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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Gujrat; Mughal Punjab; Chaj Doab; regional history; fort; water architecture; crafts; religious sites; material culture	The following article explores the city of Gujrat during the Mughal era as a regional town and its agricultural hinterland instead of considering it to be a small replica of the Mughal capitals. The city of Gujrat was situated in the Chaj Doab, lying between the Jhelum and Chenab rivers. In the larger context, Gujrat was placed within the political and economic geography of Mughal Punjab. Yet, in terms of sources, this area has received an uneven coverage with the works on Mughal administration and architecture providing the wider context and district gazetteers, local histories and sites giving a much later and incomplete picture of Gujrat itself. The current article attempts to distinguish the direct sources on Gujrat, the subsequent works carrying local traditions, and the wider patterns of Mughal period that can give context but cannot independently prove anything for Gujrat. Any claims made concerning the specifics of crafts, settlement configurations, and monuments are handled very carefully when the sources used to write about them do not provide information concerning the chronology of these aspects. This paper asserts that what makes the region of Gujrat historically significant is not the presence of an established imperial programme of urbanization in this area, but rather the way the local settlement was linked with imperial authority.
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Introduction: Why Gujrat Matters to Mughal History

A study of the Mughal period in Punjab must go beyond Lahore and other big cities. Provincial towns, markets, river crossings, agrarian settlements, and local shrines all made up the network through which imperial administration interacted with ordinary people. Gujrat, which lies in the Chaj Doab region between the rivers Jhelum and Chenab, is an appropriate example to analyze the relations of this kind in the province. Nevertheless, the significance of this settlement needs to be defined in a clear way: the data gathered allow one to consider Gujrat as a provincial center in

the context of the Mughal rule, but not as a principal capital of the province or a permanent administrative center.

Thus, the primary issue that the present article raises is not only the effect of the Mughal culture on Gujrat but also the definition of Gujrat itself as a provincial town. This focus on the local issues arises from the regional perspective adopted in the previous studies of the architectural heritage of Gujrat (Iqbal & Ali, 2025). That study is used here to provide context on the significance of local heritage rather than to date each building mentioned in it. The questions will be: how the foundation and fort of the town fit into the later layout; how the town and the surrounding rural area related to each other; what the available documents can tell us about the community and its occupations; and how religious and water buildings got incorporated into local historiography. It is important to pay attention to the change in focus since generalizations about Mughal centralization, Persianate culture, or urban planning can easily be interpreted as facts about the town.

A more careful approach is needed when considering the chronological framework as well. The conventional start of the Mughal Empire is 1526, but the year 1767 cannot be considered as an obvious endpoint of the Mughal era in Gujrat. The political domination of Punjab went through a series of local changes, and the transition from the Mughals to the Sikhs was anything but uniform. Since there is no particular event relating to the Gujrat region that establishes 1767 as a critical turning point, the term “Mughal Era Gujrat” is adopted in this article, while the use of any other evidence is clearly dated and explained in terms of its purposes.

The approach chosen is deliberate in its complexity. Research on the Mughal Empire and on its agricultural and military system provides background information (Habib, 1999; Gommans, 2002; Richards, 1993). Local and district history may help in discovering traditions and sites associated with Gujrat; however, such sources have often been produced centuries after the period they described (Cunningham, 1871; Government of the Punjab, 1883-1884; Mackenzie, 1861). Modern research on the architectural heritage of Gujrat and Kharian Baoli serves as a starting point for the connection between heritage sites and historical events (Iqbal & Ali, 2025; Parveen et al., 2025). Each type of sources is unique in its way. General information about the Mughal administration cannot prove the existence of a particular office in Gujrat on a certain date. Shah and Ali's (2026) study of Gujrat deals with the emergence of the Gakhar chieftain Sultan Muqarrab Khan at the time when the Mughal empire was becoming weaker in the middle of the eighteenth century. This is another study which offers a local context for discussing the nature of negotiations over political authority in Gujrat during the period when the Mughals were losing their control over the region and other actors began to emerge on the local scene. The periodization of Gujrat through this study is especially pertinent to the periodization offered by the article since Gujrat appears in the context of regional politics linking late Mughal institutions with the post-Mughal regime.

Gujrat's Historical Geography: Town, Rivers, and Hinterland

The location of Gujrat in the Chaj Doab is essential to consider, as it was the interplay between the town and its hinterland that created the opportunities for settlement, migration, agriculture, and trade. It is true that Jhelum and Chenab rivers define the geography of the whole region, but their mere presence does not imply that all the parts of the district have been equally fertile and well-connected. Thus, local peculiarities of soil, climate, river regime, water supply, and distance from roads have influenced the conditions in which people used to live. Any description of the economy of Gujrat cannot fail to take into account these factors without mentioning that the fertility and commercial integration of the whole district do not imply that of the specific area (Rehman & Wescoat, 1993).

It is also necessary to distinguish the town of Gujrat from the rest of the district, as a district-oriented approach allows not to mistake the town for all the settlements located nearby (Shah & Ali, 2026). This is an analytic framework based on local scholarship, while the nature of the economic relationship during the Mughal era requires contemporary or near-contemporary sources. The town could have been a market place, the place where officials met the local elite, and service center to surrounding settlements without exercising a homogenous control over the countryside. On the other hand, the village and landed communities could influence the nature of the town through supply, labor, patronage and politics. Hence, the historic unit of analysis here is a landscape which includes the urban settlement, its routes and sources of water supply, and the villages surrounding it. The general scholarship on Mughal agrarian relations sets the framework, while the particular pattern in case of Gujrat needs district level information of revenue and settlement (Habib, 1999).

The location of Gujrat in between two large river systems has given it a wider connection in terms of being a part of the corridor of movement in the northern Punjab region. In order to prove the reality of the town's role in trade, it will be necessary to find dated evidence of markets, tolls, caravans, commodities, and traders in the local sources. Otherwise, the most cautious view is that the location of Gujrat was such that regional ties were feasible and significant, but it does not mean that it could compete with commercial towns more reliably documented in the Mughal empire.

A geographical analysis also helps to avoid turning the region into a passive backdrop of imperial policy. The development of the town was shaped by environmental conditions and local decisions along with state actions. An empire may require revenues, movement, and recognition of local agents, but its success was conditioned by social ties and local knowledge. In case of Gujrat, this connection is a hypothesis for research.

The Fort, the Town, and the Problem of Urban Origins

The tradition of forts plays an important role in the historical identity of Gujrat. In recent research of built heritage of Gujrat it has been noted that the study of forts, religious structures and other

structures as locally specific heritage is preferable to consideration of these constructions just as Mughal architecture (Iqbal & Ali, 2025). Nevertheless, the modern heritage study of Gujrat is not capable of confirming the history of construction of the fortress and dates of particular phases of its construction. According to the common view, the building of a fort (Figure 1) took place during the rule of Emperor Akbar. The name of the town is explained by a process involving Gujar and Jats (Rehman & Wescoat 1993; Rehman, 1997). A contribution was collected for the construction, Gujar negotiator named Fateh Mahomed was involved, and there was a story about payment in measures of 'topa' (Adam of Dinga?). Also the names Gojerat Akbarabad' and 'Herat' are connected with relationships between Gujar and Jat populations. It is an important aspect of the local foundation legend, but these facts have to be confirmed by sources of that time (Kanwal, 2025).

However, such distinction does not make the story an unreliable one that must be ignored. Stories of founding of local communities could help preserve local claims for status, land, and membership. Also, they reflect the understanding of the relationship between political power and local communities by later generations. In the case of Gujrat, the story brings into one narrative the concepts of imperial power, collective effort, and multiple identities of different local communities. But there is a need for further investigation of particular numbers, names, etymologies, and chronological order in the story. Cunningham's nineteenth-century study might serve as the earliest documentation of certain traditions but is certainly not a contemporary evidence of the era of Akbar's rule (Cunningham, 1871). A comparable note of caution needs to be sounded in relation to the physical layout of the Mughal town. Sources include a central market, congregational mosque, government office buildings, gates, and caravanserais, which suggest that separate groups of people lived in different neighborhoods in accordance with their trades or social statuses. While this is quite plausible in the case of ancient towns, plausibility does not equal evidence. Each element needs to be proved separately through its presence, location, and age. A later street name or neighborhood name might suggest continuity in the memory of the city, but not necessarily mean that such a layout existed during the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries (Rehman & Wescoat, 1993; Rehman 1997; Khokahr, 1995, 1996; Kanwal, 2025).

Thus, the Mughal fort and its gates (Figure 2) need to be analyzed as a changing urban fabric rather than as a fixed Mughal plan. An association of the Shahdaula Darwaza or other such urban elements to Mughal design should have evidence of either architectural survey, dated inscriptions, archive material, or historical chain of references. Recent newspaper or heritage news may point out an interesting site to the public, but by itself, it is not enough for dating a structure or associating it with Mughal design specifically of Akbar's period (Rehman, 1997; Khokhar 1995).

What appears as the most plausible explanation is that the fort design tradition is an indication of Gujrat's historic relationship with political power and community formation. The extent to which the existing ruins reflect the Mughal design and to which the street layout reflects the period is a

matter of architectural and archaeological research. Site plan and measurement, photography, inscription survey, and mapping would convert the story into history.

Gujrat's Rural Society and Local Power

To provide a Gujrat-based perspective, one needs to look beyond the walls of the fort and consider the countryside from where the resources for the town came. The fiscal and military systems of the Mughal Empire depended on transactions between the state, revenue collectors, landlords, peasants, and village communities. There is an extensive literature on these relationships in general, but there was regional variation and change over time (Habib, 1999; Richards, 1993). With regards to Gujrat, the most important issues relate to who owned the land and revenues locally, what the nature of their obligations was, and how they linked the villages and village society with officials. The references provided offer some pointers, but it would be inappropriate to attempt a reconstruction of the local social hierarchy of every village. Sultan Muqarrab Khan in mid-eighteenth-century Gujrat is a more specific case that shows political power structures changing in response to weakening imperial power. This issue is addressed by Shah and Ali (2026). In this way, the present study will take the debate beyond a general framework of Mughal revenue administration into a set of actors and regional conflicts. The account provides a number of chronological statements about Muqarrab Khan's control over Gujrat. These must be reconciled with the references cited in the article in order to use the exact date. The event can only be considered as an illustration of the political change, rather than as evidence that no changes happened in Mughal institutions or social relationships.

Gujar, Jat, and Rajput castes are significant for the history of settlements in Gujrat, while Chibbs, Dutts, and Minhas are Rajput tribes inhabiting different parts of the district. Future gazetteers and descriptions of these castes can provide information on the location of the communities and claims on their status or distribution over different territories (Government of the Punjab, 1883–1884; Rose, 1911). These works, however, were composed during the colonial time, using classification categories that belonged to that epoch. They cannot be back-projected uncritically into Mughal society. A description from the nineteenth century of the whereabouts or reputation of a clan can speak for the period of its observation and imply a longer past, but it does not necessarily indicate the same thing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The use of terms like “martial character,” and the assumption that certain communities were granted jagirs solely on the basis of military services should be avoided except when backed up by concrete evidence. Jagirs were multi-purpose assignments, and later reputation of a community could not stand in place of a dated assignment or a recorded military service relationship. In the case of Gujrat, a more convincing narrative would need the presence of farmans, revenue records, critical examination of genealogies and mentions in contemporary chronicles. Unless these are available, the safe approach would be that local landowning communities and imperial intermediaries probably influenced rural power structures in the absence of sufficient documentation from our sources (Kanwal, 2025).

This caveat does not undermine the significance of rural society. This helps us pose more precise queries as well: What was the mechanism of access to land and water for the cultivators? What were the forms of dues that were levied? How were the disputes settled? And how were the supplies of grain, animals, firewood, building material, and labor to the town made by the village communities? The answers to these queries will relate the history of Gujrat to the Mughal agrarian studies, while maintaining the focus on the local context.

Work, Crafts, and the Material Life of Gujrat

The history of Gujrat (Figure 3) tends to be written via its occupational groupings. Lohars (metalworkers), Tarkhans (carpenters), Kumhars (potters) and swordmakers in Muhalla Loharan. In addition, it refers to shawl-making in Jalalpur Jattan and use of huggas. These elements are indicative of a fruitful research direction into the organization of labour, the transfer of occupational skills, and trade in local products outside the district. However, each statement must be dated, as a proof that some craft existed in Gujrat in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries does not imply the same about the Mughal period.

Muhalla Loharan is particularly relevant in local historiography since its very name evokes associations of occupation with urban space. "The assertion that sword making made the place famous throughout the subcontinent has much weight and should not be taken to be a well-known fact without any contemporary references about production, trade, military supplies, or exports," is a strong claim that cannot be reproduced as such without checking the source of the citation provided (Khokhar, 1996). The reference to the local history by Zaman Khokhar, as presented through a subsequent source, can be used as a lead, but the complete bibliographic information and the evidence presented in the source should be carefully verified before publishing it (Khokhar, 1996).

The same criterion should be applied when discussing the local production of textiles and shawls. The scholarship about Kashmiri shawl and Indo-European textile commerce explains much about textile design and circulation throughout history (Ames, 1997; Irwin, 1955). However, it does not confirm the existence of a specific kind of shawls manufactured in Jalalpur Jattan under Mughal rule. In order to support such a claim, the article should provide relevant evidence in the form of inventories, descriptions by travellers, accounts of revenues or trade, extant items with clear provenance or documentation.

There is also a need for distinguishing use, manufacture, and trade in regards to huggas and pottery. In regard to tobacco and other stimulants, the history of their use in the larger Persianate and South Asian world gives background to the practice of smoking but not in regards to Gujrat being a manufacturing center (Matthee, 2005). A local hugga should be identified through archaeological finds, documentation of workshops and makers, or through a dated collection of pieces. Pottery faces the same situation; it is a likely supposition that there were potters in the town, but the existence of specific local styles, production volume, or specialization under the Mughals needs material verification.

The better way to approach the craft history of Gujrat would be to take the names of occupations, neighborhoods, and the later reputation of crafts as evidence that should be verified. The proposed approach would also ensure that the occupation groups do not come across as static and eternal communities. Crafts were influenced by the availability of raw material, demand, military and domestic consumption, transportation, and the political environment. The material culture of Gujrat should be viewed in history and not as a static list of traditions (Kanwal, 2025).

Religious Sites, Sufi Memory, and Community Life

One of the most noticeable elements of the historical landscape of Gujrat are the religious places. Mosques (Figure 4), shrines (Figure 5), tombs (Figure 6), and places connected with the venerated persons may reveal certain aspects of worship, patronage, education, pilgrimages, and even local identity. Religious places also offer means to establish the link between the town and villages in its surroundings. However, a place's significance today does not always speak of its function in the Mughal era; its architecture may have changed due to various reconstructions and renovations. Therefore, each religious place needs to be analyzed in the context of its own chronology and sources.

The Shrine of Shah Daula as an element of the religious landscape of Gujrat. It could be examined within the framework of the cultural memory of the city, but the facts related to its first appearance, patrons, and construction during the Mughal era need some dated sources. While a modern heritage website may be used to locate a monument or summarize a modern interpretation of the story about it, it must not shoulder the whole responsibility of creating the initial chronology of events. The same methodological approach can be applied for other shrines and mosques in Gujrat and the surrounding area (Kanwal, 2025).

According to Kanwal, a shrine to Hazrat Saleh Muhammad located in Chak Sada is believed to belong to a saint who was involved in education and has something to do with the poet Ghanimat Kunjahi. However, the provided date, 1118 AH/1572 CE, is debatable because of the questionable conversion and chronology. Additionally, it is stated that the shrine was restored rather recently. This information shows that the claims made in the texts, conversion between the calendars, and the currently standing construction need verification. In case of the possibility of independent dating of the saint's life, the poetry, and the monument, the shrine may become a good example of the religious and literary history of the place. Otherwise, it should be presented as a report for the local historical literature (Kanwal, 2025).

The mausoleum associated with Pir Baba Qutab Shah in Pindi Miani is yet another case. This saint lived during the time of Aurangzeb and there is a local legend of him meeting Aurangzeb during his travels to Kashmir. It also states that the original shrine existed close to the Chenab River and was shifted following floods and then reconstructed again in 1930 (Rehman, 1997). Three different pieces of information – the date of the saint, the imperial visit and the shifting of the structure – can be found in this story. The last one might be checked by local sources or architecture; the legend about the imperial visit should be kept as an oral tradition unless corroborated

independently. The newly-constructed shrine cannot be blindly used as the evidence for seventeenth-century architecture.

The Sufi institutions in Mughal South Asia could act as social as well as religious organizations; however, this generalization cannot be used as a proof of all the services that a particular *khanqah* offered. For Gujrat, any documentation regarding teaching, charity, mediation, and patronage needs to be tied to specific locations, and this will enable the article to examine religion in the area without making the assumption that all the shrines functioned in the same manner. This will further make provision for the actions of devotees, guardians, donors, and the surrounding communities, which is in contrast to looking at religion solely as a result of imperial policy.

Water Infrastructure and the Built Environment

Water architecture provides one of the most evident links between the built heritage of Gujrat and the realities of the area's existence. The Akbari Baoli or Bahar Wali Baoli (Figure 7) and the Akbari Hammam (Figure 8). Both names are very valuable information, but such attributes as 'Akbari' and 'Mughal' are not dates themselves. A building can get such a name because of its connection to the imperial period or some other reason. In order to date a monument, it is necessary to use inscriptions, construction data, archaeological examination, architectural analysis, or chains of references.

Kharian Baoli restoration project is an example of a more localized starting point in the discussion of the problem of stepwells preservation and history (Parveen et al., 2025). According to the article by Parveen et al., the stepwell was constructed in 1013 AH during the time of Akbar and restored in 2019-2021 after years of legal and civic struggle. Thus, Kharian Baoli is a more site-specific example than a reference to Mughal water architecture. The date of construction is presented by the authors as a result of their research and must be checked in inscriptions or other documentation. The significance of the article does not lie in its ability to automatically substantiate all assertions made about the Mughal water systems in the Gujrat district; rather, it lies in the fact that it provides a focus for studying a particular building in terms of its location within an investigation or program of conservation. A baoli can be studied as water infrastructure, a point of access and movement, a piece of masonry, and a place which had a different use after its initial one. In this regard, its history would involve its location, its source of water, its building materials, its architectural phases, any renovations, and its connections to surrounding settlements and routes.

The same applies to the Akbari Hammam. Whether the building was dated to the Mughal period by means of accurate data or solely according to oral tradition, this must be clearly stated. The history of Mughal architecture provides valuable points of comparison when it comes to domes, brickwork, arches, surface ornamentation, and planning of public buildings (Asher, 1992; Koch, 1990; Nath, 2002). However, formal similarity is not enough to prove the direct patronage and even exact date of construction. Architectural analysis has to be connected to the material and known history of the monuments in Gujrat. The dating of the mosques and other buildings has to

be equally accurate. For instance, Kanwal provides several examples of buildings which seem to fit into later periods. For example, there is a mosque dating back to 1892 and some other monuments belonging to the early British period. These constructions might have an important place in the architectural history of Gujrat, but they cannot be considered Mughal monuments. They are valuable only because they show how the tradition of building developed in time when the political power of the Mughals was decreasing. It will make the article historically more reliable (Kanwal, 2025).

That is why the built environment should be seen as the stratified one and not as the Mughal legacy at all. Monument register for Gujrat should document the variant names, coordinates, evidence for dating, inscription texts, architectural periods, state of conservation, ownership, history of conservation, and bibliographic references for all monuments. This will be useful in distinguishing between well-documented dates and conjectural dates and would form a proper base for future comparisons with other cities in Punjab.

Language, Cultural Exchange, and the Limits of “Synthesis”

The term “cultural synthesis” refers to the interaction of Persianate political culture with regional languages, customs, and arts during the Mughal period (Alam, 2004; Eaton, 2019). The concept may be useful for Gujrat as long as it refers to certain, verifiable interactions (Rehman, 1997; Khokhar, 1995, 1996). It loses its usefulness, however, if it implies smooth, harmonious mixing of cultures without specifying actors, changes, and places of attestation. In this case, a history of Gujrat should address which local practices could be related to Mughal institutions, which had longer regional roots, and which only appear in later records.

Persian was one of the administrative and literary languages of the Mughals (Alam, 2004), whereas Punjabi and other local languages continued to play a crucial role in everyday communication. This general model provides context for Gujrat, but linguistic practices of local officials, merchants, religious figures, and artisans need to be based on local sources. If Persianate etiquettes, languages, and art were part of the life of the city of Gujrat, it would have shown in texts, inscriptions, literary production, artifacts, or architectural features related to the town (Eaton, 2019). Without any such material, it is better to say that the town was a part of the larger cultural world of Mughal Punjab rather than argue that a unique synthesis of local culture has already been proved.

The local traditions should not be thought of as something passive that has been changed by the imperial culture. Community narratives, neighborhood names, crafts traditions, shrines, and foundation narratives could have preserved the local memories and reinterpreted political change (Assmann, 2011). The Gujrat fort narrative, for instance, reflects how the origin of the town had been remembered through the interactions of the emperor and the local communities (Khokhar, 1996). It may not be confirmed in any other source; however, it indicates that local memory had understood the urban history as an interaction of state power and local tradition. It is the task of history to interpret such memory independent of the historical events.

Thus, a more complex view of cultural transfer emerges. Gujrat was not cut off from the political and cultural networks of the Mughals, yet it would be wrong to assume that it received the imperial culture in a homogeneous manner. Local people were free to embrace, adapt, overlook or reinterpret any practices, depending on their situation. Such an exercise demands detailed work with the local evidence base. "Continuity" must be proved rather than assumed, while resemblance cannot be taken for granted.

Gujrat Across Changing Political Regimes

The history of Gujrat after this point in time becomes important since the sources that exist for the Mughal period are largely through sources produced under the rule of Sikhs or the British. However, political eras cannot be reduced to one narrative of continued Mughal dominance over the region. There are cases when institutions, ownership patterns, urban facilities, and religious constructions continue to function despite the change in their purpose, patrons, or meaning. Therefore, the history of Gujrat can be studied based on continuity with change instead of the assumption that Mughal social organization remained unaltered. It is not just the result of changes at the level of the empire but also of the history of Gujrat; for instance, the mid-eighteenth-century political transition of Gujrat can be explained based on the work of Shah and Ali (2026), who position Sultan Mugarab Khan and other regional powers in the center of Gujrat's politics. Nineteenth century settlement reports and district gazetteers offer particularly rich material on the landscape and social categories noted by colonial officials (Mackenzie, 1861; Government of the Punjab, 1883–1884; Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1904). Such sources might record names, communities, revenue systems, structures, and local folklore that might not have been documented elsewhere. However, one should note that such sources reflect colonial administration's priorities and biases. Any evidence from such sources has to be dated to the time period described and compared to the older sources whenever available. Colonial descriptions of a village or a shrine can be used as a starting point to formulate an inquiry, but not taken as primary evidence about the pre-colonial history of the site.

Heritage literature offers a similar situation. Heritage research of Kharian Baoli by Parveen et al. (2025) offers a particularly interesting case study since it involves a named structure located in Gujrat district, and the issue of historical attribution and restoration. It may aid in understanding the site and its history of conservation; any claim made about the date of its original construction must be verified from the evidence presented by these authors rather than being deduced from the word "Mughal" used in the title of the article. In general, the idea that conservation can bring out a historical structure's value while demanding proper interpretation at the same time backs the approach used in this study. Current literature on tourism and conservation can serve to recognize sites, understand their current condition, and discuss their possibilities for interpretation (Iqbal & Ali, 2025; Parveen et al., 2025). Their significance lies in the fact that they tend to address particular monuments in the Gujrat district. The works by Iqbal and Ali (2025), for instance, relate the area's built heritage to field research, interviews, tourism prospects, and conservation issues connected to the process of urbanization. They are helpful in recognizing the

current state of a site and the significance it carries for the area, but they cannot replace the dating of specific monuments. Modern importance and historical dating are two distinct issues. The former does not negate the latter.

Discussion: What the Evidence Allows Us to Say about Mughal Gujrat

The arguments that will be drawn from this evidence are specific and conditional. Gujrat needs to be understood in its capacity as a town located within the physical and political landscape of Mughal Punjab. Its fort tradition, neighborhood, craft connections, religious institutions, and water installations give the locality an opportunity to investigate how imperial power interacted with communal existence. Nevertheless, some of the claims made in connection with town planning, administrative buildings, occupational specialization, and Mughal dates of specific monuments cannot be supported by the evidence that has been utilized.

Three evidentiary stages need to be separated clearly. Firstly, general literature will help understand the broader context of the Mughal period: agrarian relations, military movement, imperial architecture, and political administration (Habib, 1999; Gommans, 2002; Richards, 1993; Asher, 1992). Secondly, the district history and gazetteers will supply names, traditions, and conditions, usually at a later date (Cunningham, 1871; Mackenzie, 1861; Government of the Punjab, 1883–1884). Third, on-site research may test the claims using inscriptions, physical fabric, maps, archaeological data, and conservation history. Local history is made more convincing by comparing these layers of research without allowing any of them to be substituted for the others.

A research program based on the site of Gujrat would include first an inventory of the monuments and place-names, and second a chronology of the fort, gates, baolis, hammam, mosques, and shrines. It would involve comparing the local stories about the foundations of these places with early printed literature and any archival documents that are available. It would consider mapping historic neighborhoods and whether occupation-related names can be associated with any physical remains or historical descriptions.

In other words, this particular article is not making the point that Mughal Gujrat was a well-documented case of successful imperial cultural integration. On the contrary, Gujrat is a good example of regional history from the perspective of which one may examine the limitations and potentials of the available historical records. The value of this particular place stems from the interplay of its geography, memory of the establishment of the fort there, the rural background of Gujrat, its occupational and community history, and the built environment that needs to be untangled.

Conclusion

Historical analysis of the Mughal era of Gujrat is worth studying on its own merits as regional history. The location of the town in Chaj Doab, its fort and founding myths, its ties with the surrounding rural landscape, and its religious and water bodies offer several entry points into an

investigation of the political dynamics and daily life of Mughal Punjab. Such investigation needs to use local sources for evidence rather than draw assumptions from the better-documented imperial capitals.

It can be seen from the analysis in the article above that some caution is warranted. The local myth regarding Akbar and the naming of Gujrat is an important story; however, it requires confirmation. The claims about the sword industry, shawl weaving, and hugga manufacturing in the area need to be confirmed from dated sources from the Mughal era. Shrine stories have to be separated from the well-documented biographies and chronology of the shrines. The date of the fort itself and all its components like gates, baolis, hammam, mosques, and tombs needs to be verified. A more accurate history of Gujrat will come through the analysis of the above sources on a comparative basis. Not only will it become clear which aspects have survived from the era of the Mughals, but it will become possible to determine which changes occurred and how later generations altered the past. Gujrat is not to be portrayed either as the side mirror of the culture of the empire or as an eternal source of local tradition. Gujrat needs to be considered as a historically changing locality, where the local society and material world were related to broader political environments.

Figures



Figure 1. Aerial view of the encroached Gujrat Fort (Photo: Mubeen-ur-Rehman)



Figure 2. Shah Daula Gate (Photo: Muhammad Kashif Ali)



Figure 3. A street view of walled city of Gujrat (Photo: Muhammad Kashif Ali)



Figure 4. A Mughal era Mosque in Qiladar, Gujrat (Photo: Muhammad Kashif Ali)



Figure 5. A Mughal era shrine (of Hazrat Hafiz Hayat) in University of Gujrat, Gujrat (Photo: Muhammad Kashif Ali)



Figure 6. A Mughal era tomb (of Mirza Bizen Beg) in Qiladar, Gujrat (Photo: Muhammad Kashif Ali)

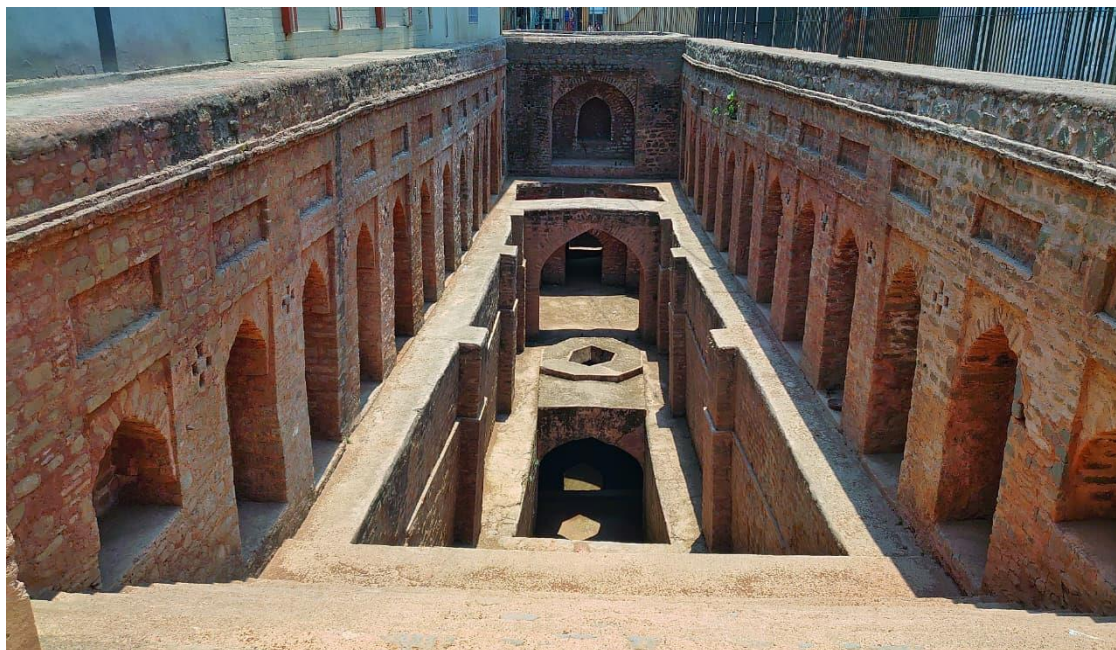


Figure 7. A Mughal era Baoli (stepwell) in Kharian, Gujrat (Photo: Photo: Mubeen-ur-Rehman)



Figure 8. Akbari Hammam in walled city Gujrat (Photo: Photo: Mubeen-ur-Rehman)

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