

Population, Ethnicity and Locality: A Study of *Dehzado* Records of the 1881 Census of Baroda State

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Abstract

At the Census of India, 1881, the former princely state of Baroda published data for every village and town, called *Dehzado*. After presenting the general demography of Baroda state, this article presents an analysis of data on caste, tribe and religion. It provides classification of villages and towns by the number of castes and tribes found in them, and discusses the issues posed by them, especially the issue of single-caste villages. This article describes the horizontal spread of various castes, tribes and religious minorities and points out its implications. In the end, it discusses the problem of urbanisation, classifying the towns by ethnic groups found in them.

Keywords

Baroda state, caste, Census of India, *Dehzado*, demography, Gujarat, religion, rural–urban relations, tribe

Introduction

This is a work in historical sociology of the former princely state of Baroda in Gujarat, based on records of the Census of 1881. These are printed records in Gujarati, known as *Dehzado* (Persian *deh* = village; *zado* = people). They are

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in the form of tables, each of which lists the villages and towns in a sub-district (*mahal*) in a district (*prant*), and shows for each village and town its population, separately for every Hindu caste, every Adivasi tribe, and every minority religion, under two columns, 'men' and 'women'. Although every minority religion has divisions, often like castes, the census does not provide information about these divisions but treats it as a composite ethnic group.¹ The last column gives the total population of men and women in the village/town. All this information allows us to know the distribution of the population of every caste, tribe and religion for every village and town and the correlations between these variables. The census of no other princely state or British province seems to have provided data of this kind in published form.

The Baroda state published the Dehzado data for every census from 1872 to 1931. We have analysed these data for only the 1881 census. Although the 1872 census was the earliest, it was insufficient in several respects. We therefore decided to study the records of 1881 as the benchmark. This is a modest, exploratory work, which might lead to a study of the entire corpus of Dehzado records.

It is well known that there were two methods of conducting census in India. First, a census was conducted in one village or town on one day and of another village or town the following day, thus covering all villages and towns in a large area over a long period of time. This kind of census was conducted in the British districts in Gujarat in the early 19th century.² In the second kind, a census was conducted in all villages and towns in an area simultaneously on one day. The British began to conduct this kind of census in India, called Imperial Census, in 1872. It had a uniform format for all British provinces as well as the princely states. In addition, a British province or a princely state had freedom to canvass data on any other subject of its choice. The Baroda state collected data for every village/town and ethnic group through the Dehzado. We should find out if any other state or a British province collected data of this type, and then make a comparative study.

The Dehzado data help us understand certain aspects of rural as well as urban society in India. For example, we shall examine with the help of these data the theory of self-sufficiency of Indian village community. It can also help in understanding the horizontal dimension of caste, contrasted with its vertical (i.e., hierarchical) dimension. The former is concerned with the spread of population of a caste in villages and towns in an area. Some castes are basically rural, some urban and some rural as well as urban. We can also find the relation between the total population of a village or town and its ethnic (i.e., caste, tribe, religion) composition. This study thus contributes to the discourse on the use of the census by the state to encourage caste, tribe and religious consciousness in India.³

The removal of castes, except Scheduled Castes, from the census in the post-independence period has raised difficulties in studying the horizontal spread of castes. The present study tries to fill this gap by looking into caste, tribe, religion and rural-urban locality in Baroda state based on an analysis of its Dehzado records. Sociologists have studied the changing caste dynamics mainly in terms of vertical relationships between castes, based mainly on small-scale field studies. Very few have attempted to study the horizontal spread of castes across a whole region. The present study would throw some light on spatial relationships within castes and tribes: their presence, and the density of their population, in villages

and towns. The Dehzado records also enable us to map the numerically dominant castes and tribes in the region, and examine whether a village had only one dominant caste or tribe, or more than one.

The study dwells on the distribution of religious communities in rural and urban areas. The concentration of Muslims and their coexistence with castes and tribes in certain areas give us some understanding of the character of majority–minority relations which became a contentious issue during the British rule and continued after partition of India and Pakistan. It is said that the Muslims are concentrated nowadays in urban spaces rather than rural. Was it true in 1881 also?

Baroda State

Baroda state was ruled by the Gaekwad dynasty, belonging to the Maratha caste in Maharashtra. Pilajirao Gaekwad and his comrades established an independent state of Baroda in 1723 (Desai, 1923a, p. 439). Consequently, a considerable number of Marathi-speaking population immigrated into different parts of Baroda state, especially in Baroda (now Vadodara) city. Thus, people belonging to several different languages were represented in Baroda state, especially, Gujarati, Marathi and tribal dialects. It is also noteworthy that the Parsis from Iran landed in south Gujarat in waves from the 10th- to 13th-century AD and settled in many villages and towns which later became part of Baroda state (Desai, 1923a, p. 114; Shastri, 2001, pp. 120–121). Thus, the population of Baroda state had a great deal of ethnic diversity. The Dehzado records enable us to study the various dimensions of this diversity.

While Baroda state as a whole was part of Gujarat, it was divided into four *prants* (districts) located in the four sub-regions of Gujarat: Amreli in Saurashtra, Kadi in North Gujarat, Baroda in Central Gujarat, and Navsari in South Gujarat. Thus, it was representative of Gujarat's society and culture. Each district was divided into smaller administrative units called Mahals.⁴ A district was administered by an official named Suba and a Mahal by a Vahivatdar. Baroda city and cantonment were considered separate administrative units.

None of the districts was a territorially integrated unit. Some of its villages and towns were interspersed with those of the neighbouring British districts and other princely states. For example, the Kodinar Mahal was separated from the main part of Amreli district by about 100 km, with several princely states located in between.

The geographical fragmentation of Baroda state imposes a limitation on what we can say about Gujarat in general because the horizontal spread of caste, tribe and religious community was not confined to this state but extended beyond its boundaries into the adjoining districts of Bombay presidency and other princely states.

Methodology of the Study

The first census of Baroda state was conducted on 21 February 1872, along with the general census of Bombay presidency. The results were tabulated in Bombay,

and figures were published in the census report of the Bombay presidency along with figures for all the princely states under its jurisdiction. The second census was taken synchronously with that of the rest of India on 17 February 1881. On this occasion, the results for Baroda state were tabulated, and a report published solely by the state administrators (Bhatavadekar, 1883, p. 1).

We obtained the Dehzado records of 1881 from the library of Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. A programme was prepared to feed these data to the computer. It was processed, and a series of tables prepared, and some maps plotted on the computer. The maps of four districts of Baroda state were digitised, using the location code and village boundaries, based on the 1991 census handbooks corresponding to these districts. About 25 per cent of the villages of the 1881 census were not traceable in the 1991 census map. Our Baroda state maps were drawn by overlaying the boundaries of the 1991 census and matching the names of villages with the 1881 Dehzado village data. The Dehzado data were mapped using the Geographical Information System Software (ArcView3.1). The gradual thematic layers (based on class intervals) for different themes, such as castes, tribes and religious minorities were generated, using the software to represent the database of the 1881 census. We have thus tried to relate the population size of a village or town and its ethnic composition. Consequently, we are able to know the spread of villages composed of just one caste or tribe as distinguished from multi-caste or multi-tribe villages.

Census of 1881

The preparations for the 1881 census in Baroda began in 1878. The chief administrator of Baroda, Kazi Shahbudin appointed G.K. Bhatavadekar as Census superintendent. For conducting the census, the villages in every Mahal were grouped into *thanas* (police stations). To ensure accuracy of the results of the census, a list of villages and towns was prepared through the village accountants (*talatis*). These lists were checked with those obtained from the revenue, police and judicial departments. For census enumeration, the villages were clustered into Blocks, and several Blocks into a Circle, with officers responsible for each (Bhatavadekar, 1883, pp. 1–2).

In census enumeration, ‘house’ meant building (*makan*) and not home (*ghar*) as it is understood in the later censuses. While *makan* was a physical structure, *ghar* meant ‘household’, a social structure. Clear instructions were issued about how to identify a house (Bhatavadekar, 1883, p. 6). As a general rule, not more than 300 persons or 60 houses in a Block were allotted to one enumerator.

After demarcation of Blocks and Circles, the houses were numbered. A proclamation was then issued about the census and to drive away any prejudices that people might have against the census. For instance, many people believed that some calamity might occur on account of the census. Some believed that the state had plans to shift people to faraway settlements, and that was why a census was being taken. The copies of the proclamation were sent to every village. The village accountant and headman of every village were directed to assemble the people in some prominent place, such as the village *Chowra* (Square), and to

read out and explain to them the Sarkar's proclamation. The proclamation tried to pre-empt people's prejudices, solicit their cooperation, and explain to them that the census was being taken to know the increase and decrease in population. It also dispelled their fears about imposition of new taxes or increase of the existing ones (Bhatavadekar, 1883, p. 13).

The Suba of each district, the Vahivatdar of each Mahal, the Naib Fouzdar of each Thana and the Talati of each village or a group of villages were ordered to carry out the enumeration. Whenever the official number of enumerators fell short of the requirement, the non-official members of the village were requested to cooperate. The enumerator's schedule was the same as the one used in the British districts, and included columns for information about sex, religion and caste of every individual. This information was used by the Baroda census for compiling the Dehzado records (Bhatavadekar, 1883, p. 21).

On 25 December 1880, the census books were dispatched to villages and towns. The preliminary enumeration commenced on 15 January 1881. When the census was being conducted, inspections were held. The final enumeration took place on the night of 17 February 1881, at about 8.30 PM in villages and at 9.00 PM in towns. A record office was opened in Baroda for the purpose of tabulating, registering and compiling the results after the final enumeration.

General Demography of Baroda State

The total population of the state was 2,185,005 in 1881, distributed in 39 towns and 2,905 villages (Tables 1 and 2). There were two types of village settlements, nuclear and dispersed, the former more common than the latter. A nuclear village had a definite site (*gamthan*) on which were located dwellings and other buildings, such as temple, mosque, council house and school, while agricultural fields lay all around this site. In a dispersed village, every dwelling was located on its own farm, at some distance from another such dwelling. A group of such dispersed dwellings constituted a village.⁵

A village settlement was distinguished from a territorial unit called *mauja* (Persian; meaning 'measured') which was recognised for village administration. Usually, a *mauja* included within its boundaries only one residential settlement, but there could be one main and one or more subsidiary settlement sites, and

Table 1. Population of Baroda State by District and Gender

District	Male	%	Female	%	Total
Amreli	77,048	52.25	70,420	47.75	147,468
Baroda	349,283	53.33	305,706	46.67	654,989
Kadi	509,954	51.59	478,533	48.41	988,487
Navsari	146,477	50.94	141,072	49.06	287,549
Baroda city	53,871	52.91	47,947	47.09	101,818
Baroda cantonment	2,879	61.33	1,815	38.67	4,694
Total	1,139,512	52.15	1,045,493	47.85	2,185,005

Source: The Dehzado records.

Table 2. Villages and Towns in Baroda State by District

District	Villages	Towns
Amreli	229	5
Baroda	838	11
Kadi	1,063	11
Navsari	775	12
Baroda state	2,905	39

Source: The Dehzado records.

even a few dispersed farm houses. Most of the villages were nucleated, with the village settlement occupying not more than 5 per cent of the *mauja* area. In the hilly areas populated by tribal communities in Baroda and Navsari districts, most villages were dispersed (Hardiman, 1987, pp. 78–85). For the population census of villages, the basic unit was the *mauja*. So much so that the census might find some *maujas* without any population.

A settlement was classified as town if its population exceeded 5,000, and practised urban occupations, and if it contained 1,500 or more houses (Bhatavadekar, 1883, p. 58). Baroda city was considered to be special. The district-specific rural–urban distribution shows that Amreli contained 5 towns and 229 villages; Kadi, 11 towns and 1,063 villages; Navsari, 12 towns and 775 villages; and Baroda, 11 towns and 838 villages (Table 2).

The population density of Baroda state and its four districts is shown in Table 3. It was lowest (94.53) in Amreli, highest (343.64) in Baroda and 254.95 in the state as a whole. It was high in towns and less in villages, the highest (20,363.60) being in Baroda city.

Of the total 2,185,005 population of the state, 52.15 per cent were males and 47.85 per cent females, or 917 females per 1,000 males (Table 1), contrary to the general assumption that a deteriorating gender ratio is a result of modern development. Baroda district showed the lowest proportion of females (875 per 1,000 males), with Baroda city having 890 females per 1,000 males. Navsari, with 963 females per 1,000 males, showed a nearly balanced sex ratio, largely because of the presence of tribal communities in the population. Amreli with 914 females

Table 3. Density of Population in Baroda State by District

District	Area (Square Miles)	Total	Density/Square Miles
Amreli	1,560	147,468	94.53
Baroda	1,906	654,989	343.64
Kadi	3,158	988,487	313.01
Navsari	1,940	287,549	148.22
Baroda city	5	101,818	20,363.60
Baroda cantonment	1	4,694	4,694.00
Total	8,570	2,185,005	254.95

Source: The Dehzado records.

per 1,000 males also showed a relatively high sex ratio. Baroda cantonment had merely 630 females per 1,000 males due to the preponderance of male soldiers in the army.

Among religious communities, Muslims had 953 females per 1,000 males, compared to 911 females per 1,000 males among Hindus (Table 4). The low sex ratio among Hindus was mainly due to their preference for sons and the practice of female infanticide in certain castes (Vishwanath, 2000). The largest proportion of males was among the Christians, with 423 females per 1,000 males, which was due to male immigration into Baroda state from outside the state (Bhatavadekar, 1883, p. 30). More than 1,000 females per 1,000 males were also found among Muslims (1,016) in Navsari district, among Jains (1,003) in Kadi district, and among Parsis (1,292) in Navsari district. In every district, the proportion of females was higher among the Muslims than among the Hindus. The higher ratio of females among Jains in Kadi was explained in the *Gazetteer*, 'Many Jains from these districts have migrated to Bombay and other places leaving their females at home' (Desai, 1923, p. 103). A similar reason was given for the remarkably high proportion of females among the Parsis (Desai, 1923, p. 103).

In the state, the Hindus formed 79.53 per cent of the population, Muslims 7.54 per cent, Jains 2.15 per cent, Parsis 0.36 per cent, Christians 0.07 per cent and Tribals 8.46 per cent, whereas 1.92 per cent persons did not state their religion, or it was not known. The distribution of religious groups varied greatly between the districts. Certain districts showed the dense presence of certain minority groups: Muslims in Kadi, Jains in Kadi and Parsis in Navsari. Muslims had the highest population (41 per cent) in Kadi and the lowest (11.4 per cent) in Amreli district. The district-wise distribution of Muslims showed a high share in Kadi (6.38 per cent), Baroda (8 per cent) and Amreli (12 per cent). The tribes were preponderant in Navsari district, accounting for about 44 per cent of its total population, and 5.8 per cent of the population of the state as a whole. The high density of Parsis in Navsari was due to, as mentioned earlier, their first settlement here during their immigration from Iran. The high density of Jains in Kadi was due to the fact that, during the early medieval period (10th–13th century), Patan city, located in this district, was the capital of Gujarat, where some of its kings, several of their ministers and many merchants were Jains, and their influence spread in villages (Shastri, 1953, *passim*). Why the Muslim density was high in Amreli is a problem for further investigation.

Ethnic Composition of Villages

It is widely believed that the Indian village was always composed of people divided into a multiplicity of castes, each practicing a traditional specialised occupation, and that these castes were bound together by what is now well known in social science literature as the *jajmani* relationships. This belief led to the theory of self-sufficiency and autonomy of the Indian village, formulated during the 19th century by such European thinkers as Charles Metcalfe, Henry Maine and Karl Marx, and later advocated by such nationalist leaders as Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave and Jai Prakash Narain. This theory was examined critically by Srinivas

Table 4. Population of Religious Communities in Baroda State by District

Religion		Amreli	Kadi	Navsari	Vadodara	Total
Hindu	Male	62,457 (53)	452,628 (52)	57,891 (51)	286,218 (54)	859,194 (52.34)
	Female	56,123 (47)	423,533 (48)	54,543 (49)	248,205 (46)	782,404 (47.66)
	Total	118,580 (100)	876,161 (100)	112,434 (100)	534,423 (100)	1,641,598 (100)
	Sex ratio	899	936	942	867	911
Muslim	Male	9,259 (52)	31,882 (50)	11,415 (50)	27,242 (53)	79,798 (51.21)
	Female	8,558 (48)	31,323 (50)	11,594 (50)	24,558 (47)	76,033 (48.79)
	Total	17,817 (100)	63,205 (100)	23,009 (100)	51,800 (100)	155,831 (100)
	Sex ratio	924	982	1,016	901	953
Jain	Male	1,280 (52)	16,039 (50)	981 (59)	4,372 (53)	22,672 (50.94)
	Female	1,194 (48)	16,087 (50)	686 (41)	3,868 (47)	21,835 (49.06)
	Total	2,474 (100)	32,126 (100)	1,667 (100)	8,240 (100)	44,507 (100)
	Sex ratio	933	1,003	699	885	963
Parsi	Male	10 (67)	30 (61)	3,247 (44)	83 (67)	3,370 (44.18)
	Female	5 (33)	19 (39)	4,194 (56)	40 (33)	4,258 (55.82)
	Total	15 (100)	49 (100)	7,441 (100)	123 (100)	7,628 (100)
	Sex ratio	500	633	1,292	482	1,264
Christian	Male	16 (67)	33 (75)	9 (69)	53 (69)	111 (70.25)
	Female	8 (33)	11 (25)	4 (31)	24 (31)	47 (29.75)
	Total	24 (100)	44 (100)	13 (100)	77 (100)	158 (100)
	Sex ratio	500	333	444	453	423
Tribal	Male	0	2,316 (52)	61,395 (51)	25,372 (51)	89,083 (50.99)
	Female	0	2,179 (48)	59,348 (49)	24,087 (49)	85,614 (49.01)
	Total	0	4,495 (100)	120,743 (100)	49,459 (100)	174,697 (100)
	Sex ratio		941	967	949	961

(Table 4 continued)

(Table 4 continued)

Others	Male	4,981 (52)	7,020 (52)	5,199 (53)	3,901 (57)	21,101 (53.22)
	Female	4,532 (48)	6,481 (48)	4,573 (47)	2,958 (43)	18,544 (46.78)
	Total	9,513 (100)	13,501 (100)	9,772 (100)	6,859 (100)	39,645 (100)
	Sex ratio	910	923	880	758	879
Total	Male	78,003 (53)	509,948 (52)	140,137 (51)	347,241 (53)	1,075,329 (52.10)
	Female	70,420 (47)	479,633 (48)	134,942 (49)	303,740 (47)	988,735 (47.90)
	Total	148,423 (100)	989,581 (100)	275,079 (100)	650,981 (100)	2,064,064 (100)
	Sex ratio	903	941	963	875	919

Source: The Dehzado records.

Note: The values in parenthesis are percentages.

and Shah in 1960 and has been widely discussed since then. The Dehzado records enable us to examine it further.

A fundamental problem with this theory is that it ignores villages populated entirely by tribal communities, and villages in which members of one or more tribes coexisted with members of castes.⁶ In Baroda state, this problem does not arise in Amreli and Kadi districts because Amreli did not have any tribal population, and Kadi's tribal population was as small as 0.45 per cent. It is necessary, however, to consider this problem in Navsari and Baroda districts which had sizeable tribal population. The Dehzado records show that Navsari district had as many as 213 villages populated entirely by the tribals, and Baroda district had 28 such villages (Table 5). The villages populated by members of one or two tribes each were characterised by rudimentary division of labour, contrasted with the elaborate specialisation of occupation and division of labour based on caste in multi-caste villages. The former would depend on the neighbouring multi-caste villages and towns for a number of goods and services.

The theory of self-sufficiency of the Indian village was also based on the assumption that the population of every village included members of all the specialised castes required for its social life. The social situation, however, was not so simple. Table 6 shows classification of villages in Baroda state according to the number of castes found in a village. It is remarkable that there were as many as 231 single-caste villages, of which, Navsari had the highest number (148) and Kadi the least (14). On the other hand, there were only ninety villages in the state with twenty-five or more castes. Of these villages, forty-eight were in Baroda district and thirty-eight in Kadi, while only two each in Navsari and Amreli. On the whole, the average number of castes per village was high in Baroda and Kadi districts and low in Navsari and Amreli.

Table 5. Villages with Castes and/or Tribes in Navsari and Baroda Districts

District	Villages with All Castes	Villages with All Tribals	Villages with Tribals Plus Castes	Total
Baroda	331	28	479	838
Navsari	82	213	499	794

Source: The Dehzado records.

Table 6. Number of Castes in Villages of Baroda State by District

Castes	Amreli	Baroda	Kadi	Navsari	Total No. of States
1	27	42	14	148	231
2-5	79	107	181	157	524
6-10	77	136	238	105	556
11-15	28	176	244	40	488
16-20	7	129	173	14	323
21-25	2	68	97	4	171
25>	2	48	38	2	90
Total	222	706	985	470	2,383

Source: The Dehzado records.

Table 7. Single-caste Villages in Baroda State by Caste and District

Caste	Occupation	Amreli	Baroda	Kadi	Navsari	Total
Ahir	Shepherd		1			1
Bajaniya	Drummer				1	1
Bhangiya	Scavenger	2		10	1	13
Bharwad	Shepherd	1	1		2	4
Brahmin	Deccan				10	10
(Dakshini)	Brahmin					
Brahmin	Gujarati		2		26	28
(Gujarati)	Brahmin					
Darji	Tailor				3	3
Dhed	Weaver	3	1		26	30
Ghanchi	Oil presser				2	2
Hajam	Barber				1	1
Kanbi	Peasant	1		1	9	11
Khalpa	Skinner		1			1
Koli	Peasant	10	27		27	64
Kumbhar	Potter	1			1	2
Lavana	Trader		1			1
Machhi	Fisherman				1	1
Maratha	Peasant				27	27
Rabari	Shepherd	3	1	2		6
Rajput	Warrior	2	3		7	12
Soni	Goldsmith				1	1
Suthar	Carpenter				2	2
Vagher	Seafarer	4		1		5
Vania	Trader		4		1	5
Total		27	42	14	148	231

Source: The Dehzado records.

A detailed examination of 231 single-caste villages (Table 7) suggests certain significant issues. We find that such a village could be formed by members of a caste placed at any level of caste hierarchy, from the Brahmin at the top to the scavenger at the bottom, including such artisan and service castes as tailor, potter, goldsmith and carpenter in the middle. A large number of such villages were populated by the 'backward' peasant caste of Koli (sixty-four villages) and the untouchable castes of Dhed (thirty villages) and Bhangiya (thirteen villages) on the one hand, and by the higher caste of Brahmin (twenty-eight villages) and Maratha (twenty-seven villages) on the other hand. It is also noteworthy that more than 50 per cent of such villages were located in Navsari district. Possibly every such village was involved in economic and social relations, may be of the *jajmani* type, with the people of neighbouring villages and towns.

Horizontal Spread of Castes

The population of a caste in a district varied greatly, from just a few hundreds to more than a lakh or so, and its presence in the number of villages and towns also

varied. We have considered a caste as numerically preponderant if it had a population of 25,000 to 100,000 or more in a district. We provide here an overview of the four districts in this regard.⁷

Baroda District

Among the peasant castes, the Kanbis had the highest population (above 100,000) in Petlad, Sisva, Sinor and Dabhoi Mahals,⁸ whereas the Kolis had the highest population in Tilakwada, Padra, Koral, Jarod, Vadodara and Sankheda.⁹ There was also high presence of the untouchable, weaver caste of Dheds (36,908 people). Religious specialists, such as Brahmins also had a population above 25,000. Among the castes with the least population were the Sindhva (untouchable, menial workers) and Bhavaiya (folk-play performers).

Of a total of 838 villages, the following castes were widely spread, that is, found in 70–80 per cent of the villages: Koli (peasants), Bhangi (scavengers), Dhed (weavers), Kanbi (peasants), Brahmin (priests) and Hajam (barbers). Overall, there seemed to be a balance between the agricultural caste, religious service caste, labouring and service castes and the untouchables in most of the villages in the district. Among the least distributed, that is, found only in a few villages, were certain artisan castes, such as Bhavsar (weavers and dyers) and Chhipa (printers), and the service and labourer castes, such as Gola (urban servants), Garoda (priests of untouchables), Ghanchi (oil pressers) and Macchi (fishermen).

Kadi District

The numerically preponderant castes were the peasant castes of Koli (2.17 lakh) and Kanbi (1.90 lakh), making this district in highly agricultural population in Baroda state. The shepherd caste of Rabari, the warrior caste of Rajput, the service caste of Dhed and the priestly caste of Brahmin were preponderant in Mehsana Mahal. The least populated castes were Kansara (bronze smiths) and Dhobi (washermen).

Koli, Kanbi, Kumbhar (potters) and Rabari (shepherds) were widely spread castes, in 70–80 per cent of villages, covering more than 750 villages. The other significantly distributed castes were Hajam (barbers), Dhed (weavers), Luhar (blacksmiths), Brahmin (priests) and Vaghri (menial servants). The least distributed castes (i.e., in less than fifty villages) were Dhobi (washermen), Kansara (bronze smiths), Jogi (drummers) and Bharwad (shepherds).

Amreli District

Among the numerically preponderant castes, that is, with population of more than 5,000, were Koli, Kanbi, Rajput, Dhed and Brahmin. The least present castes (less than 100 persons) were Sangariya (jute workers) and Kansara (bronze smiths) present only in one Mahal. Other castes which showed significant presence were Koli, Brahmin, Hajam (barber), Kumbhar (Potter), Rajput (warrior) and Sadhu (mendicant) in 130 villages.

Navsari District

As we shall see (Table 8), Navsari is a tribal-dominated district. However, Dhed, Koli and Brahmin castes were widely distributed, though in small numbers.

It is essential to note that the horizontal spread of every caste mentioned earlier was not confined to the boundaries of a district in Baroda state but extended into the adjoining districts of Bombay presidency and other princely states. This shows that political boundaries did not decide the social boundaries of castes—perhaps at no time in Indian history. Nevertheless, it was possible, if not inevitable, that every political authority, whether the British provincial government or the Hindu or Muslim princely state, decided its own policies and programmes vis-à-vis the various castes within its boundaries. For example, it is well known that Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda (1875–1939) followed more progressive policies than did the British Government with regard to education of what were then called the untouchables. He gave financial aid to B.R. Ambedkar for higher education abroad.

Horizontal Spread of Tribal Communities

The tribal population was listed in the 1881 census as ‘aboriginal tribes’ (Bhatavadekar, 1883, p. 74). The major tribes were Bhil (including Jangli Bhil), Dhanka (including Jangli Dhanka), Nayakada, Chodhra, Dubla and Dhundiya. The largest tribal group was Jangli Bhil, and the least populated was Chodhra. Many of the present names of tribes were not mentioned in the Dehzado records of 1881, probably because of growth of some clans of a tribe into two or more tribes and their eventual separation with new names—an important subject of inquiry.

The total tribal population was 191,464, making 8.76 per cent of the total population in the state (Table 8). Not a single person was recorded as ‘tribal’ in Amreli district. The Saurashtra region, in which Amreli district was located, did not have any tribal population, compared with the rest of Gujarat (Shah, 2003). On the other hand, Navsari district had about 70 per cent of the tribal population of the entire state and 46.36 per cent of the total population of the district. About 28 per cent of the tribal population of the state resided in Baroda district, which formed about 8 per cent of the total population of the district. Most of the tribal population of these two districts lived in the hilly and forested areas on the eastern border of Gujarat. The Jangli Bhil was shown as a tribe separately from the Bhil, and the Jangli Dhanka from the Dhanka because the Jangli section lived in forests in the hills—*jangal* meant ‘forest’—while the other section practiced agriculture in the plains.

The Jangli Bhils, the largest tribal group, were predominant in Navsari district, forming 51 per cent of the total tribal population of Baroda state, and 4.4 per cent of the total population of the district. They were present in 489 villages of the district. The Bhils formed 13 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. They were widely dispersed with a population of 2,187 in Kadi district, 941 in Navsari and 21,466 in Baroda. Hence, Baroda district showed 87 per cent of the total Bhil population of the state.

Table 8. Distribution of Population of Tribals in Baroda State by District

District	Jangli Bhil	Bhil	Dhanka	Jangli			Dubla	Dhundia	Total No. of Tribals in the State		Percentage of Total Population
				Dhanka	Nayakda	Chodhra			Tribals in the State	Total Population	
Amreli	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0.0
Baroda	6,124	21,466	20,246	3,992	1,623	0	0	0	53,451		8.16
Kadi	85	2,187	0	0	0	2,223	0	0	4,495		0.45
Navsari	91,317	941	0	0	4,998	3,304	20,183	12,570	133,313		46.36
Total	97,526	24,594	20,246	3,992	6,621	5,527	20,183	12,570	191,259		9.20
Baroda city	4	125	44	0	5	0	0	0	178		0.17
Baroda cantonment	0	25	0	0	2	0	0	0	27		0.57
Total	97,530	24,744	20,290	3,992	6,628	5,527	20,183	12,570	191,464		8.76

Source: The Dehzado records.

The Dhanka were found only in Baroda district, numbering a little above 20,000. The Nayakada were found mostly in Baroda and Navsari districts; of their 6,621 total population, 4,998 resided in Navsari district and 1,623 in Baroda. The Chaudhari (Chodhra) were found in Kadi and Navsari districts. Of their 5,527 total population, 2,223 were in Kadi and 3,304 in Navsari. The Dubla, with a total population of about 20,000, were found only in Navsari district, forming 10.5 per cent of the total tribal population of the state. The Dhundiya (Dhodiya), with a total population of 12,570, resided in Navsari district, forming 0.5 per cent of the total tribal population of the state, and 6.5 per cent of the population of the district.

The horizontal spread of all tribes in Baroda state extended into the neighbouring parts of Bombay province and other princely states. What differences, if any, prevailed in the relations between the various political authorities and their tribal population is a fascinating subject of inquiry (Hardiman, 1987, pp. 68–77; Shah, 1982). It is possible that a Rajput princely state differed in this respect from the Gaekwads as well as from the British and the Muslim. For example, a tribe might claim Rajput status on account of its Sanskritisation and Rajputisation, and hypergamous relations of some of its members with the Rajputs, the kind of relations that did not exist with other political authorities.¹⁰

Horizontal Spread of the Minority Religious Communities

The Muslims, with a population of 148,871, were the largest among the four religious minorities, present in practically two-thirds of the villages and in all towns of the state (Table 9). Their highest concentration was in Kadi district, with practically every village having their population. This was due, possibly, to the fact that when the Sultans of Delhi annexed Gujarat to their empire in 1299 AD, they made Patan city (located in this district) its provincial capital. Subsequently, the Sultans of Gujarat continued to rule from Patan till they moved to Ahmedabad in 1411 AD (Misra, 1963, pp. 59–71). The Muslims were sparsely populated in Navsari district; their population was distributed between villages and towns in the ratio of 3:1, and most of the villages were tribal.

The Jains, with a population of 43,422, were the second large religious minority. They were almost entirely a mercantile community, with two-thirds of them living in villages as shopkeepers. As many as 32,126 of their total population, that is, a little more than two-thirds, was concentrated in Kadi district, reflecting as mentioned earlier, the impact of Jainism on the ruling establishment located in the capital city of Patan during the medieval Rajput period. Even Baroda district, the hub of Baroda state, had only about 8,000 Jains, whereas Amreli and Navsari districts had each a little more than 1,000.

The Parsis had a total population of 7,622 in the state, of which an overwhelming majority, 7,441 lived in Navsari district alone, the place of their initial settlement, while 123 lived in Baroda, 49 in Kadi and 9 in Amreli. Their Navsari population was spread in 12 small towns and 193 villages. Although the Parsis are well known today as a community of business men, industrialists and professionals living in Mumbai and other large cities, they were predominantly a rural community in the pre-modern times.¹¹

Table 9. Population of Religious Minorities in Baroda State by District and Rural/Urban Location

District	Amreli		Baroda		Kadi		Navsari		Total		Grand		%	
Religion	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Total	Total	Rural	Urban
Christian	0 (0)	15	54 (9)	23	18 (4)	26	24 (6)	11	96 (19)	75	171	43,422	56	44
Jain	1,232 (56)	157	6,251 (262)	1,989	20,495 (534)	11,631	1,012 (83)	655	28,990 (935)	14,432	43,422	43,422	67	33
Muslim	8,977 (182)	3,330	41,190 (624)	10,610	39,595 (745)	22,160	15,932 (402)	7,077	105,694 (1,953)	43,177	148,871	148,871	71	29
Parsi	0	9	91 (25)	32	12 (3)	37	1,191 (193)	6,250	1,294 (221)	6,328	7,622	7,622	17	83
Total									136,074	64,012	200,086	200,086		

Source: The Dehzado records.

Note: The values in parenthesis refer to the number of villages.

The Christians, with a population of 171, were the smallest religious community, almost evenly divided between towns and villages. Of these, 77 lived in Baroda district, 44 in Kadi, 35 in Navsari and 15 in Amreli, and as mentioned earlier, many of them were immigrants from outside Baroda state. This indicates that little evangelical activities took place in Baroda state, compared to the adjoining districts of Bombay province.

Urban Centres

As noted earlier (Table 2), Amreli district had 5 towns, Baroda 11, Kadi 11 and Navsari 12. Baroda city (with cantonment) had the highest population, 106,512 persons. The next large town was Patan in Kadi district, with more than 37,000 people. Table 10 shows the number of towns according to the size of population in different districts. There were five towns with more than 9,000 population in Kadi district (Kadi, Mehsana, Siddhpur, Unjha and Vadnagar), one (Navsari) in Navsari district, two (Petlad and Baroda) in Baroda district, and none in Amreli.

To understand the social structure of towns in Baroda state, as in India in general, it is essential to recognise that urban settlements have existed in India since the time of Indus Valley Civilisation many centuries before Christ, and two major sites of this civilisation, namely, Lothal and Dholavira, are located in Gujarat (Jain, 2013; Shastri, 2001, pp. 13–17). Patan in Kadi district has existed as a town since at least the 10th century AD, and Baroda as a town since at least the 14th century (Subbarao, 1953). Such old towns may be considered as exclusively urban, in the sense that their population was engaged in non-agricultural occupations, such as crafts, arts, trade, commerce, services, education, priesthood, administration and armed forces, with a king or his governor and his establishment at the top. The entire urban space of some of these towns was fortified by high and thick walls with huge gates. Baroda city had such walls and four gates in 1881. Even a small town, such as Dabhoi in Baroda district was fortified. There was no agricultural population within such a town.

Table 10. Number of Towns in Different Districts by Population Size

Population	Amreli	Baroda	Kadi	Navsari	Total No. of Towns
0–1,000	1	1		2	4
1,001–2,000	1	2	1	3	7
2,001–3,000				3	3
3,001–4,000	1		1	1	3
4,001–5,000	1	2	1	1	5
5,001–6,000	1		1		2
6,001–7,000		2		1	3
7,001–8,000		1			1
8,001–9,000		1	2		3
9,001–15,000		1	1	1	3
15,001+		1	4		5
Total no of towns	5	11	11	12	39

Source: The Dehzado records.

On the other hand, at least since the 16th century, a considerable number of villages in Gujarat had grown into small towns by a process that A.M. Shah has analysed in several writings (1982, 1988, 2002). In brief, when a village became prosperous on account of cultivation of commercial crops, such as indigo, cotton, tobacco, sugarcane, spices and oil seeds, it attracted many artisans, craftsmen, traders and servicemen from towns near and far to settle down. Eventually, it also became the capital of a little kingdom or the administrative centre of a province in a large kingdom. Such a town continued to have its erstwhile population of peasants and other castes associated with them. In 1881, Baroda state included a number of such towns. That is why the *Gazetteer of the Baroda State* stated:

The Baroda state is essentially agricultural and many of the so-called towns are merely overgrown villages of which a large proportion of the population is employed, either in the production, or in the distribution, of the fruits of the soil. Industrial enterprise and manufactures on the western model are confined to the city of Baroda and to four or five of the largest towns, such as Petlad, Patan, Sidhpur, Dabhoi, Amreli, Navsari and Bilimora. (Desai, 1923a, p. 94)

It is widely believed that the process of urbanisation involves migration of rural population to urban centres. However, it is necessary to recognise that this kind of urbanisation is linked with industrialisation, whereas pre-industrial or traditional urbanisation was linked with migration of urban population to rural communities, transforming them into small towns with mixed population. Actually, these two kinds of urbanisation can proceed side by side in a county of India's size and diversity.

Ethnic Composition of Towns

The towns had greater ethnic diversity than in villages. First, several different religions were represented in towns: Hinduism (with many sects), Jainism (with several sects), Islam (with several sects), Christianity (with several sects), Zoroastrianism and even some tribal religions. Second, the Hindus in towns were divided into many more castes than in villages. This ethnic diversity was related to much greater occupational diversity in towns than in villages, reflected in a large variety of occupations, such as traders, artisans, craftsmen, service men, cultural and religious specialists and rulers. Many of the urban occupations were practiced by diverse ethnic groups, for example, trade and commerce practiced by Hindus, Jains, Muslims and Parsis.

We have seen earlier the variations in the number of ethnic groups in villages (Table 6): the minimum was one, and the maximum twenty-five+. We have presented in Table 11 the data regarding the number of ethnic groups in towns. It shows that, of thirty-nine towns, two towns had 10–14 ethnic groups; three towns, 15–19 ethnic groups; and ten towns, 20–25 ethnic groups. This means that some villages could have as much ethnic diversity as had some towns, and we have to inquire into the specific nature of their ethnic diversity. The majority of the towns, however, had more than twenty-five ethnic groups each, the maximum of which was sixty-one in Baroda city. Actually, Baroda city and cantonment

Table 11. Number of Ethnic Groups in Towns in Baroda State

No. of Ethnic Groups	Name of Towns	Total
10–14	Siddhpur, Kalol	2
15–19	Vankal, Timba, Harij	3
20–25	Damnagar, Siyanagar, Palsana, Velachha, Mahuva, Songadh, Vyara, Atarsuba, Kheralu, Kadi	10
26–30	Dhari, Dwarka, Kodinar, Navsari, Gandevis, Kamrej, Variyav, Bilimora, Sisva, Charanda, Visnagar	11
31–35	Tilakwada, Jarod, Dehgam	3
36–40	Petlad, Padra, Sankheda, Mahesana, Vadnagar, Patan	6
41–45	Sinor, Dabhoi, Baroda cantonment	3
46–61	Baroda city	1
	Grand total	39

Source: The Dehzado records.

together formed Baroda Capital Territory, making it an urban space with even greater ethnic diversity.

While we have been able to examine a few issues concerning the rural society, we regret we have not been able to go beyond touching the surface of the urban society. Even an exploratory study of the latter would have required an analysis of the data concerning a large number of ethnic groups—more than sixty in Baroda city alone—and a collection of basic information about social life in as many as nearly thirty small towns. We hope further studies of urban centres will be undertaken sooner rather than later, which are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of Indian society.

However, we would like to make two points. First, while the majority of castes had sections of their population living in both villages and towns—even the so-called peasant castes had sections, especially the wealthy, power elites, living in towns—there were a number of castes living only in towns. They were hereditarily urban, in the sense that they lived in towns from generation to generation and, when necessary, migrated only to towns: for example, the writer caste of Kayastha, the silk weaver caste of Salvi and the betel-leaf seller caste of Tamboli (Shah, 1982, 1988).

Second, there were remarkable differences between the towns of the four districts of Baroda state regarding prevalence of castes. For example, the entertaining castes were found only in towns in Kadi district. The tribals were present even in towns, though in small numbers, in Baroda and Navsari districts, contrary to the general assumption that the tribals always lived in villages, especially in forest areas. And the minorities, particularly the Muslims, had a larger share of population in urban areas of Navsari and Amreli districts.

Concluding Observations

In this article, the Dehzado records of Baroda state are presented as an archival source for studying society in Gujarat from 1872 to 1931. That this state was fragmented into four districts in four sub-regions of Gujarat is both an advantage

and a disadvantage for such a study. On the one hand, it was representative of Gujarat in many ways, but on the other hand, it gave a fragmented view of the horizontal spread of its castes, tribes and religious communities.

As the Dehzado records are based on a census taken on one day, they allow us to take only a snapshot view of the society at one moment in time. However, they provide a useful benchmark for studying demographic and social change. Their full value would be realised only if the Dehzado records of the subsequent decennial censuses from 1891 to 1931 are also studied.

As these records, as far as we know, are unique among the archives of the Census of India, they are significant for studying social history of not only Gujarat but also certain aspects of social history of India in general, by way of at least generating hypotheses. We hope this article has given some idea of the richness of data for undertaking studies in this regard.

As Baroda state is widely recognised as one of a few progressive princely states in India, the idea of collecting and publishing data reported in this article seems to be part of a general approach to governance. It would be useful if scholars could find out, by an intensive study of Baroda state archives, the background of this innovation. Was the decision taken by the Maharaja himself, or by his Dewan, or by some other official? And what were the arguments for it?

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Notes

1. For a study of divisions among Jains, see Cort (2004); for that among Muslims, Misra (1964).
2. For an illustration of this method, see Shah (2002, pp. 213–218).
3. For a debate on this discourse, see Dirks (2003).
4. Although we have analysed the data concerning the Mahals in every district, we have not cited them in this article. Interested scholars may consult them at Centre for Culture and Development, Vadodara.
5. For ethnography of such a village, see A.M. Shah (1955).
6. We do not know if the tribals in villages of the latter kind had *jajmani* relations with the caste groups, or they worked only as agricultural labourers on the latter's farms, not involved in *jajmani* relations.
7. For early ethnography of Baroda state, see Desai (1912, 1923a, 1923b).
8. A few decades later, the Kanbis began to be called Patidars. For a modern anthropological study of Kanbis and Patidars, see Pocock (1972).
9. A few decades later, the Kolis began to be called Thakors. For a study of Kolis in the 19th century, see Clark (1984) and B.V. Shah (1982).
10. On relations between Rajputs and the tribals, see Shah (2010, *passim*).
11. For a field study of rural Parsis in the 1950s, see Shah (1955).

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