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# MAATI CHE JE CHE

An Audio Visual Documentary film that focuses on the problems faced by the Kumbhar community of Kachchh, mainly regarding clay procurement

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Feedback Page

# Acknowledgment

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Kachchh is a place that has been quite close to my heart, partly due to its immense beauty, that it gets from nature and the various crafts but mainly due to the beautiful people. I think everything that I had missed out on during the pandemic has been compensated for during the fieldwork. The stories I heard, the experiences I had and the things I have learnt have shaped me as a person and I hope it reflects in my project. I would like to acknowledge and thank all the people who have opened up to me about their experiences and took out their precious time to talk to me for this project.

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# Introduction

This is a short documentary film about the potter community of Bhuj in Kachchh, focusing on their craft and various problems involved. The land of Kachchh in Gujarat has a great cultural and geographical history, humans of the region went onto live in an arid land and weaved their livelihoods around it. The *Kumbhar* community has tried to utilize the uniqueness of the soil of the region. The salt laden soil which is absolutely futile in terms of producing any viable crop was found to be more than apt for making the most efficient pots to keep the water cool in the arid areas of Gujarat.

Majority earthen pots that all the cities of Gujarat get, are made by the potters of Kachchh till date. So the project focuses on how something as abundant and ignored as land or *Mitti* and how it has changed things for the people of Bhuj, in terms of their livelihood and profession. Having worked with the artisans prior I had a brief knowledge of the craft and community, but with eventual fieldwork I got to know more about the people, their livelihoods and the major problems involved with the sustenance.

The film focuses on the uniqueness of the craftsmanship of the community, mainly the process of *Gadhai* and the specialized painting done on the pots by the women folk. The documentary is central to Clay that is the major raw material for the craft. The final stages of the narrative touch upon the problem I started this project with, the scarcity and difficulty regarding the procurement of clay, by the potters of Bhuj.

The visual of the film follows the journey the potters have to undertake for

the procurement of clay. The process of making earthenware, their predicament due to the ever increasing scarcity of raw materials, their ways to cope with it, the idea of hope and future of the craft and the community. During the third semester, a lot of different project ideas were explored, which revolved around the idea of crafts and the communities. Shifting from the idea of educating people about various crafts and the people practising them. Under the guidance of my guides a craft form I was aware of was selected, and the focus was shifted to a single community.

Prof. Vishvajit Pandya and Prof. Madhumita Mazumdar made sure that I went to the field, had my research in place and I had clear idea of what need to be portrayed and what I aimed with this project. The way my research was steered and the comments and insights that I was provided during the course of this project, shaped up the final narrative.

# Project Brief

## Problem Statement

The aim of this project is to focus on how something as abundant and ignored as land or *Mitti*, has changed things for the Kumbhar community of Bhuj, in terms of their livelihood and profession.

## Need for Design

The Kumbhars of Kachchh have taken the legacy of their ancestors forward by making peace with challenges at hand and strive to sustain the craft of terracotta pottery. But there have been various big and small challenges always. While people, the craft and the craftsmen have been popularized, the challenges that they face are still unknown to many.

While there is lot of literature and visual content available in terms of highlighting the craft and popularizing it, nothing has been done to discuss the hardships and problems associated with it. Due to changing times and with introduction of new materials for making vessels and various items of rituals, the demand for terracotta has declined. But Kachchhi artisans are constantly testing the boundaries of their craft, ensuring that their work does not stagnate in a market whose whims are ever changing. Though it has been difficult for the potters with their art and innovation, they have tried to keep up with the times. What another change time has brought is industrialization and the ever increasing need of construction. One may ask how that affects a potter but in real sense it very greatly does, industrialization increases the need for bricks and land. Both of which lead

to a scarcity of availability of raw material for the potters, that is clay or *Mitti*. There are various problems that keep arising of which the concerned authorities are either unaware or are not bothered enough to take due actions towards. Hence, to highlight the gravity of the problem and make the people aware of it, one needs to communicate it in a way that they are paid heed to.

## Choice of Medium

The design project needed to easily communicate at a negligible cost to a varied group of targeted audience, in terms of age group, language and literacy. Hence for optimum engagement one needed to use Multimedia resources, and an amalgamation of both the audio and visual medium was finalized.. Therefore a documentary film was best medium of communication for this project. A film provides the inflexibility of putting forth complex ideas in a manner that it doesn't downgrade the bystander's own sensibilities and let them decide their own meaning from the filmmaker's stand point.

## Target Audience

The project was intended to reach the general public, including policy makers, NGO workers and activists. The Indian citizens in general were the target group. They could be either aware or unaware of the community, the craft and the problems shown in the film. The narrative aims at educating them about the community and their hardships, which may lead them to empathize with them.

# Pre-Production

## Ideation and Preliminary Research

The process of ideation started with research on different topics pertaining to social, economical environmental and cultural aspects of the Kumbhar community of Bhuj in Kachchh.

As per observation the artisans, specifically the potters of Bhuj, Kachchh, in this case are unable to sustain their livelihood and are struggling with something as basic as procurement of the raw material required i.e. terracotta clay and other materials used in painting and firing of the pots. It is observed that the problem is not caused by a single reason and arises on multiple grounds that vary in importance and whether they can be easily solved or not.

### a) Literature Review

i. Articles: There have been articles regarding the community and the crafts over the period of time and the following inferences were made while refereeing to them.

1. Pottery started during the Indus Valley Civilisation, in the region of present-day Kachchh. The gold and beaded jewellery, terracotta toys, bronze figurines, and seals with symbols found at the sites reflect the objects we use till day. One such object, unchanged through millennia, is the earthen pot, an ubiquitous object seen all over the country.

2. Meanwhile, another area where the potters collect their clay from has started losing out to a number of salt factories coming up in the vicinity. The excess salt that seeps into the ground makes the clay lose its special quality. The potters have written to the district collector expressing their concern.
3. With the products losing relevance, many of them replaced by metal, plastic and other artificial material, the “need” for such products has gone down drastically.
4. While potters are finding it difficult to sell their wares, there is also an issue of underpricing. The little diyas for example, are being bargained for Rs 2-3, which is a miserable amount if you look at the fact that the effort of the potter – finding and sourcing the clay, kneading/wedging, making, firing, painting – is hardly covered. The size of the object might be small, but no one want to give him what’s due for his effort. For a potter, at these prices, his business is not sustainable.
5. Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) issued the Operational Guidelines of Kumbhar Sashaktikaran Program (Pottery’ activities) vide a notification dated 09/16/2020. This pilot project is an initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for the empowerment of the potter’s community in the remotest of locations in the country. Under these pilot programs, beneficiaries will be provided skill training and modern pottery machines.



6. Once several villages in the Rann of Kutch such as Khavda, Lodai, Tuna were hubs of pottery-making. Potters crafted beautiful items such as pots for water storage, plates, glasses, bowls, lamps, boxes that were coloured in the trademark geru (red) colour and embellished with black paint. But today Khavda pottery, as it is known, is in dire straits.

Documentaries: Following are a few documentaries that acted as a reference point in terms of gathering and presenting information, as well as explaining the kind of progress that has been made thus far-

1. **Story of Khavda Pottery**

In the small village of Khavda, Gujarat, centuries are intact in this pottery craft. A craft that can be traced back to Indus Valley civilisation. Carefully chosen mud, are ground, sieved & soften, shaped on a potter's wheel, are left to dry in sun & shade. The amber coloured surface is decorated with natural Black & White.

2. **Khavda Painted Pottery in Rann of Kutch | Gujarat | Rann Utsav | Handicraft (Outlook Traveller)**

One of the oldest known art forms to exist, this painted pottery is inspired by nature in its designs and colours. Meet the artisans of Khavda Village as you visit the Rann of Kutch this season. #ChaloRann

3. **Life of an Artisan | Kutch Pottery | Indian Traditional Crafts | Matters Of Hand (Serendipity Arts Festival)**

Ramzu Bhai is a potter from Bhuj, Gujarat whose entire family is involved in the traditional occupation of kutch pottery. Matters of Hand: Craft, Design and Technique, curated by Rashmi Varma. Forms of shelter, furniture, floor covering, lighting, kitchen utensils and storage are imbued with story and embody thought processes, perfect-imperfections, function and aesthetic integrity extending from the creators themselves.

4. **Khamir Presents Ghadai by the Potters of Kutch**

This movie of "Ghadai" narrates lives and issues of potters of Kachchh. It was developed as part of Ghadai exhibition organised by Khamir in year 2014. It was a unique exhibition on lives and issues of Potters of Kachchh. It narrates lives and issues of the Potters of Kachchh.

- b) **Field Visit**

Before field work, a few telephonic interviews and discussions were scheduled. First two interviews were with Niraj Dave who is a craft designer and owns a pottery studio in Bhuj, Kachchh. This was done in order to navigate what all problems exist and to get a better idea of the situation, craft and the artisans involved. After the recognition of various problems and inferences, further interviews were conducted with Ramzan Ali Mohammad (Ramzu Bhai), who is a master potter living and working in Bhuj for around 30 years. These conversations made me aware of the current scenario better and broke some assumptions and myths. While during the month of September, I visited Bhuj and Kumbhar Vaas for the first field visit. Conclusions made from the interviews were-

- Niraj Sir mentioned that clay is used in almost all everyday objects, is considered sacred by the locals and are used in both auspicious occasions like marriage and even during the death practices.

- Women cook and store food in earthen ware and kids play with terracotta toys. One of the most important rituals is during the time of navratri, where the sthapana of the idol of the goddess is done, along with which the decorated Garbo pots are brought in the house for all the nine days. This practice has both a religious and spiritual meaning. Garbo is considered an embodiment of the universe, and lighting a flame inside signifies the existence of life. The numbers of how many such pots are produced every season has reduced but it is still a very prevalent ritual.

- While other rituals include making the four pillars around the Lagan Mandap (Marriage stage) using big to small sizes of pots stacked together on the four sides on the square arena where the marriage rituals take place. There are a lot of beliefs behind the significance of the four pillars while some mention the pillars symbolize the four stages of life as per the Hindu Vedas, that are Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and ending with Sanyasa, that both the people who are getting together today will stay with each other all throughout these stages. While some other interpretations suggest that they represent the parents of the couple who will always have their blessing on their children and the walls of the home where the newly married couple will start their life afresh, in a protected environment.

- Whereas on Diwali terracotta toys are gifted to children of the family and that of friends and relatives. That is something which has become a tradition over the years, terracotta toys take up their form and inspiration still from the ones that have been there from the Indus Valley Civilization. But recently the toys have commercialised and changed a lot too, due to them being more acceptable in the market.

- At present there are around 154 potter families in Kachchh scattered in different villages and towns. Though these families are potter families but when there is an off season or there is a limited need of products in the market and hence they end up doing odd jobs. Initially potters were majorly residing in Anjar, Gundiyali and Khavda regions of Kachchh. But after the 2001 earthquake many of the families rehabilitated and have relocated to various villages of Bhuj.

- Due to changing times and with introduction of new materials for making vessels and various items of rituals, the demand for terracotta has declined. But Kachchhi artisans are constantly testing the boundaries of their craft, ensuring that their work does not stagnate in a market whose whims are ever changing. Though it has been difficult for the potters with their art and innovation, they have tried to keep up with the times.

- What another change time has brought is industrialization and the ever increasing need of construction. One may ask how that affects a potter but

in real sense it very greatly does, Industrialisation increases the need for bricks and land. Both of which lead to a scarcity of availability of raw materials for the potters.

- Changes in terms of commercialisation or the various demands of the market have been quite well understood by a lot of potters, which has inspired them to innovate and in turn make good money. While there are others who just focus on pottery during the peak seasons and sustain themselves and their families by doing odd jobs otherwise. Moreover with the talks of sustainability and ways to curb climate change, the shift towards terracotta as kitchenware has been greatly promoted.

- The government acknowledges the potters and hence has given them the rights to procure any amount of clay from the land owned by them. But off late there has been either illegal acquisition of land or it being sold to third parties, which restricts the procurement. Moreover, even from the land remaining a large chunk of clay is taken by the brick manufacturers as the process requires a lot of clay and there is an ever increasing demand of bricks for construction.

- Ramzu Bhai confirms that since the last 3-4 years they have been managing somehow to procure clay, but often when the assigned person reaches the usual spot to collect clay all that they find is a big hollow pit inside the land instead. He explains that the whole of his household is part of the pot making process, each individual has a role and responsibility. The various processes have been divided between the members of the family and

if there is a delay or shortage for even one section the whole process becomes slow. He exclaimed the plight of not getting the Mitti is real and is one of the major concerns for the potters of Bhuj.

- Higher authorities are very difficult to reach and more so generally they get some support from the other organisations to reach the government but due to covid and lack of medium for the potters, they are fighting against the brick kiln owners all alone.

# Script / Story Board

## STRUCTURE NOTES

### *1. Maati che je che (Working Title)*

Narrator: Ramzan Ali Muhammad (Ramzu Bhai)

Stakeholders showcased: Ramzu Bhai and his family, Niraj Dave, Local potter communities, Locals of Bhuj, Brick Making Sites

Story Structure (Version 1)

Seq.	Structure Points	Shots	Interview
1	<p><b>Introduction</b> – The film begins with hands molding wet clay on the potter's wheel, that has taken the form of a pot. Then the process of degeneration (reverse clip) of the pot is shown, at a slightly higher speed. The video stops at the time when the lump of clay is about to be thrown on the potter's wheel. We see an empty potter's wheel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Showcase the process of molding clay to form a pot.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Degeneration of the pot.</i></li><li>- <i>The lump of clay being thrown on the wheel.</i></li><li>- <i>Empty potter's wheel rotating.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai working</i></li></ul>

<p>2</p>	<p><b>Introduction to the Problem</b> – Ramzu Bhai is seen kneading the clay with his hands. Then he starts talking about the various processes involved in making the pots. The journey of one or two members of the family is shown where they go to a nearby lake to collect clay. At the site of the clay collection there are these big pits, instead of adequate clay. The boys/men have a conversation which shows them being disappointed and dissatisfied by the clay found. There is a constant back and forth happening. They manage to get something but their faces show dissatisfaction and a sense of disappointment.</p> <p>Then he shares that this has been a problem the community is facing since the past few years. Though the craft is age old and has been passed on from generations to generation but each and every generation has had their own set of problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase the journey of collecting clay from the collection site.</li> <li>• Brief discussion about the problem of collection of clay and its adequate unavailability.</li> <li>• Interview with Ramzu Bhai.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai's face shows where he is busy kneading the clay.</i></li> <li>- <i>The space is shown, that is Ramzu Bhai's house and workplace.</i></li> <li>- <i>The two boys/men are shown going on their way to collecting clay.</i></li> <li>- <i>The site of collection.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai working.</i></li> </ul>
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<p>3</p>	<p><b>History of the place and community</b> – The visuals show the Bhujia fort overlooking the city of Bhuj and the dusty land with the sparse vegetation that the region has all throughout.</p> <p>Ramzu Bhai while looking and breaking the dry chunks of dry lumps of clay, he talks about the land of Kachchh which essentially is a barren landscape with a salt laden desert, which is filled with saltwater for more than half the year. Ramzu Bhai talks about how his ancestors made the most of the land which would grow just nothing and geographical conditions were essentially dry and arid. He talks about the art of making pots being passed down from generation to generation, making it a source of pride and subsequent livelihood for most of the resident potter families of the area. When nomads settled down in cities of Gujarat at the beginning of civilization, it was a turning point for the way humans would live. A settled life meant agriculture, which meant excess grain, and that gave rise to trading and exchange and eventually seals and currency. Staying in one place in cities, it also implied construction and storage. This is where the use of mud came into existence, with the production of bricks and storage vessels.</p> <p>He talks about himself that he was born in Khedoi village of Anjar block, Kachchh. Since childhood he started learning different techniques of pottery, at the initial age of his life he used to make bricks, but he learned all the forms of pottery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Top of Bhujia Fort, overlooking the city of Bhuj</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work.</i></li> <li>- <i>Visuals of the Salt Laden Rann</i></li> <li>- <i>Images of the pots found from the Harappan Civilization.</i></li> <li>- <i>Images of the pots found from the Harappan Civilization.</i></li> <li>- <i>Visuals of Ramzu Bhai's family at work.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work.</i></li> </ul>
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	<p>slowly and started producing it. He made matkas, bowls, glass, plates etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase the city of Bhuj, the locals and Kumbhar Vaas.</li> <li>• Showcase the process of starting to prepare the clay.</li> <li>• Interview with Ramzu Bhai.</li> </ul>		
4	<p><b>Processes of preparing the clay and Earthquake</b> – The process of preparing the clay is a long one and generally carried out by the females of the family, the initial process involves the clay that is brought in to be broken into small pieces. While the pieces are being broken, Ramzu Bhai talks about the time when all of Kachchh looked like a pile of broken pieces of hard clay. In 2001 a massive earthquake occurred having its epicenter in the Bhachau taluka of Kutch, killing around 20k people and destroying about 3.5 lakh buildings. The earthquake almost completely destroyed Bhuj, Anjar Lakhat and surrounding big and small villages. It greatly impacted Ramzu Bhai and his family, leaving them with a broken home and forcing them to rehabilitate in Bhuj with other potters. The rehabilitation resulted in the forming of Kumbhar Vaas and a lot of government organizations and NGOs helping revive the crafts local to the area. Ramzu Bhai recalls it was a shock and how overcoming the damage and trauma seemed impossible but</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Dry clay chunks being broken into smaller pieces. Then being added to water.</i></li> <li>- <i>Stock Footage of 2001 earthquake.</i></li> <li>- <i>Images of Ramzu Bhai's home from the earthquake (if available).</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai at work.</i></li> <li>- <i>Images of the 2002 riots and the destruction. The communal rift, between the hindu and muslim communities.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work.</i></li> </ul>

	<p>even after more than 2 decades to the natural disaster, the memories of that particular disaster seem unreal.</p> <p>The images and stock footage of the earthquake, pictures of the locals of the times and how the rehabilitation took place.</p> <p>The visuals shift to the discarded and broken pots lying in the vicinity.</p> <p>But the rehabilitation took time but he strived for it further when the riots of 2002 took place almost just a year apart from the earthquake. He tells about that time that he had to leave khedoi after the riots, as the Darbar community of the village had issues with the Muslim khumbhars. They started neglecting them and this negative behavior from the Darbar community forced him to leave the village and shift to Bhuj. As Ramzu bhai being a sensitive and emotional human being he always felt that Hindus and Muslims of Kachchh have always lived peacefully since years. He wanted peace of mind and realizing the better opportunities he shifted to Bhuj with his entire family.</p> <p>The chunks of clay when softened, are kneaded with dry mud, to make the clay fit for usage, in a similar way craft clusters were formed and a lot of potter families and artisans now coexist at a single place in various villages all across Kachchh.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The rehabilitation and setting up of houses in Bhuj.</i></li> <li>- <i>Visuals and footage of Kumbhaar Vaas.</i></li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase the process of preparing the clay.</li> <li>• Stock footage of earthquake and destruction.</li> <li>• Stock footage of 2002 riots</li> <li>• Showcase the process of rehabilitation starting.</li> <li>• Interview with Ramzu Bhai.</li> </ul>		
5	<p><b>Preparing the clay further and life after the earthquake</b>  – The clay requires a lot of kneading, and women of the family take their turns in preparing clay. Ramzu Bhai’s wife and sister in law apart from preparing meals for the family, take care of making the clay, perfect for the process. Women are an integral part of the process and most of the females of the family can throw pots on a wheel; they are more engaged in other processes. After the mixing and the kneading the clay the lumps of clay are put into a machine which removes the excess air and gaps from the mixture and compresses them into cylindrical forms.</p> <p>Here Ramzu Bhai talks about how after the earthquake life felt like starting all over again. He had to work with NGOs which gave him a chance to collaborate and learn from various students and designers. CARE India started working for the rehabilitation of the artisan community. RamzuBhai started working with CARE India. There he got a Chance to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Females of the family are busy kneading the clay, and mixing them vigorously.</i></li> <li>- <i>Females and young boys using the compressing machine to form cylinders of kneaded clay.</i></li> <li>- <i>Images of Ramzu Bhai working with CARE INDIA</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai at work.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work.</i></li> </ul>

	<p>interact with 25 designers of NIFT. He started learning new design techniques, shapes, firing, etc with these designers; he loved to learn new forms. He was involved in different workshops, exposures conducted by CARE India, this made his vision broad and a new ray of hope was developed in Ramzu Bhai. He exclaims just like clay he as a potter, was also kneaded time and again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase the process of preparing the clay.</li> <li>• Images of Ramzu Bhai working with CARE India.</li> <li>• Interview with Ramzu Bhai.</li> </ul>		
6	<p><b>Throwing the clay on the wheel and new learnings</b> – The cylinders of clay are then thrown on the potter's wheel and with his hands Ramzu Bhai starts giving shape to the lump of clay with steady motions and calculated hand movements. As the pot takes shape Ramzu Bhai talks how in 2015 he joined Khamir NGO and at 45 years he was a student again. He states an artist named Prithvi Singh Deo from Orissa visited khamir and was a consultant in the pottery section,</p> <p>RamzuBhai considers him as his true teacher (guru). He started learning with him new forms and designs, Mr. Deo taught him to make different glazes, clay bodies, gas firing, and wood firing. Ramzu Bhai's knowledge in the dark was</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Lump of clay being thrown onto the pot and with regulated hand movements the clay taking a form.</i></li> <li>- <i>Hands shaping the clay with movements.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai at work</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai instructing his sons.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work.</i></li> </ul>

	<p>enhanced with these inputs. He started using new technology in his work. He also simultaneously taught the techniques to his children and other people of his community. He says he has always wanted to do the best in the field and sustain the traditional pottery of Kachchh.</p> <p>The pot gets its form and at this stage Ramzu Bhai slices off the pot from the wheel, with this he realizes and exclaims that, though pottery is something that was given to Ramzu Bhai as his family legacy, he has learnt and unlearnt things about it time and again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase the process of throwing a pot on the wheel.</li> <li>• Showcase Ramzu Bhai working at Khamir. Images of him working with Mr. Deo in 2015.</li> <li>• Interview with Ramzu Bhai.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai having conversations with other potters.</i></li> <li>- <i>Images or footage of Ramzu bhai at Khamir, the NGO.</i></li> <li>- <i>Images of Ramzu Bhai with Mr. Deo (if any of them are available).</i></li> </ul>	
7	<p><b>Gadhai and Modernisation</b> – When a pot comes off a potter’s wheel it has yet not achieved its final form and the perfect finesse is achieved a day later, after the clay gets sundried. The surface of the pot is beaten by the ladle to give it the original spherical form. The surface is made thinner and finer with every beating until the surface is even and gets the perfect form. Hence each pot that gets made is different from each other though however similar they look.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Flat base pots sun drying in the open verandah.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work, beating the pots with a paddle.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work.</i></li> <li>- <i>Niraj Sir at his studio.</i></li> </ul>

	<p>Ramzu Bhai here talks about how with changing times change is inevitable and that is one thing that he has adopted. For the past many years Ramzu Bhai has been closely working with Niraj Dave, who used to work in Khamir and now has his own pottery studio. Together they keep learning about new things and new trends. Working with Niraj Sir and NGOs like Khamir has educated Ramzu Bhai about the ongoing market trends and how pottery and terracotta craft has changed for the consumers.</p> <p>Niraj Sir talks about how things have changed for the craft and what has been its impact on the community. The way they have learned things over time and experimented, yet have gone to the basics when need be. In true sense their life shaping up has been similar to the process of Gadhai.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase the process of starting to prepare the clay.</li> <li>• Stock footage of earthquake and destruction.</li> <li>• Showcase the modern day terracotta products. Tour of Niraj sir's studio.</li> <li>• Interview with Ramzu Bhai and Niraj Sir.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai working with Niraj Sir, they are having a conversation.</i></li> <li>- <i>Niraj sir talking about modernisation.</i></li> <li>- <i>Images or footage of Niraj sir's studio in Bhuj, with varieties of new age terracotta products .</i></li> <li>- <i>Images or footage of Ramzu Bhai and Niraj sir at various exhibitions and with students.</i></li> </ul>	
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<p>8</p>	<p><b>Painting pots and women in the community</b> – After Gadhai that the pots get their final form, then they are cleaned and put in the sun to dry and then they are beautified with natural paints made out of various stones, mainly white, red and black in colour. The terracotta pots of Gujarat are distinct from the ones we may see elsewhere, because of their smooth finish which is a result of repeated cleaning at every stage of the process of their making and their unique painted surfaces.</p> <p>This process is primarily done by the women of the house. The pots get their red colour from Geru, a type of soil (ocher/ umber), and the black and white dots and stripes are also made with natural material. The forms that are painted consist of dividing the pot in various sections by drawing lines on them and the sections are filled with curved lines and geometric patterns. This human need for adornment and decoration is timeless.</p> <p>Ramzu Bhai is a Sufi, and is a very open minded person, always embracing the changes in life. Always ready for new dynamics and challenges, he is a very broad minded person and wants his children to be the same. He got married 30 years ago and he gave equal freedom to his wife. It was difficult in the kumbhar community to get a girl for marriage as girls and women in the community had to perform difficult tasks like mud preparation, making the instruments ready for work, bringing the water etc. Due to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>After Gadhai, the pots being lined up and sundried</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work, making the initial lines with paints.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai's daughter painting the pots.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai proudly inspecting his daughter at work .</i></li> <li>- <i>The various motifs and patterns being formed on the pot.</i></li> <li>- <i>Women of the house indulging in various processes of making a pot.</i></li> <li>- <i>Females sharing light moments with each other or playing with the kids while working.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai while at work.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ramzu Bhai's Daughter at work.</i></li> </ul>
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# Production

## Equipments

I was equipped with a Canon EOS 200D II DSLR Camera with 18-55 mm Lens Kit, a lapel microphone and a tripod during the fieldwork, along with that I always had my laptop handy during the field visits. Major chunk of the shooting was done handheld and while the tripod was used during the interviews and landscape shots. I also managed to use the tripod in the form of a gimbal for extra stability while executing tracking shots.

Lapel microphone was extensively used during the interviews and while recording some of the background sounds. I also had backup batteries for the camera that I recharged them a night prior while night on the field. Apart from this I always kept at least two memory cards with me, for adequate storage of the footage.

## Planning

I was always ready for the unexpected as from the very start of the project nothing went the way I thought it would. Once in the field one realizes no amount of extensive research, prior fieldwork or making a storyboard can prepare you for the fact that you might not be able to capture things as planned. Due to various factors, shooting becomes an overwhelming process and to prevent this, I planned for the shoot a day earlier. All the equipment had to be checked twice and readied. A short supply of essential food and water needed to be there. Although depending on the

circumstances, availability and the interviewee, unplanned questions were asked to them, yet a set of questionnaires was kept handy at all times. Even the list of shots to be taken, were written in a handy journal.

For instance, the following set of information was readied before the start of the outdoor shoot in the field;

Questionnaire (for other potters): Varying perspectives and opinions of different people regarding the community and the problem were needed. That is why a common questionnaire was made for all the interviewees. So, This set of questions was asked to every interviewee.

- What is your name? What is your age?
- What do you do? Where do you belong to?
- Since when have you been indulgent in this craft?
- How did earthquake affect them?
- Who all in their family, take part in the craft?
- What problems do people face? What do they do about it?
- Has it been the same for everyone?
- This problem dates back to when?
- Are the solutions feasible and viable?
- What help have they had from the government? Or from the other NGOs?
- Who is responsible for the problems?
- Have people left pottery? What are the alternatives?
- Will they continue the craft? Do they want their children to do so too?

Apart from common questions, a set of specific questions were also made for every interviewee. Following are the sets of questionnaire and shots' list for Ramzu Bhai, who is a Master Artisan and the central character and Mr. Niraj Dave, who is a Craft Designer.

#### a) Questionnaire (Ramzu Bhai)

- Who were his ancestors?
- Where does he belong to and why did he leave his village?
- What was earthquake like and its effects on him?
- How was settling in Bhuj and Kumbhar vaas like?
- What does he feel about working with people /NGOs and learning?
- What does he think about modernization and how has he adapted to it?
- What has been the change for him
- What have been his achievements and set backs?
- What is the role of women of the community?
- Why can't the clay be replaced by some other form of clay?
- Who are the main people responsible for the current crisis?
- What all has been done?
- What all are they doing as a community?
- What does he feel for the community?
- Have people left the craft of pottery?
- Why did they leave pottery?
- What he thinks about the future of the craft?
- Does he want his family to continue this craft?

- Is there hope in terms of the problems at hand?
- Are there any other problems related to the craft?
- What are his general thoughts about their livelihood?
- What are his thoughts on sustaining the craft?

#### List of Shots

- Long, mid and closeup shots of interviewee
- Long and mid shots of him working on the wheel
- Mid shots of him doing Gadhai
- Shots of him showing his tools and products
- Shots of him taking out seeds out of the containers
- Mid and closeup shots of different earthen ware
- Mid and closeup shots of his hands while at work
- Long and mid shots of his home and verandah
- Shots of his family
- Panning shots of the insides and the outsides
- Shots of the lane leading up to his home
- Shots of pots being made
- Shots of him having menial things to do
- Shots of clay
- Long, mid and closeup shots of all the process involved
- Long, mid and closeup shots of pots and earthenware
- Long, mid and closeup shots of people at work

## b) Questionnaire (Niraj Dave)

- What has been the shift in the craft ?
- When did the shift come into being?
- What does modernisation mean for the craft?
- What led to setting up Dehaati Studio?
- What it is like working with Ramzu Bhai and other potters?
- What is the problem of clay collection?
- Does he get to face problems too?
- How does he think, it has affected potters?
- What is his idea about future of the craft
- What has been done about the problem?

## List of Shots

- Long, mid and closeup shots of interviewee
- Long and mid shots of him working
- Mid shots of the products
- Shots of him showing his tools and products
- Shots of him taking out seeds out of the containers
- Mid and closeup shots of different earthen ware
- Mid and closeup shots of the surroundings
- Long and mid shots of the studio

## Shooting

The shooting process a lot of planning and there was substantial back and forth before I could start with the shooting process. As I am not a resident of Bhuj my visit to the field was limited to two times only. But having worked with Ramzu Bhai and Niraj sir in the past helped me connect with them better. I have visited and stayed in Bhuj earlier for a couple of times, spanning up to 10-15 days, making the place familiar to me.

My first field visit was done on 24th September. I had left Ahmedabad by a bus on the night of 23rd September and reached Bhuj at 8 am in the morning the next day. I got down at Kukma and went to Niraj Sir's homestay cum studio which is near the NGO Khamir by 9:30. Then we left for Kumbhar vaas in a Chhagda( a local auto rickshaw) where we could meet Ramzu Bhai, have further conversations and see all of his family at work. Once we reached his home, I had further interviews with both Niraj Sir and Ramzu Bhai, other potters working at Kumbhar vaas and their families involved in the process of making pots. Though the first field visit gave me insights the main shooting process was done in the month of March. It involved a lot of pre planning, yet some things were spontaneous as per the situations.

Though certain things were shot during the first field visit, most of them were images for visual referencing. Since the subject matter and topics of the interviews was the same as it was after the final research proposal, I got



to use a lot of that data later as well. The final shooting and fieldwork, was delayed than what was planned due to the ailing health of Ramzu Bhai, the central character. Even finalizing the right flow and structure for the film took time. There were various alterations made and after reworking three to four versions, one was finalized.

The shoot was done over five days, while I was present in the field for a week. The first two days were spent talking, exploring and doing a quick recce of the places. I tried to capture the highlighted landmarks and distinct places mentioned in the narrative. Apart from shooting the planned list of shots for everyday at field, I tried to capture anything that caught my attention. There were a lot of things that I discovered while shooting and being on the field which could be used in context of the film.

During the interviews, I tried to capture everyone in their comfort zones and I tried blurring using shallow depth of field. I tried to make sure that the character's face is neither over nor underexposed. For me to get the most honest and candid viewpoints of the interviewees, so it was important to make them feel comfortable in front of me and the camera.

The first two days I had good conversations with people all around Kumbhar vaas, by the end of them it was so heartwarming that everyone recognized me and addressed me as *Bai*, which is term for lady in the Kachchhi language.

Even though most of the interviews had been planned at least a day earlier, I

would go into their houses or work areas and converse with them and politely ask them if I could interview them regarding their work and the problems. They were all very fascinated and excited to be on camera yet a little apprehensive so I showed them how other people had spoken and if they were willing too. All the interviewees very sweet, welcoming and were open to share their perspective, which made the whole process quite smooth and pleasant.

# Post-Production

## Organizing Footage

A lot of data was captured during the fieldwork and production. The data was in the form of video clips, photographs and audio files and that needed to be organized first. At the end of the shoot everyday I would transfer the data to my laptop at the end and organize them into folders. After the production process, different folders were made for footage, audio files, edited files, photographs, documents. Subsequently the data was moved into sub folders inside them, depending upon the content and the context.

The next step involved importing footage and audio files and organizing them in the editing software, Premiere Pro. Different bins for footages, audio, music, graphics, rough cuts, stock footages, archival photos etc were made. Most of the data went into the footage bin, where a lot of sub-bins were made. All the interviews were kept in separate bins along with their respective audio files. Different bins for B-roll footages were made, where I kept similar footages in groups. I used markers, labels and tracks to create easy distinctions for good and bad footages, so that they were accessible to me throughout the editing process.

## Transcription

To build a narrative from all the data that I had been captured, the interviews were transcribed first. I watched all the interviews I had taken to get familiar with all that was said and told to determine what worked and

what did not. I began by roughly transcribing the important and usable parts of the interviews in a word processor. Along with transcribing, I divided each interview into sections on the software along with making notes in my journal so that it could be used at the time of the editing. Depending on the type of content I got from interviews, I made a thematic table and put parts of the interviews inside different sections of the table. This helped me quickly differentiate the parts of interviews that were related to a specific theme or topic and could be easily referenced at the time of building the final narrative.

## Narrative

During the initial fieldwork, I was able to get in touch with most of the people who ended up playing pivotal characters of the documentary film. They introduced me to all the aspects of the community, the myths related to it, the craft and how they no longer are relevant and steered my focus to the problems that no one associates with the craft or the community as a whole. The first field visit helped me get a clearer idea of what should be the focal point of the narrative and what all can be used as context to drive it forward.

The narrative was built on a three act structure. The first act introduces the subject matter. The second act shows the depth of issues and main conflicts in the question. The third act finally provides a resolution to the conflict. This film is about the community and their struggles and victories, hence the structure of the film had to be worked around them only.

So, the first act is about the introduction to the problem that is the unavailability of clay and its importance for the community. This part presents the idea mostly through the visuals and the voiceover.

The first act does not give away much, in fact it leaves the viewer to piece it together what the film wants to represent or finally talk about. This leaves the viewer engaged and wanting to know more about what's to come.

Then the second act helps us understand the problem and the community facing it. Here the people of the community talk about their struggles. The struggles of the past and the ones that are at hand, the narrative is weaved such that through the various processes involved we get to know the various aspects of the Kumbhar community of Bhuj. The problem of procurement of clay is discussed at length by the central characters and others, to reach the peak of tension before we finally move into the third act.

The third act answers the question, "What is being done about the issue at hand?" It expands on the people's response to the problem, solutions and expectations before reaching a resolution.

#### ACT-1:

- It starts at Ramzu Bhai's house with him making a pot. Then we move on to the process of degeneration of the same pot
- We then move forward to the problem that is the unavailability of clay.

#### ACT-2:

- Then we talk about the craft and its history and about the community's history all through Ramzu Bhai. The processes are intertwined with stories which describe the various stages. The stories are then intertwined with the processes (constant kneading of clay and formation of clay lumps, removal of the pot from the wheel) involved along with the various struggles.
- We then move to the part where the pot is kept for a day to sun dry and then they are beaten with a paddle to give them the final form, where we then talk about the modernisation of the craft and how the community has adapted around it.
- Then we come to the preparation for firing of the pots where we talk about how in a similar fashion bricks also get fired and most of the clay is unavailable due to this reason only. The problem is discussed in depth, what have been the consequences and how has the community suffered.

#### ACT-3:

- Then the firing starts and Ramzu Bhai talks about how things have been difficult time and again. Then he elaborates about their efforts regarding the problem and what is being done about it by the various organizations involved.
- Ramzu Bhai concludes that he has always done whatever is required of him to sustain the craft and hopes to continue to do so till they can.

#### FINAL SCENE:

The narrative comes to end with Ramzu Bhai talking about clay.

# Story Board

## First Act: The clay isn't available

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Kachchhi Folk Song



Title - Maati Che Je Che



The rocks are being broken, to get clay



Big Craters instead of clay at pond site

"Life is just a lump of Clay", said Haku Shah, the Indian anthropologist. With the abundance and versatility of clay one can never question its viability or it being a concern.

## Second Act: The Community

### CAMERA/SOUND

### DIALOGUE/VO



The Bhujia fort overlooking the city

Bhuj city was founded in the 1500s by Maha Rao Hamir, the capital of Kachchh has always been important for its rich crafts and history. The city is lined by the massive Fortress walls on the Bhujio dungar.



Rann and the soil of Kachchh

Kachch gets its name from the vast salt laden marshy lands of the Rann. The excessive salt in the ground has made Bhuj a hub for Salt production. The salt laden soil which is absolutely futile in terms of producing any viable crop is found to be more than apt for making the most efficient pots to keep the water cool in the arid areas of Gujarat.



Potter making a pot on a traditional potter's wheel, steered by hand. Members of the community are busy finishing terracotta birdhouses.

The clay even with the excessive salt is the only source of livelihood for the local potter community. With large potter families indulgent in the craft they rely heavily on clay for sustenance.



Ramzu Bhai Talking about himself and his history.

## Second Act: The Community

### CAMERA/SOUND

### DIALOGUE/VO



Garba Pot being made

However plain and beautiful a pot may look, a lot of time and effort goes into making one. The clay itself undergoes a lot of changes before attaining a form.



Various transitions of clay



Various transitions of clay



Broken pots and earthenware

While a pot is baked to make it solid and stable, things don't pan out the way they should all the time. Just like our lives the pots are fragile ergo certain pots are going to crack or break, just like the lives of people did, after the earthquake.

## Second Act: The Community

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Stock footage of destruction during earthquake, of the news pieces from 2001.



Stock footage of destruction during earthquake, of the news pieces from 2001.



Fade to visuals of Dry clay chunks being broken into smaller pieces.



Chunks of dry clay are mixed vigorously, to create a slurry.

The way dry clay is mixed with water to make a slurry, these potters had to change the ways of their lives too.

## Second Act: The Community

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



The slurry moves through various channels finally dumped into a big pit.



Visuals of Kumbhar vaas and Ramzu Bhai's house there.

Just the way the slurry of clay moves through various channels to finally be dumped in a section to rest and get ready to be used, people resettled and started their lives afresh. Ramzu Bhai and his family moved to Kumbhar Vaas in Bhuj from their ancestral village Khedoi, they had to rebuild their homes and livelihoods but this place has been their everything for the past 20 years.



Ramzu Bhai talks about resettling



The visual depicts cylinders of clay are thrown on the potter's wheel

After the clay is sun dried, lumps of clay are formed that are thrown on a potter's wheel to be shaped

## Second Act: The Community

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Earthenware left to sun dry



Perfect round pots



Process of Gadhai

What we see as a pot is a spherical earthenware but something that is often missed is the fact that when the pots come off the wheel they have a flat base. A product might not be perfect when it comes off the pot

The process of shaving, rhythmic beating and reshaping of a pot is known as Gadhai. It is one of the most pivotal processes.

For a Kumbhar just throwing a pot on the wheel is not enough, finishing it to a certain degree of finesse is important, that's where the tedious process of gadhai comes into play. What we get in the market at dirt cheap prices are the products of skilled labor and craftsmanship of these communities.



Pictures of Ramzu Bhai over the years

## Second Act: The Community

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Ramzu Bhai talking about Change



Visuals of Studio Dehaati



Niraj Sir

The major change in craft has been, material. People are now more aware of the material, not only the craft. Even though, it has been used since ages for making utensils and in architecture. But people had forgotten this craft can be used in today's times as well, now with time, everyone is realizing that.



Women of the family an integral part of the process

Not just the men, even the women of the community play an integral role in all the processes to make earthenware. They actively participate in both the indoor and outdoor activities.

Apart from managing housework they do not fear the strenuous processes that involve manual labor.

## Second Act: The Community

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Women are the painters in the family



The painting and the motifs



Deterioration with painting

This unique art is depleting, due to the decreasing involvement of women. Earlier women of the family were dedicated to the art of painting, whole heartedly. The quality of painting has deteriorated, we just have six good painters in our house, whereas in all Kachchh there will be 6 more, there are others, but they are no good.



Preparing the kiln

The family members prepare the kiln, it being completely ready and the process of firing starting. The whole process of firing a kiln.

## Second Act: The Community

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Firing the pots

NARRATOR  
Once the pots are painted and dried the kilns are prepared for firing. All the products are systematically placed in the kiln and a fire is ignited at the mouth. With the heat exuding, all the contents of the kiln are slowly and thoroughly baked. This process is time consuming hence all one can do is wait.



Talking about the survey

According to a 2001 survey there were 2500 potters working, but as per the latest one, there are only 150 potter families working in Kachchh right now.



Making pots

Though the process of making a pot looks alluring, it involves a lot of complexities and obstacles that the community has been trying to overcome for quite some time.



The main problem



**Third Act: What do the potter's say**

**CAMERA/SOUND**

**DIALOGUE/VO**



Clay the major issue



The amount of bricks made



Ramzu Bhai talks about the problem

We face issues regarding clay, unavailability of adequate space, and that of wood or fuel, these are the major problems. But the biggest problem is procuring clay, other problems can still be dealt with. For space we can build more and more floors, and as for fuel we can use other alternatives, either garbage, gas or diesel. But for clay there is no other alternative.



Ahmad Bhai talks about clay usage

All the clay that you see here, if we potters used it, it would last us around 20 years. But if the brick makers will use it to make bricks, it would last them only seven to eight days.

**Third Act: What do the potter's say**

**CAMERA/SOUND**

**DIALOGUE/VO**



Brick kilns the main problem

They bribe the policemen, and then they just get the clay. The Brick kilns don't struggle as much, they are open everywhere, in fact they are open all over Gujarat.



Ramzu Bhai talks about the problem

Now we use smaller carriers to get clay, then the policemen believe us that we are not brickmakers.



Means to get clay



Jena ben talking about the problem

When we started working on our own we realized, there's an issue regarding clay, we did not know earlier. Everyone used to tell us they are unable to get clay, we always thought there is so much clay, why do these people claim this. But we realize it now, there is no clay, even right now we don't have any clay.

Third Act: What do the potter's say

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Brick kilns in Kachchh



Isah Bhai talking

No, we don't have much clay. My brother has a small carrier truck,so whenever we run out of clay, he uses that to get clay. For which we have to go early in the morning at 4, otherwise the policemen trouble us, as soon as it is morning, he gets it.



Sun rise



Allah Rakha bhai talks about his point of view

With clay being such a major problem, why should we continue this craft. Government provides us with help in terms of other means, to continue this artform. But it is very difficult, the problem of clay persists. We have to get clay from outside, like Morbi, one tractor of which costs 20000 rupees. It is not at all feasible for us, we don't get clay from here nor there. It is impossible to sustain this way.

Third Act: What do the potter's say

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



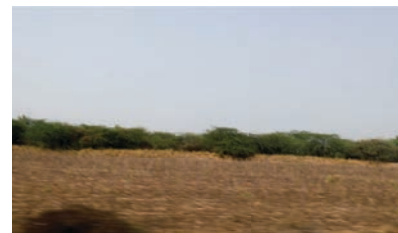
Tractors having clay

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Abdul bhai talking about other jobs

My sons do labor work instead, even I go sometimes. Even during monsoon there is less work, so we end up doing odd labor jobs.



Bhuj landscape



Niraj Sir talks about the potters problems

In almost 54 villages of Kachchh, there are potters. In some places there is 1 potter or 4, the numbers vary, but in all there are 54 villages. According to the region they are in they have means nearby to procure clay from. But in 60 to 70 percent of these areas some problem has arisen, at their clay source. Either land has been acquired illegally.

## Resolution

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



The finished pots



Ramzu Bhai talks about hope



Potters at work

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Abdul Bhai talks about continuing the craft

## Resolution

CAMERA/SOUND

DIALOGUE/VO



Kid playing with sand

Ramzu Bhai believes that though his ancestors had no heirlooms to pass onto him, they rewarded him with one of the biggest gifts he has ever got. They enabled him to create something out of just a lump of Clay.

Though clay has been a constant in their lives, is the struggle for it worthy enough?



Ramzu Bhai talks about Clay

We love clay, it is the main means of our livelihood, we are helpless without it. We won't be able to survive without it, it is to us what a walking stick is to an old man. Clay is the main topic, we are nothing without it. Clay is everything for us, without it there is nothing.

Ramzu Bhai Laughs

Folk song

## **Editing**

The most challenging part of this project was editing, since this was the part where all the work culminates into a narrative that aims to satisfy the problem statement. Due to the mode being on line, the post-production was needed to be carried out solely by me, from my own home instead of the studio. Hence, the editing was done entirely on my laptop, which sometimes posed an issue. Thus, editing turned out to be more challenging than it needed to be. I really appreciate the patience and consideration of Prof. Vishvajit Pandya, Prof. Madhumita Mazumdar and Prof. Anirban Dutta Gupta under these circumstances.

The editing process included the following steps;

### **a) Assembling**

The assembling started with the narrative structure being according to the storyboard, hence all the footage needed to be roughly assembled in a sequence. Firstly, all the bits of interviews were placed into the sequence. The rough clips were then cut into the sections the way they were mentioned in the storyboard. Then the b-roll clips were put in between the interviews and process sequences roughly. The process of cutting, replacing and removing clips went on throughout the post production process until the most apt narrative structure was achieved.

### **b) Voice over**

All throughout the film, different processes and situations needed to be connected to each other in a way that the narrative kept moving forward without ambiguity. To give a definite direction to the film, a scratch voice over was recorded and put in place during the assembling. The scratch voice over was recorded straight into the editing software and a separate audio track was assigned for it, such that it did not mix with other audio clips. This process made it easy to later replace these rough clips with the final voice over. English was chosen as the language of voice over as it makes the documentary relevant and understandable for the majority target audience.

### **c) Graphics**

i) Lower Thirds: Animated lower thirds served as introduction to each and every character in the form of their names and their positions/occupation. The graphic had two font sizes in white, making it visible while overlaying the video footages. The animated lower thirds last for 5 seconds on average. They appear on the screen whenever a character is introduced in a talking head format. They appear smoothly from the edge of the screen opposite, generally left in this case, to the direction in which the talking head is facing and smoothly disappear in the same way. Lato regular and bold fonts are used in the lower thirds.

ii) Credits roll: In the credit roll, Roboto and Roboto Slab fonts are used. The credits come in fade ins and fade outs. People who contributed to the project and various stock content were added to the credit roll.

iii) Subtitles: In the film, there were instances where either the character spoke in Gujarati or Hindi or it was not clear enough to be understood by everyone. So, subtitles in English were added for the audience who either would not understand Gujarati or some Hindi words. Subtitles were added almost all throughout the film, except during the voice over as it is in English and audible enough for the target audience to understand. Roboto font is used for the English subtitles. Length of the sentences never exceeds 12 words at a time. Although the subtitles appear on the screen just as the characters start speaking and disappear just as they have finished speaking, they appear long enough on the screen that they can be read properly.

v) Film Title: For the film title, font Hudson Nx titling was used with a slight shadow that gave it enough contrast against the background. A mask was moved over the title to make it gradually appear on the screen and smoothly disappear. The font was an old serif type but bold and bigger in length than in width. This gave the title an old but strong and stable character.

#### **d) Sound**

Other than the audio that was captured on the field including that in the

interview and background sounds, a number of different music as well as sound effects were used, which were duly credited.

Ambient sound effects of flowing water and hammering, a dramatic instrumental sequence was used to convey a sense of tension in a section of the film. All these were acquired from the free usage medium Pixabay.

As for the music, a small portion of Kachchhi folk instrumental music was taken from an online source under fair use law, Paradhi from Soorvani.

#### **e) Final Cut**

While the bigger narrative had been finalized early in the early stages of the post-production process, the length of the film was cut short from 35 minutes in the initial stages to about 18 minutes in the final cut. To reach this length, there were a lot of iterations to all the aspects of the film. The essential and context-driven content was retained while the inessential parts had to be mercilessly cut out of the film over a period of time. The visual narrative was further shaped up with the gradual introduction of the voice over, sound design and subsequently the graphics. The toughest part was to cut away the stories and shots that I found interesting.

To effectively deal with this issue, I had to keep in mind the problem statement which reminded me of the purpose of the film. Whenever I completed an edit of the film I patiently waited for the reviews of all my mentors that gave me time off the film and I was able to distance myself

from the aspects I was getting attached to. Enabling me to return to editing with a fresh perspective, that made me realize my mistakes and redundant content that I eventually corrected.

After having finished the final cut, I went on to finally color correct and color grade the film. The aim was to create better contrast and even lighting that helped shift focus to the characters and the landscape. Many of the scenes in the film were either over or under exposed due to unavoidable circumstances. The colors of some places were either too dull or bright and ended up looking unnatural. Also there was a need to correct the archival photographs and stock footage to look in sync with the colors in the rest of the footage.

## Final Script

[CUT]

[SCENE 1].[INT]. [POTTER'S WORKSHOP].[NOON]

Top angle, medium close up shot of a pot being made of the potter's wheel. The hands molding the wet clay. Slowly the pot starts degenerating and the lump of clay comes off the pot, leaving an empty potter's wheel.

Text on Screen: Maati Che Je che

[CUT]

[SCENE 2].[EXT]. [SITE FOR PROCURING CLAY].  
[EVENING]

Mid shot of a man is seen using his ax on the rocks to break it. Then cuts to a close up of the man showing his expressions. Cuts to close up shot of the rock that is being demolished. Cuts to mid shot of the man examining the broken rocks and throwing them in disappointment.

[CUT]

[SCENE 3].[EXT]. [SITE FOR PROCURING CLAY].[DAY]

Pan shot of the pond site, where the man was trying to break the rocks to find the right clay. At the site of the clay collection there are these big pits, instead of adequate clay. The journey of two members of the family is shown where they return from the lake empty handed.

NARRATOR

"Life is just a lump of Clay", said Haku Shah, the Indian anthropologist.

With the abundance and versatility of clay one can never question its viability or it being a concern.

[CUT]

[SCENE 4].[EXT]. [LANDSCAPE SHOTS].[DAY]

The visuals show the Bhujia fort overlooking the city of Bhuj and the Bhuj Market. the dusty land with the sparse vegetation that the region has all throughout.

NARRATOR

Bhuj city was founded in the 1500s by Maha Rao

Hamir, the capital of Kachchh has always been important for its rich crafts and history. The city is lined by the massive Fortress walls on the Bhujio dungar.

Kachch gets its name from the vast salt laden marshy lands of the Rann. The excessive salt in the ground has made Bhuj a hub for Salt production. The salt laden soil which is absolutely futile in terms of producing any viable crop is found to be more than apt for making the most efficient pots to keep the water cool in the arid areas of Gujarat.

[CUT]

[SCENE 5].[INT]. [POTTER'S WORKSHOP].[NOON]  
Potter making a pot on a traditional potter's wheel, steered by hand. Members of the community are busy finishing terracotta birdhouses.

NARRATOR

The clay even with the excessive salt is the only source of livelihood for the local potter community. With large potter families indulgent in the craft they rely heavily on clay for sustenance.

RAMZU BHAI

I have been working since my childhood, continuously for 30- 35 years with both clay and this craft. Sometimes we used to make piggy banks, or tiles. This is a craft carried out by our forefathers, even our neighbors

[CUT]

[SCENE 6].[INT]. [POTTER'S WORKSHOP].[NOON]  
A garba pot is being shaped by the potter. Shots of clay in various stages of transition. Visuals of perfect and broken pots, showing a variation.

NARRATOR

However plain and beautiful a pot may look, a lot of time and effort goes into making one. The clay itself undergoes a lot of changes before attaining a form.

While a pot is baked to make it solid and stable, things don't pan out the way they should all the time. Just like our lives the pots are fragile ergo certain pots are going to crack or break, just like the lives of people did, after the earthquake.



[CUT]  
[SCENE 6].[EXT]. [KACHCHH AND BHUJ LANDSCAPE].  
[EVENING]

Stock footage of destruction during earthquake, of the news pieces from 2001. Visuals of Dry clay chunks being broken into smaller pieces.

RAMZU BHAI

I don't really know what was the exact intensity of the earthquake, but the destruction was massive and something we won't see again. Even in a small village like ours, 18 people were killed. Houses were completely destroyed, the whole Anjaar district too. Bhuj and Bhachau were majorly affected. We have seen a lot of tough times but this was unimaginable, no one was ready to help each other.

NARRATOR

The earthquake resulted in massive loss of infrastructure, people's belongings but most importantly many many lives. Houses looked distinctly similar to the heaps of broken dry clay which is the very first step of the process.

R  
[CUT]  
[SCENE 7].[EXT]. [SITE FOR CLAY PREPARATION].  
[EVENING]

Chunks of dry clay are mixed vigorously, to create a slurry. The slurry moves through various channels finally dumped into a big pit. Visuals of Kumbhar vaas and Ramzu Bhai's house there.

NARRATOR

The way dry clay is mixed with water to make a slurry, these potters had to change the ways of their lives too. With the assistance of various government and non-government organizations rehabilitation took place. Just the way the slurry of clay moves through various channels to finally be dumped in a section to rest and get ready to be used, people resettled and started their lives afresh. Ramzu Bhai and his family moved to Kumbhar Vaas in Bhuj from their ancestral village Khedoi, they had to rebuild their homes and livelihoods but this place has been their everything for the past 20 years.

RAMZU BHAI

Working with CARE(NGO) helped us a lot, people in and near Kumbhar vaas recognised us, because of that. Otherwise it is difficult to win over people's trust in Bhuj, they realized though we were

skilled we were reasonably priced.

[CUT]

[SCENE 8].[INT].[POTTER'S WORKSHOP].[NOON]

The visual depicts cylinders of clay are thrown on the potter's wheel and with his hands Ramzu Bhai starts giving shape to the lump of clay with steady motions and calculated hand movements. The products are lined up to sundry and the subsequent sun dried earthenware.

NARRATOR

After the clay is sun dried, lumps of clay are formed that are thrown on a potter's wheel to be shaped and reshaped with calculated hand movement. The right pressure from the hands molds and remolds the malleable clay into any desired shape. The tenacity of clay makes the process look almost magical. According to Ramzu Bhai just like the clay the lives of the potters of Kutch have been quite tensile too.

Once a form is achieved the product is removed from the wheel and the finished form is then left untouched outside to sun dry. The sun dried pieces are ready for the next step.

[CUT]

[SCENE 9].[INT].[POTTER'S WORKSHOP].[NOON]

The form of a flower pot is achieved and it is taken off the wheel. The complete process of Gadhai is represented using short, cut shots.

NARRATOR

What we see as a pot is a spherical earthenware but something that is often missed is the fact that when the pots come off the wheel they have a flat base. A product might not be perfect when it comes off the pot but

RAMZU BHAI

A potter who can use other tools is a real potter, only being able to mold clay on the wheel doesn't make one a potter. A potter should be able to do that, as well as know Gadhai.

NARRATOR

The process of shaving, rhythmic beating and reshaping of a pot is known as Ghadai. It is one of the most pivotal processes.

For a Kumbhar just throwing a pot on the wheel is not enough, finishing it to a certain degree of finesse is important, that's where the tedious process of gadhai comes into play. What we get in

the market at dirt cheap prices are the products of skilled labor and craftsmanship of these communities.

[CUT]

[SCENE 10].[EXT]. [STUDIO DEHAATI].[EVENING]  
Series of Images Of Ramzu Bhai in the olden days and recent past, showing the idea of change. Footage of Niraj sir's studio in Bhuj, with varieties of new age terracotta products.

NARRATOR

Just like a pot changes its shape with each rhythmic tap, life also conditions a person to move towards change and embrace it.

RAMZU BHAI

When we were working with CARE they took us to Delhi, they wanted us to look at new things, observe them and learn more. Frankly we actually learnt and embraced change after that. When we first started our training, there was an expert named Harkishan. He asked us to make a product, I refused saying nobody could make this. Reacting to that he said that, how can you give up even without trying, you are a potter's son. When you can make a Kulhad used for drinking lassi by a farmer, why

can't you make a tea cup, don't just give up. That statement changed something in me and then I decided, whatever it is, I will try and make it.

NARRATOR

As part of the change Ramzu Bhai has worked with many designers, one of them being Niraj Dave who has his own pottery studio in Kachchh.

NIRAJ DAVE

The major change in craft has been, material. People are now more aware of the material, not only the craft. Even though, it has been used since ages for making utensils and in architecture. But people had forgotten this craft can be used in today's times as well, now with time, everyone is realizing that.

[CUT]

[SCENE 11].[EXT]. [KUMBHAR VAAS].[EVENING]

Shots of females of the community sharing light moments with each other. Them being indulgent in various processes of making a pot. The whole process of painting a pot and the various motifs and patterns that are formed on the pot.

NARRATOR

Not just the men, even the women of the community play an integral role in all the processes to make earthenware. They actively participate in both the indoor and outdoor activities.

Apart from managing housework they do not fear the strenuous processes that involve manual labor.

Women potters are almost synonymous to Kachchhi pottery as the unique painting done by them sets it apart from the others.

The pots are thoroughly cleaned and coated with a slurry of natural paints made of stones. The pot is set on a manually movable wheel, and with a fine wooden twig brush it is divided into various sections. Each section is filled by various geometric forms and aesthetic motifs, making each pot different from the other.

During the Harappan civilization, earthenware was not just used for cooking or serving food, huge pots were used for storage of not just grains and pulses but even clothes and valuables. To make the elements of display aesthetically pleasing, the tradition to paint the pots came into being.

can't you make a tea cup, don't just give up. That

RAMZU BHAI

This unique art is depleting, due to the decreasing involvement of women. Earlier women of the family were dedicated to the art of painting, whole heartedly. The quality of painting has deteriorated, we just have six good painters in our house, whereas in all of Kachchh there will be 6 more, there are others, but they are no good.

[CUT]

[SCENE 12].[EXT]. [BACKSIDE OF THE WORKSHOP].  
[EVENING]

The family members prepare the kiln, it being completely ready and the process of firing starting. The whole process of firing a kiln.

NARRATOR

Once the pots are painted and dried the kilns are prepared for firing. All the products are systematically placed in the kiln and a fire is ignited at the mouth. With the heat exuding, all the contents of the kiln are slowly and thoroughly baked. This process is time consuming hence all one can do is wait.

RAMZU BHAI

According to a 2001 survey there were 2500 potters working, but as per the latest one, there are only 150 potter families working in Kachchh right now.

[CUT]

[SCENE 13].[INT].[POTTER'S WORKSHOP].[EVENING]

A pot is being made by one of the potters. From Ramzu bhai starts to talk about the problem. The visuals of the brick kilns, and heaps of clay.

NARRATOR

Though the process of making a pot looks alluring, it involves a lot of complexities and obstacles that the community has been trying to overcome for quite some time.

RAMZU BHAI

We face issues regarding clay, unavailability of adequate space, and that of wood or fuel, these are the major problems. But the biggest problem is procuring clay, other problems can still be dealt with. For space we can build more and more floors, and as for fuel we can use other alternatives, either garbage, gas or diesel. But for clay there is no other alternative.

The problem is that the potters and brickmakers work together. The only solution is if there is some distinction between the two. Even the smallest of the brick kilns uses at least 4 tonnes of clay per day. From 4 tonnes, the usage can go upto 100 and even 200 tonnes. While we require less than 15 tonnes of clay per month. If we use 15 tonnes of clay per month, around 8 tonnes of it goes to waste. There are stones or other rubble that get discarded as waste.

[CUT]

[SCENE 14].[EXT].[SITE FOR PROCURING CLAY].[EVENING]

PA n sot of a huge pile of clay, sitting idle. Along with Ramzu Bhai a lot of other potter's talk about the predicament. Visuals of the temporary solutions adopted by the various potters.

AHMAD BHAI

All the clay that you see here, if we potters used it, it would last us around 20 years. But if the brick makers will use it to make bricks, it would last them only seven to eight days.

NARRATOR

Here the question arises, how do the brickmakers get Clay?

RAMZU BHAI

They bribe the policemen, and then they just get the clay. The Brick kilns don't struggle as much, they are open everywhere, in fact they are open all over Gujarat.

NARRATOR

The solutions are there but they are few and temporary

RAMZU BHAI

Now we use smaller carriers to get clay, then the policemen believe us that we are not brickmakers.

NARRATOR

Unavailability of Clay is a prevalent grievance throughout Kachchh

JENA BEN

When we started working on our own we realized, there's an issue regarding clay, we did not know earlier. Everyone used to tell us they are unable to get clay, we always thought there is so much clay, why do these people claim this. But we

realize it now, there is no clay, even right now we don't have any clay.

NARRATOR

A solution necessarily might not work for everyone. Hence everyone is dealing with this in their own way.

ISAH RAHMAN BHAI

No, we don't have much clay. My brother has a small carrier truck, so whenever we run out of clay, he uses that to get clay. For which we have to go early in the morning at 4, otherwise the policemen trouble us, as soon as it is morning, he gets it.

ALLAH RAKHA KUMBHAR

With clay being such a major problem, why should we continue this craft. Government provides us with help in terms of other means, to continue this art-form. But it is very difficult, the problem of clay persists. We have to get clay from outside, like Morbi, one tractor of which costs 20000 rupees. It is not at all feasible for us, we don't get clay from here nor there. It is impossible to sustain this way.

NARRATOR

In an arid land switching to other professions is a problem too, but that is also a solution

ABDUL REHMAN SULIEMAN

My sons do labor work instead, even I go sometimes. Even during monsoon there is less work, so we end up doing odd labor jobs.

NARRATOR

The potter community all across Kachchh aren't able to procure an adequate amount of clay, making it the biggest issue at hand.

NIRAJ DAVE

In almost 54 villages of Kachchh, there are potters. In some places there is 1 potter or 4, the numbers vary, but in all there are 54 villages. According to the region they are in they have means nearby to procure clay from. But in 60 to 70 percent of these areas some problem has arisen, at their clay source. Either land has been acquired illegally, otherwise like in a village named Tuna, they have built a new port. The potters of Tuna village make pots using clay from the sea, but due to the port procuring clay has become difficult now. Because every time they have to go into the port and take permission as well, all the forty

potters of the village come together when they have to collect clay. From there they take the clay. The expense and formalities involved makes the whole process difficult.

[CUT]

[SCENE 15].[EXT].[KUMBHAR VAAS].[EVENING]

Visuals of the completed, varied and beautiful pots kept together.

NARRATOR

Unavailability of raw material makes this a major grievance yet is there any hope?

RAMZU BHAI

The clay problem is as good as solved. Gujarat Government has this provision under which no one can restrict us to take clay. We don't want to rush things or be over smart, no one can refuse us our rights. We just need our G.R. from the revenue office, nothing else is needed, no collector or minister is needed. There is a law for it which dates back to 1947, which has been revised in the year 2005. We will wait, we don't want to mess anything up.

NARRATOR

The problems may end, but one can't be sure when.

But does this discourage the  
to discontinue this age-old craftform?  
what's in future for this craft and will it be con-  
tinued

ABDUL REHMAN SULIEMAN

We will do it, why won't we do it. It has been the  
means of livelihood since ancestral times and we  
will continue it.

[CUT]

[SCENE 16].[EXT].[KUMBHAR VAAS].[NOON]

Footage of the younger generation playing with clay  
or sand.

NARRATOR

Ramzu Bhai believes that though his ancestors had  
no heirlooms to pass onto him, they rewarded him  
with one of the biggest gifts he has ever got. They  
enabled him to create something out of just a lump  
of Clay.

Though clay has been a constant in their lives, is  
the struggle for it worthy enough?

RAMZU BHAI

We love clay, it is the main means of our liveli-  
hood, we are helpless without it. We won't be able  
to survive without it, it is to us what a walking  
stick is to an old man. Clay is the main topic, we  
are nothing without it. Clay is everything for us,  
without it there is nothing.

[END SCENE]

Ramzu Bhai Laughing



## **Title of the Film**

When the project was in the initial stages, I used to write down any possible or relatable words or phrases that could be a sensible title for the documentary film, some of the options were too used or some were not very understandable by the target audience.

The film is centric to the Kumbhar community, but the narrative is very much centric to the central character that is Ramzu Bhai, with the kind of experience he has and the amount of work he has done he is almost the face of Kachchhi pottery. While a lot of phrases like ‘યત્રા’ or ‘જાત્રા’ meaning yatra or journey in Kachchhi local Language or something as direct and plain as *Rann ki Mitti* .

But during my first field visit Ramzu Bhai used a phrase while talking about clay to me that caught my attention, that was, “*Maati Che Je Che*”. Hence I finalized on this title as it emotes the feelings of the community and the importance of clay for their sustenance.

# Conclusion

I met Ramzu Bhai, in the a year 2015 and I felt a sense of amazement and awe every time I saw him work magic and wonders with clay. Going back to Bhuj and see him work even after these many years insinuated the same feeling. He is a magician in true sense and his pixie dust is the invaluable *mitti*, something with unparalleled versatility.

While one might see this craft as a source of income and livelihood for them it is their religion, a religion they have been following and worshipping since ages. Through this selfless community I have learnt that a craft is sufficient in itself to retain its richness. Learning about the abilities of clay and its various properties has been an eye opener for me, and I hope I can put it forward for others as well. When it comes to clay nothing is a waste and everything has its own value and aesthetic. Hence, I feel all my efforts for this project and to be able to put forth a documentary film in a span of few months is an achievement and none of it will ever be a waste.

I think I started this project with the sole idea of love for the craft but in due course I have realized I knew too less or thought I knew all of it. The research and the fieldwork were eye openers for me and gave me a greater sense of the community, the craft, the problems and most importantly the raw materiel that is clay.

This project is very close to my heart and I was able to materialize it owing to my professors who have guided and nudged me always and have trusted me with the process as well. This project has been a learning and an

experience, I am forever indebted to this course, my professors, the institute and this project for it.

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