | 55. Sitaram Parivar |
| 27. Leo Club | 56. Swaminarayan Seva Mandal |
| 28. Lioness Club | 57. Tolani Education Trust |
| 29. Lions Club | 58. Vishva Hindu Parishad |
| | 59. YMCA |

APPENDIX 7:

List of School at Kandla Complex

S. No	Name of School	Address
1.	Amarchand Singhvi International School	Parekh Parisar, Ward 7A, Gandhidham
2.	Adarsh Primary School	Nr. Sant Kawarram Dharamshala
3.	Adarsh Maha Vidhyalaya	Nr. Sant Kawarram Dharamshala
4.	Ambe Bhavnath Primary School	Gandhidham
5.	Ambedker Primary School	Plot No.51, Sector No.8, Gandhidham
6.	Anand Marga High School	Ward 10/A, Gandhidham
7.	Anand Marga Primary School	Plot No.51, Sector7, Gandhidham
8.	Andhara Primary Vidhyalaya	Kandla
9.	Bal Vikas Primary School	Gopalpuri Colony, Gandhidam
10.	Bhartiya Vidhya Mandir	Gopalpuri Colony, Gandhidam
11.	Bhartiya Vidhya Mandir	Kandla
12.	Braham Samaj Primary School	Sector 8
13.	Brilliant Primary School	Adipur
14.	Brilliant Primary School	Sector 5, Gandhidham
15.	Cambridge School	Nr. Shivaji Park, Gandhidham
16.	Kendriya Vidhyalaya	Railway Colony, Gandhidham
17.	Delhi Public School	Opp. Rajvi Resort, Gandhidham
18.	Dr. C.G. High School	Nr. Shivaji Park, Gandhidham
19.	Dr. C.G. High School	Nr. Shivaji Park, Gandhidham
20.	Excelsior Model School	Ward 4B, Adipur
21.	Glaxy Primary School	Plot 179, Sector 5, Gandhidham
22.	Govt. High School	Nr. Shivaji Park, Gandhidham
23.	Govt. High School	Ganesh Nagar, Gandhidham
24.	Green Hill Academy	Guj. Housing Board, Nr. KSEZ
25.	Guru Nanak Public School	Ward 5B, Adipur
26.	H.K.V. Primary School	Olso, Gandhidham
27.	H.J Shukla High School	Sector 8, Gandhidham
28.	J.S. Adarsh Kanya Mahavidhyalaya	Lilashah Nagar, Gandhidham
29.	K.K. Primary School	Plot No.106, Sector 8, Gandhidham
30.	K.P. Shahani Primary School	Lilashah Nagar, Gandhidham
31.	Kairali School	Lilashah Nagar, Gandhidham
32.	Kanya Maha Vidhyalaya	Adipur
33.	Kanya Primary School	Adipur
34.	Kendriya Vidhyalay	IFFCO Colony, Gandhidham
35.	Kakubhai Parikh School	Opp. Holiday Village Resort
36.	Kutch Machhoya Ahir Vidhyalaya	Ward 5B, Adipur
37.	Learners Academi	Ward 6B, Adipur
38.	M.P.Patel Kanya Vidhyalaya	Ward 12B, Gandhidham
39.	Maitry Kumar Primary School	Adipur
40.	Maitry Mahavidhyala	Adipur
41.	Maruti High School	Sector 5, Gandhidham
42.	Matru Chahya Primary School	Adipur

APPENDIX 8:

Order by Maharaja of Kutch granting 15000 acres
land to Sindhu Resettlement Corporation (SRC)

no. 19 of 1948.

Dewan Office,
Bhuj,
The 29th January, 1948.

ORDER.

with reference to the application dated the 27th January, 1948 by Shri Pratin Daldas on behalf of the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation Ltd., His Highness has been pleased to note with satisfaction the following objects of the said Corporation as set out in the said application viz:

- (a). Planning of the Model City with all modern facilities to settle amongst others, the Hindus and Sikhs from Sind;
- (b). Provision for and offer of equal opportunities to all Kutchies in the adventures, labours, benefits of the proposed Modern City in Kutch.
- (c). Definite provisions in the Articles of Association fixing a maximum dividend of 6% - six percent - and the utilisation of profits over and above that amount made in Kutch for purposes of Public Utility including the development and betterment of educational and medical facilities therein.

II. With a view to enable the ^{said} Corporation to achieve these objects, His Highness has been pleased to order as follows:-

- (a). That the said Corporation be and is hereby granted a piece of land roughly admeasuring 15,000 acres lying between Khari Rohar and Warsameddi more particularly shown and set out in the sketch hereto annexed. This land is granted in perpetuity to the said Corporation with full occupancy and proprietary rights and free from all assessments and land taxes and can be utilized for residential, industrial, agricultural and any other purposes.
- (2). That the said Corporation shall have the plan of the Model City prepared and have the same approved by His Highness and the Government of Kutch.
- (3). That the said Corporation shall have the authority to sub-divide the aforesaid land into plots of suitable sizes for residential, industrial and other purposes and dispose of them on suitable terms.
- (4). That the said Corporation shall set up a separate Local Authority for the disposal of plots and other cognate matters. On this Body the Government of Kutch will have one-third representation.
- (5). That in the Town Planning provision shall be made for sufficient number of plots for the construction of public offices and quarters for Public Servants in consultation with His Highness and the Government of Kutch. No development charges will be demanded from the State for such plots.
- (6). That to the said Corporation shall be handed over the reservoir at the site of the Viri Springs, the Viri Springs and that portion of the Lang River between the Viri Springs and the second up-stream proposed reservoir and the site of the second proposed reservoir and also the necessary strips of land below the Viri Springs reservoir for a conduit or pipe line upto the border of the land granted to the Corporation. A survey for up-stream reservoir is being carried out. The exact demarcation of the land on the site shall take place after the survey is completed. The Corporation shall supply as much water as may be required by the Port, Salt Works, Railways, Khari Rohar Villages, etc. The terms, conditions and charges on water shall be supplied for all these purposes shall be settled by mutual discussion between the Corporation

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ANNEXURE 'A-1'.

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and the Government of Kutch after the total amount of money spent by the Corporation on Water Works is ascertained.

The present arrangement for the supply of water to the Port, Railways etc., by the Government of Kutch shall continue till such time as the said Corporation complete their water works or are prepared to take up the work of distribution of water. The existing pipe line and 25'-0" of space on either side of the pipe line shall remain under the control and supervision of the Irrigation Department for such time as the Government of Kutch continue to distribute water.

(7) That in the area of land granted to the Corporation are included certain pieces of land the occupancy and the other rights of which belong to certain Subjects of His Highness. The Government of Kutch will acquire these rights and the amount of compensation for the acquisition thereof shall be paid by the Corporation. If there is any land to be acquired for the purposes of water supply, the Government of Kutch shall do so and the compensation will be paid by the said Corporation.

(8) That the said Corporation is hereby exempted from the payment of royalty for a period of six years from the date hereof and lime-stone, building stone, concrete, sand and murum which the Corporation may need for its construction purposes.

(9) That the Government of Kutch exempt the Corporation from the payment of Customs Duty on materials to be imported by it from the Dominion of India for building purposes for a period of six years.

(10) That after the lapse of ten years the Government of Kutch will bring into existence by a special enactment a Municipal Corporation for this Model City. Such a Municipal Body may acquire from the said Corporation roads, water works, lighting and sanitary arrangements, undisposed plots on terms and conditions to be mutually agreed upon.

(11) That the necessary 'DEED' shall be drawn up and handed over to the said Corporation by the Government of Kutch evidencing the aforesaid grant of land unto the said Corporation.

Sd/-Tribhovandas J. Raja

Dewan : Kutch.

Sealed Government of Kutch

Dewan Office.



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DESERTLAND TO HOMELAND



The Land that could have been Sindh...

Throwing light on the oasis behind the mirage, this book takes one on an eclectic journey through time, during the pre-partition years of India, through the looking glass of Sindhis, from their ethnic pathways, struggles, milestones and achievements, thanks to many heroes and inspired by the humble, Bhai Pratap.

At the time, every state had its own regional leader and visionary, giving its own people an extra push of hope including their national beacon to independence, Gandhiji. During this confusing and tumultuous time, the decision of deciding states per the local ethnicities, to conducting peaceful protests or otherwise to drive the British out, everyone was trying to both fight and build a place for their own place to call 'home', together in spirit and apart in their own regions.

Through all of this and more, this book provides a unique insight into Sindhis' personal experiences of that period, with a thorough glimpse of the founding blocks, be it, basic amenities, transport & international trade, educational successes to the current booming industries, and what it took to make it all possible.

Packed innately with facts & figures, findings of national and international learned historians, a walk down memory lane with old-timers during that era, the story of the heroes involved, and a visual display of the makeshift Sindh region with Gandhidham, the Kutch area, all flowing in the vein of Mohan Gehani's throbbing passion for his people and their story.

