

VERNACULAR FURNITURE OF GUJARAT

Focus On : East Gujarat (Dahod, Panchmahal, Chhota Udaipur & Narmada Districts)

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Overview

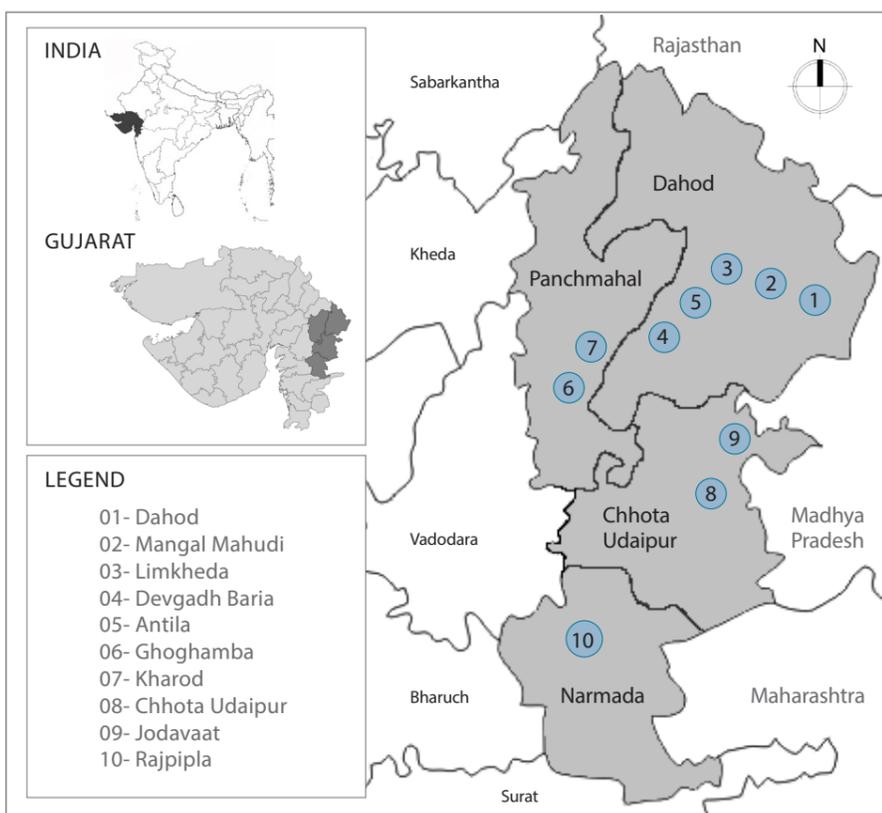
Places Visited: 10

Distance travelled: 850 km

Elements Mapped: 98

Scholars approached: 8

Craftspeople approached: 5



Field visits for the month of January 2016, focused on four districts in East Gujarat namely - Dahod, Panchmahal, Chhota Udaipur and Narmada. Among the places covered were vernacular dwellings of the tribal communities of Mangal Mahudi, Antila, Jodavaat, Ghoghamba and Kharod; a tribal museum in Chhota Udaipur; traditional houses and town market of Dahod; and Palaces of Devgad Baria and Rajpipla.

The tribal population in this region, predominantly comprises of Bhils and Rathwas. It subsists mainly on agriculture, forest produce and cattle herding. The tribes also practice craft forms like bead work, bamboo and cane weaving, and pottery. The Rathwas excel in traditional mural wall paintings dedicated to Pithora, their tribal deity of grain and plenty. Pithora paintings are renowned for their distinctive style and tribal ethos. The tribe's dwellings are made using indigenous materials like tree trunks for columns and beams, mud and stone walls, thatched or tiled roofs. Their furniture is very basic, and comprises of *khatlo* (Charpoy) and *patlo* (stool), a rectangular seat made of wooden planks, elevated from the ground (not more than a few inches) with the help of wooden members along its width. Basic framework (bedstead) for the *khatlo*, is made by the local village carpenter, and the web of rope is then knitted by the women of the family themselves. Wood for making the *khatlo* is collected by small time vendors from nearby forests, and sold in the form of pre-sized members. An interesting piece of furniture among the tribes is a *ladi patlo* (*ladi* means 'dear daughter'). Unlike the *khatlo* and *patlo*; *ladi patlo*, is a ceremonial furniture used

only during weddings and is carved with intricate patterns and painted in multi colours. It is only after stepping over the *ladi patlo* that a bride is allowed to enter the groom's house. A wedding cannot take place without the ceremony featuring the *ladi patlo*, making it a significant piece of furniture among the tribe. Since the tribes grow as well as grind their own food grains a *kothi* (granary) and a *ghanti* (hand mill grinder), are the two most prominent features in the kitchens of the tribals. *Kothis* found in the region are either made of woven bamboo or built out of a mixture of mud, hay and cow dung. The *ghanti* is usually placed on a stand known as a *manchi*.

In Dahod, a few houses have retained *hichko* (swing), *takht* (bench), and the likes. In the local market, shopkeepers catering to their day to day business, sitting on a *gaadi* (mattress) and working on a *dhalio* (merchant's desk) is a common sight.

While the palaces of Rajpipla have barely any traditional or vernacular furniture still in use; the palace at Devgad Baria houses an assortment of traditional wooden trunks, octagonal side tables, *sev nu patiyu* a kitchen furniture used to make *sev* (noodles), and a *dabalo* (Container for bride's belongings). Made entirely of brass, the *dabalo* is a three legged container with a hemispherical lid. It is traditional storage piece laden with the bride's valuable costumes and jewellery, which she takes it to her new home, along with other belongings.



1. Khatlo (Charpoy), 2. Kothi (Granary), 3. Ghanti ni Manchi (Flour Mill Stand) & 4. Ladi Patlo (Stool), 5. Majjus (Storage), 6. Sev nu Patiyu (Noodle Maker), 7. Kothi (Granary) & 8. Paniyara (Waterplace)



Ladi Patlo (Stool)



Dabalo (Container for Bride's belongings)