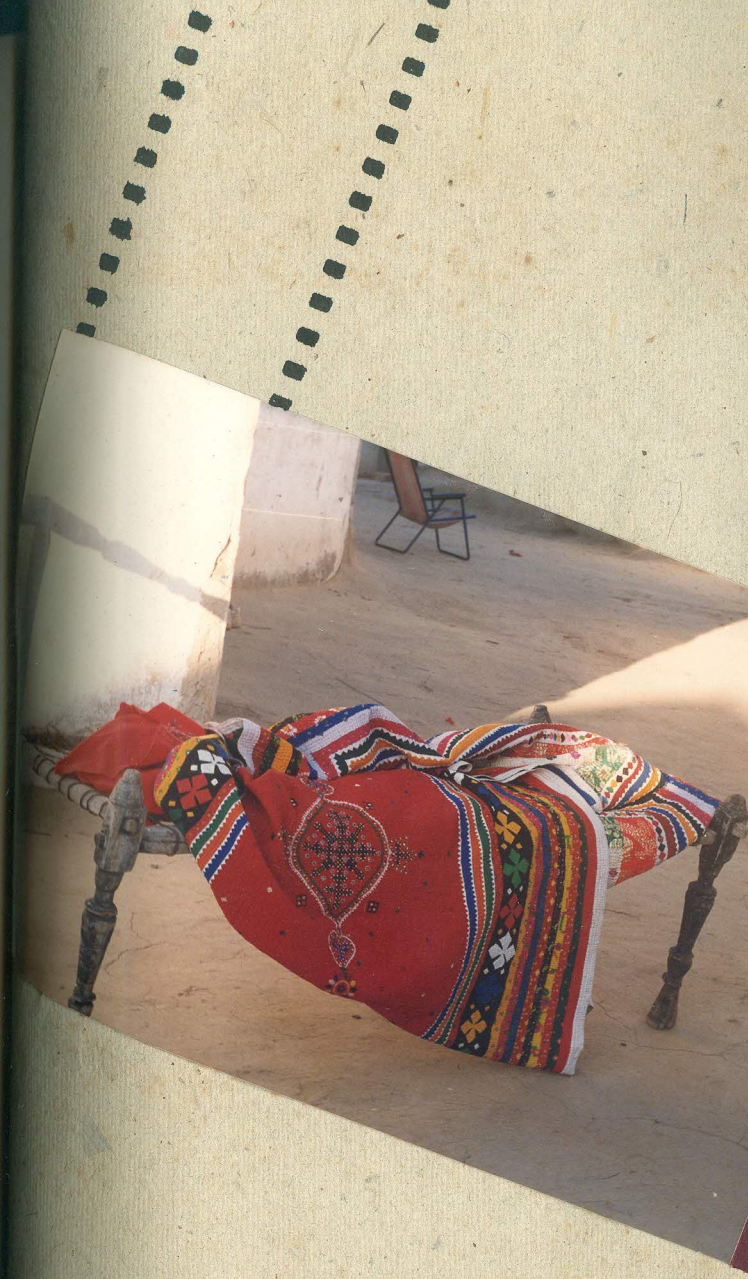
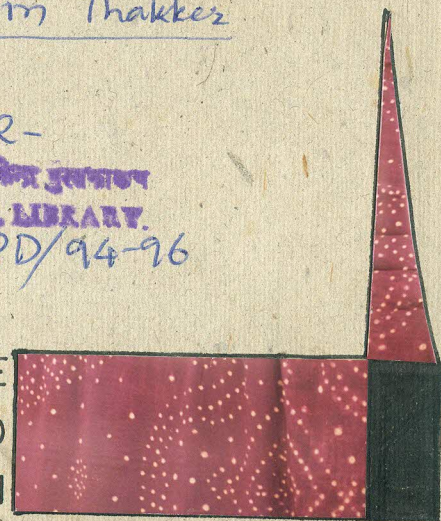




✓ Amin Thakker

MSR-
श्री. व. के. जयसिंग
L.D.C. LIBRARY.
16th PD/94-96

ENVIRONMENT, PEOPLE
AND
CRAFTS OF KUTCH





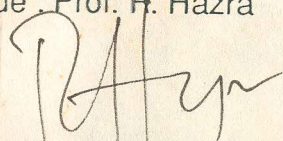
ENVIRONMENT, PEOPLE AND CRAFTS OF KUTCH

Industrial Design (Special Project) ✓

AMIN THAKKER
Roll No. 94613017

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Design
Degree in Industrial Design

Guide : Prof. R. Hazra



Industrial Design Centre
Indian Institute of Technology
Bombay - 400076

1996.



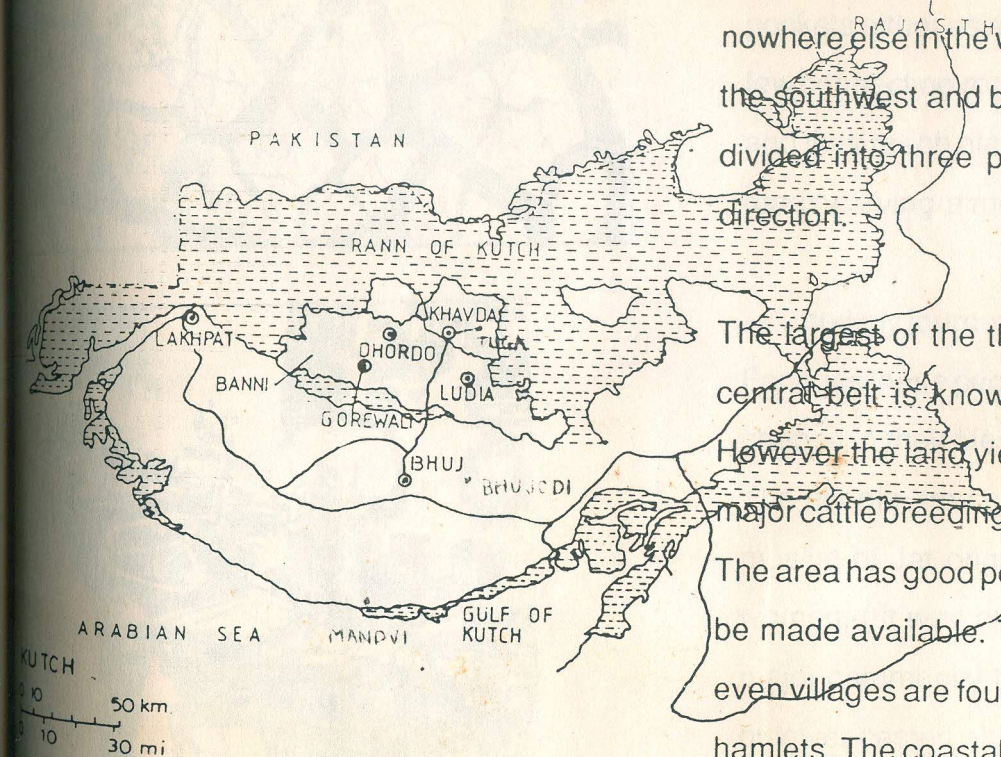
Acknowledgements :

I am thankful to my guide Prof. R. Hazra for assigning me this particular project. Naming an individual for distinct help will be an injustice to many others. Hence, I am thankful to all those who helped me in making this particular project a success.

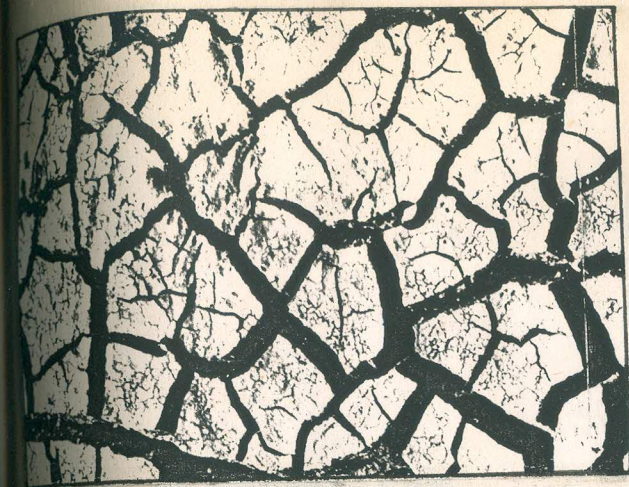
Amin Thakker
94613017



THE REGION Kutch is an ancient land located in the North-western region of Gujarat, the western most state of India. It has a rich history due to its strategic locations on the historic route to India. It is bordered by the flat desert locally known as the 'Rann' on the North and the east. The Rann is the unique feature found nowhere else in the world. Kutch is bounded by the Arabian sea to the west and the southwest and by the gulf of kutch to the South. The Kutch region can be divided into three parts running more or less horizontally in the east west direction.



The largest of the three is the Rann extending towards the southeast. The central belt is known as Banni, a name derived from the rice cultivation. However the land yields good quality of grass if the rain is sufficient. It is now a major cattle breeding area, supplying milk to the major settlements to the south. The area has good potential for dairy farming if somehow sufficient water could be made available. There are no urban settlements in the Banni, in fact not even villages are found. However, there are over forty beautiful semi nomadic hamlets. The coastal area in the south is the most urbanised part in the region. As the sea routes were major factor contributing to their development in the past. Most of the larger settlements lie among this belts.



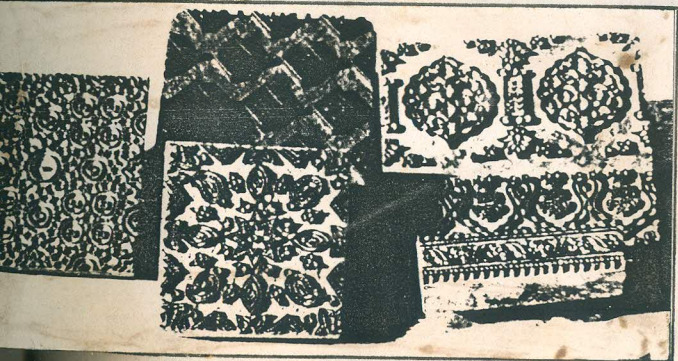
The entire region as a whole is very dry and all the places you see around you get to see sand, thorns, stones all over the places. This dryness of the land has made people very colourful in their lives. The average population density of the entire region is around 20 persons/sq. kms. Again they are distributed in the pockets either as a village or at a very far distances. Previously there were very few connecting roads or katcha roads. Now state transport buses are available and they reach almost all the villages over the entire region and also the tarred roads carving almost entire region.



KHAVDA

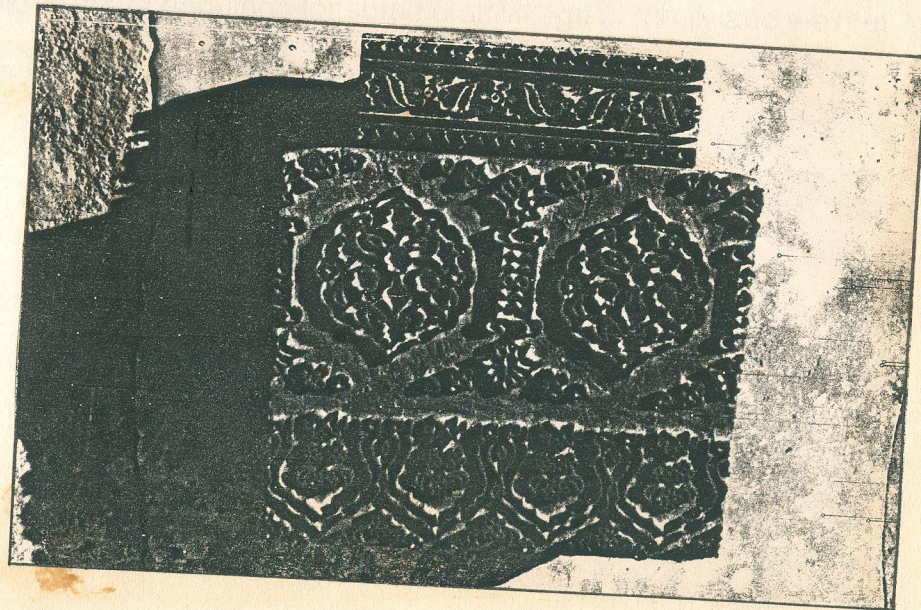
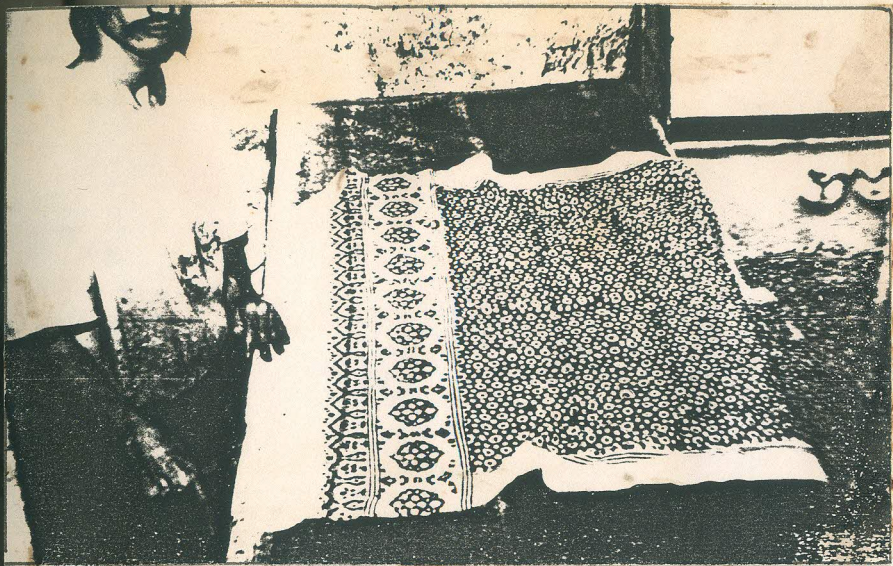
I started my journey with the Banni region which is a sparsely populated region. For ages these people are involved in a traditional occupation and there is a little change in their lifestyle. They have hardly any education even in recent years. The people are courteous and soft spoken. About 90 % of the population is muslim of Jat origin. They have strong idea of the need of privacy for their women. (It was almost impossible for me to photograph any woman). Other major community to be seen in this region is Harijans who are mostly hindus of lower castes although they are not treated strictly as untouchables.

My study of the land started with the village Khavda known for printing work called Ajhrakh and also leather crafts. We arrived at Khavda and started



looking for Ismailbhai Khatri who knows about Katchi print and embroidery of the Banni region. We met Alimama who is his uncle and a very old person. We started talking to him and by the time we had started discussion we were offered a cup of tea. He showed us some of his samples of leather mojris, chappals and mirrors. It was undoubtedly great time to see people working efficiently in the shop without any formal structure.

Unsure of where to stay at night, we were exploring the roads in the village near guest house and I saw a conical dwelling at a distance went there and met the owner and got a preliminary idea of these houses called as 'Bhunga'. The owner also suggested us to meet ismail master in the village Tuga nearby and also told about his achievements. Next we took a bus and reached Tuga at 9:00 p.m. in the night. It was dark everywhere and we were uninvited guests at the place. Still we were welcomed warmly and give rich food and lodging. In the night Amin, his son showed us his own work of painting and it was beautiful. Not only the crafts, but it also made me think of the way these people use their spare time, sitting in a place miles away from the urbanised place. In the morning we had good breakfast and we were extremely pleased to see the quilts that we used in the night - a piece of art each one of them. It will cost a few thousand rupees in any other part and still it will not have that hospitality



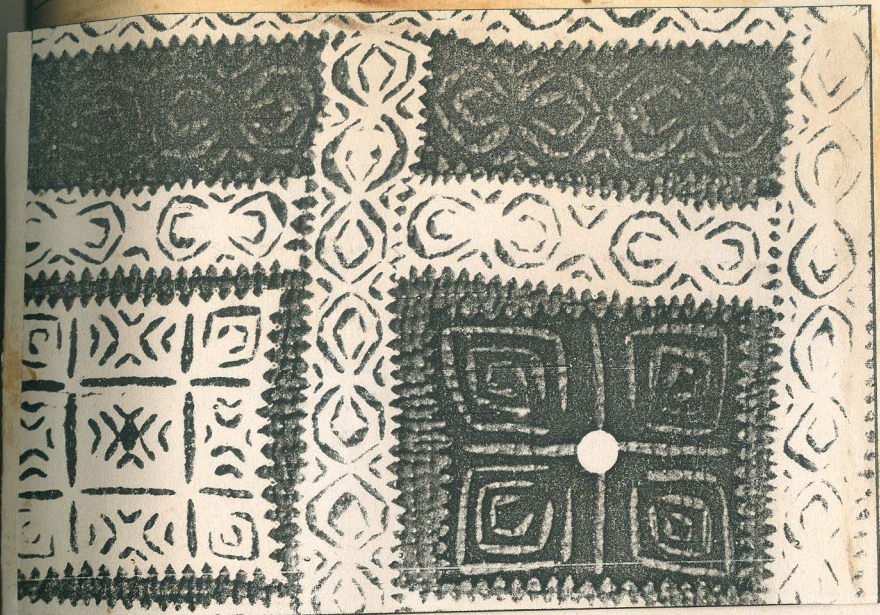
of the region in it. The quilts made out of the patchwork of very bright colours and intricate designs were really beautiful things.

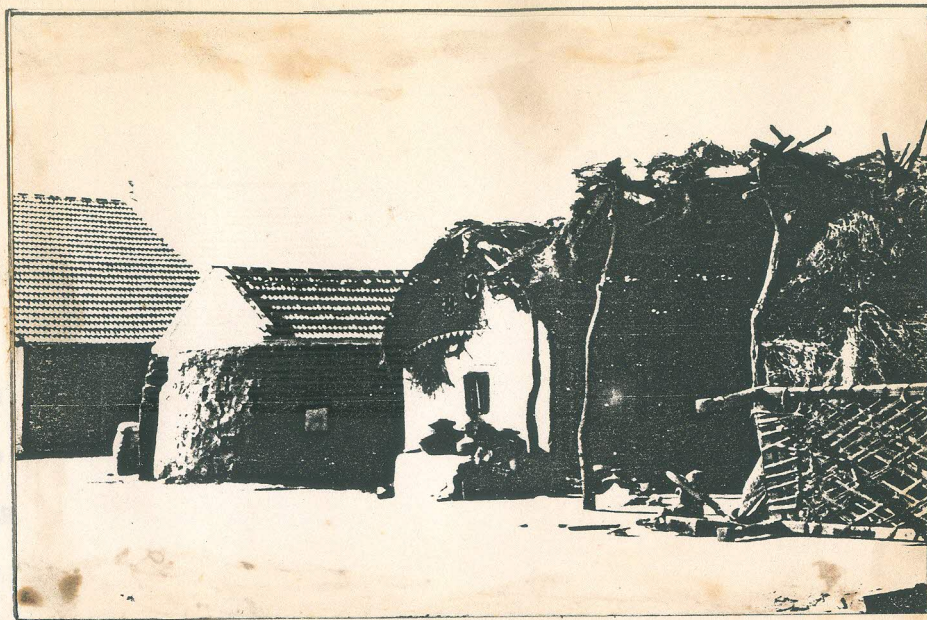
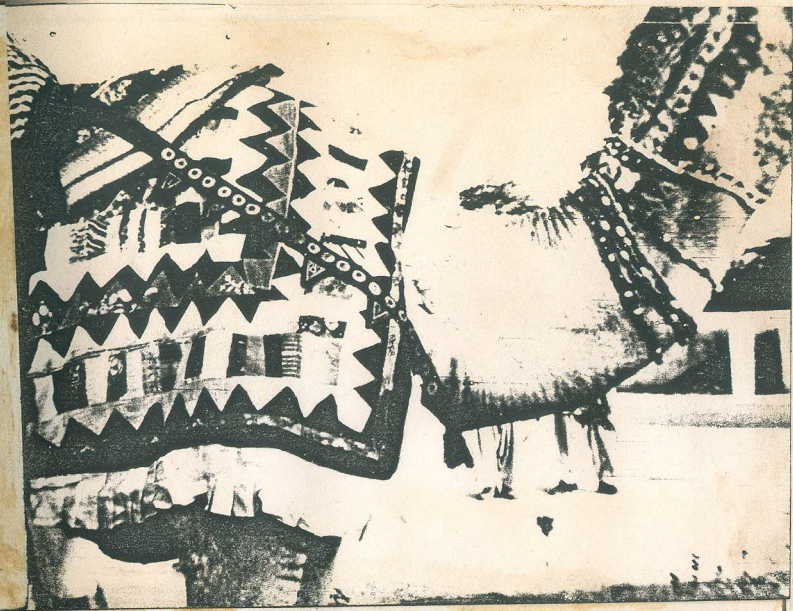
TUGA



Shri Ismail Master of village Tuga is a principal of school in Tuga. He knows a lot about camels and desert routes. He showed us how they prepare camel before the ride. Even the cloth that they use to cover the camel is finely embroidered patchwork on it. Camel is a part of the family and not an animal for them. It was very pleasing and natural to perform daily activities like bath etc. in the open air among bushes. Unsure of what to do next, we started return journey to Khavda in a water tank which supplies water to the village.

In Khavda again we were enquiring for some craft village or family and we met Koma Sambha, a Harijan craftsman from village Ludia and his cousin Hemalbha. We found that each house in Kutch has a collection of embroidered articles made by their women. We saw few such articles at Hemalbha's place. Each house over there has embroidered articles may be because it is a tradition over there among girls to learn and preserve all their work till marriage time and show it to her husband and in-laws. This is called dowry. Like designer prepares the portfolio, we then along with the Koma Sambha started to village Ludia for a night's stay at his house. When we reached his house, we were offered a cup





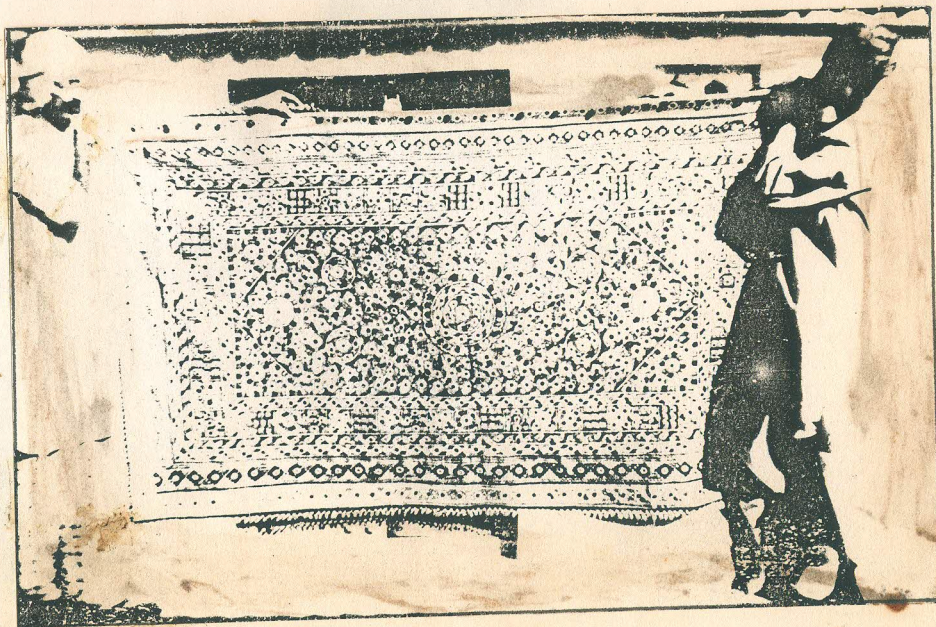
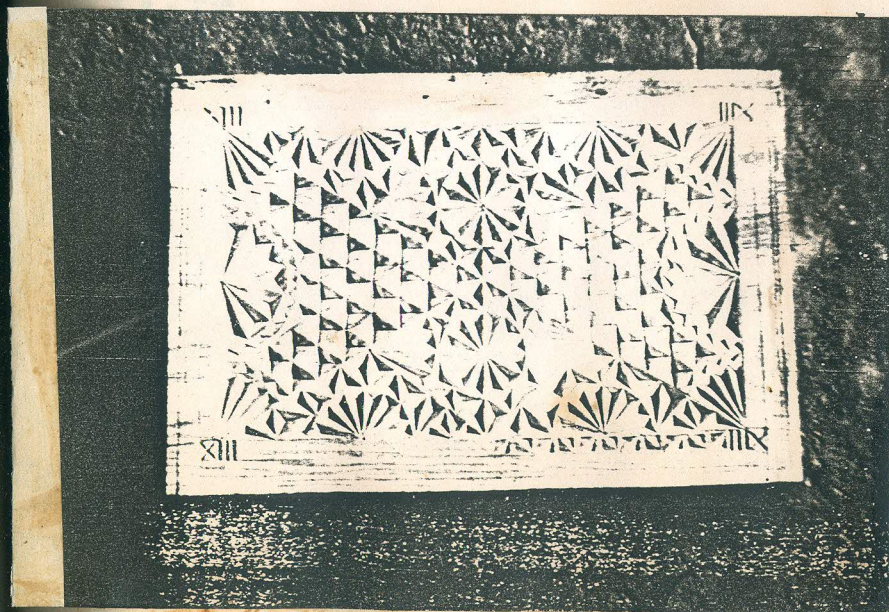


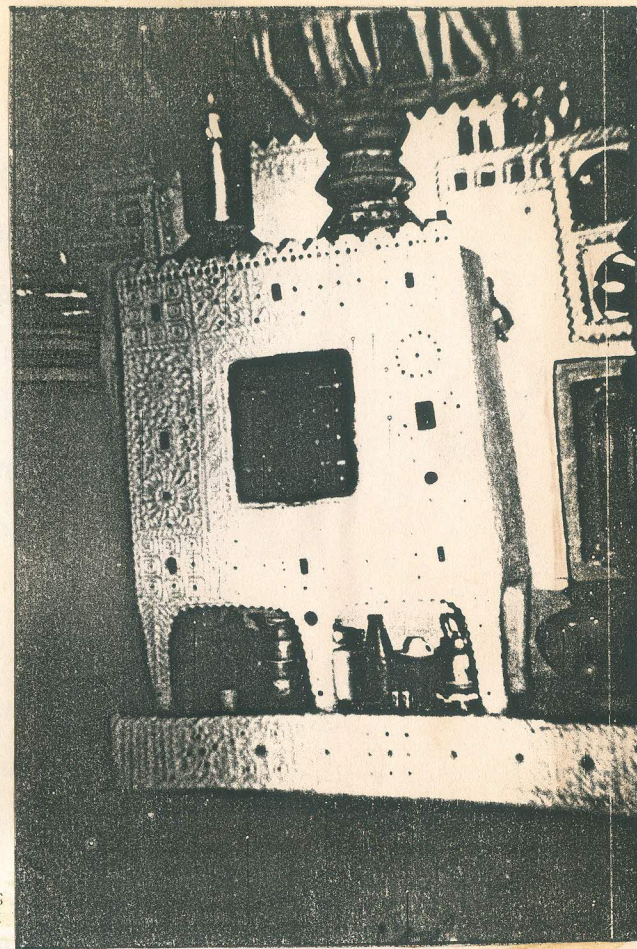
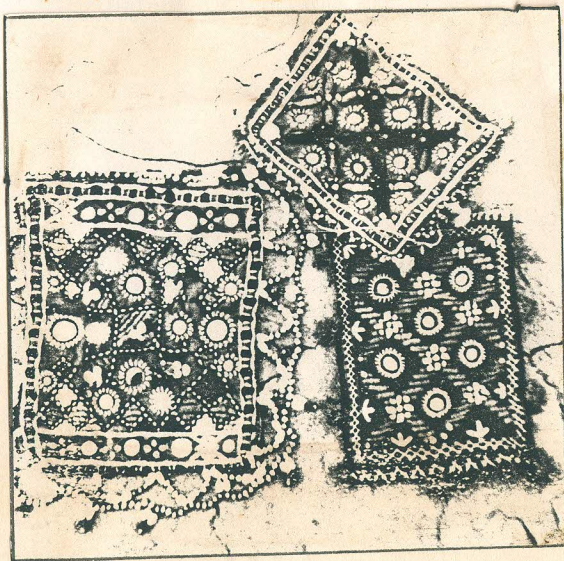
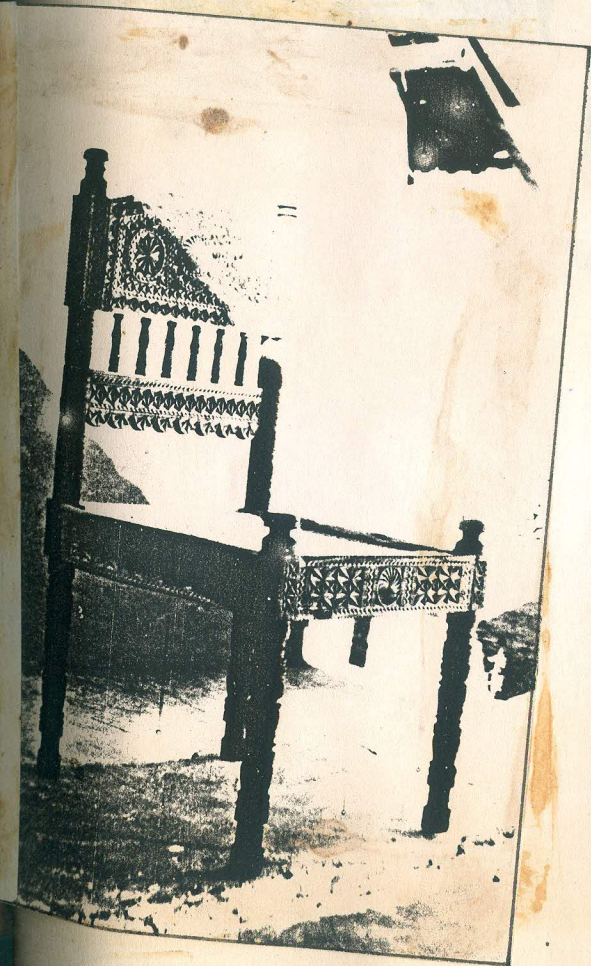
of tea by his wife Panibai. We had nice time chitchating with the children in the village Ludia where one of us exchanged our muffler with them.

LUDIA We saw 'Bhunga' from very close. The clay floorspace developing into varied platforms, rises vertically to form the walls of circular houses. The walls terminate in the pure conical roofs made of thatch. The roof overhangs and protects the shades. The sculptural walls which are sometimes adorned by colourful graphics and floral patterns. The decorations are made with the earthy colours which create the harmonious yet distinctive environments. Round huts used as dwelling called as Bhunga varies from 3m to 6m. in diameter is the main hospitable space. Roofload in the Bhunga is not carried by the mudwalls, it is transferred through a beam which runs across the space diagonally and rests on two wooden posts often kept exposed outside the circular walls. Some space is always left between two major buildup spaces. However a horizonatal clay platform defines the tieup of all the spaces of a dwelling unit. The mudwork on the interior walls of the Bhunga is again a very interesting creation by these people and reflects their interest to leave better life. Apart from Bhunga we saw a lot of wooden craft in the village. The shapes and patterns generated by these people are evolved over the years and generations. Possibly tradition makes them much more sensitive to their work.





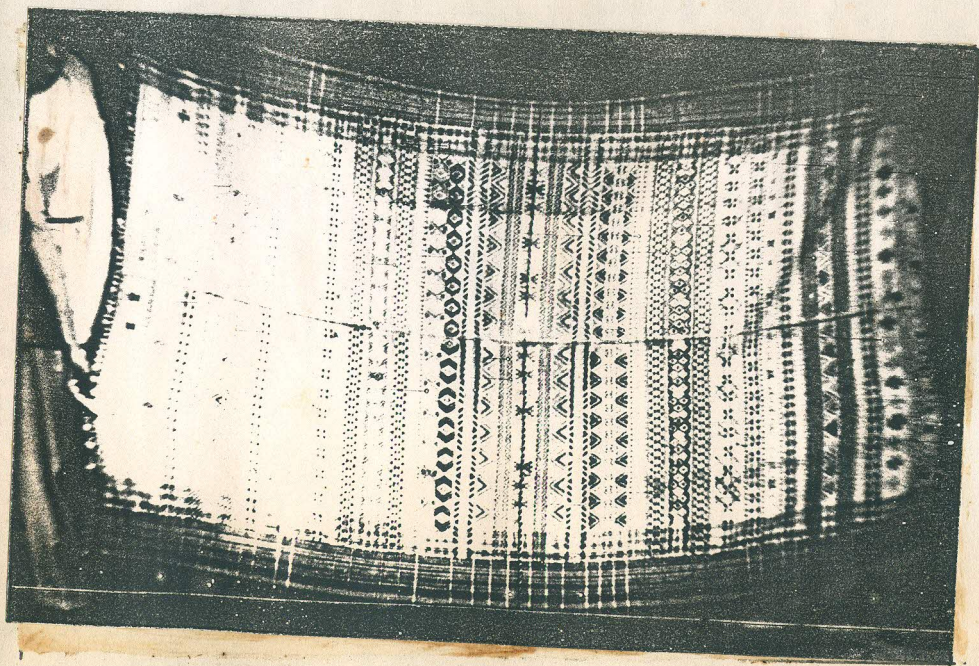
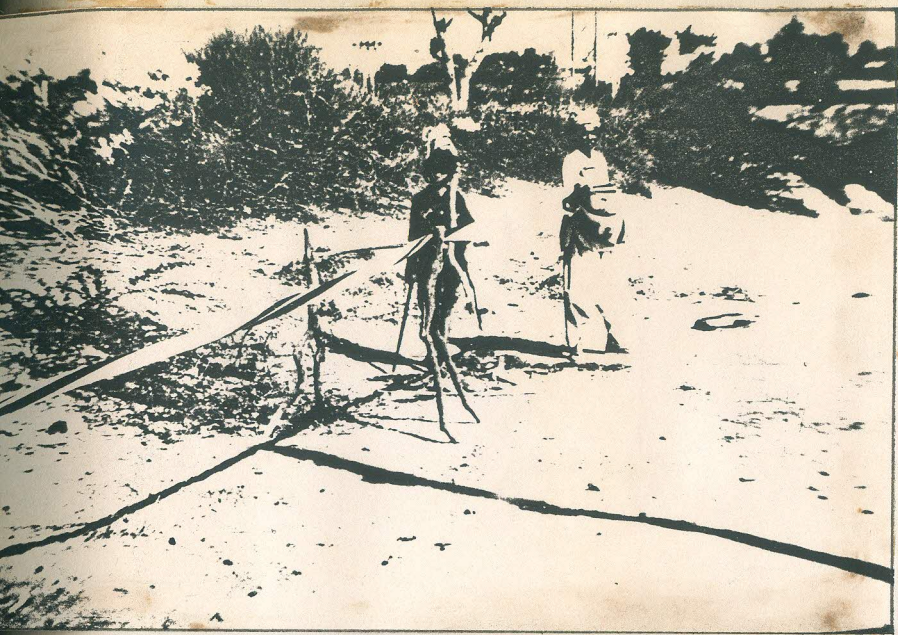




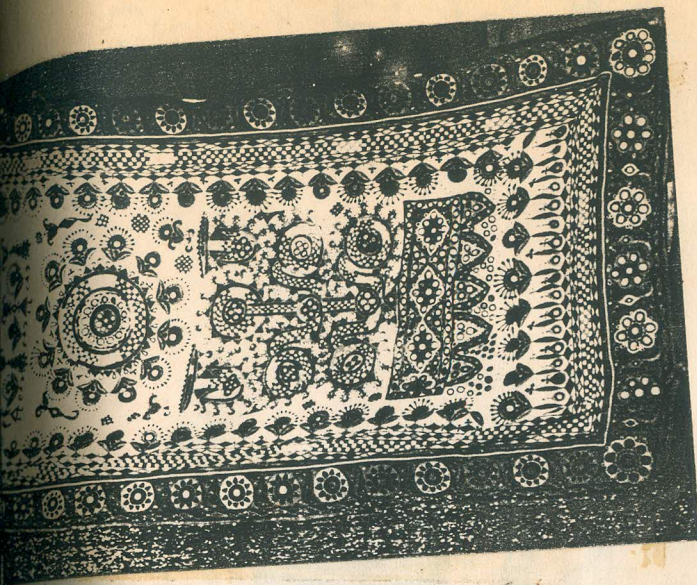


From Ludia we started towards a village called Dhordo known again for its crafts and habitations. We were fortunate enough to meet Gulbegdada the headman of the village who is known all over the Kutch for the way he has established Dhordo as crafts centre. A strong leader and nice character. His hospitality is an example to be cited which made a long lasting impression in our mind. Also people in this village are used to such visitors and it is well established tradition of the to welcome the guests wholeheartedly. We studied here few patterns of embroidery and the way the colours are used effectively.

BHUJODI After fantastic experience of the Banni, we started towards the southern part of the Kutch, where people are conscious about the commercial aspects as well. But that hardly makes difference in the hospitality of the people. I also visited village Bhujodi for its woolen weaving crafts. As the population of the sheeps is in a good quantity, the craftsmen find good quantity and quality of wool for weaving. Shawls, carpets, cushion covers, blankets, curtains etc. are their main productions. The main community engaged in this craft is Harijan. In Bhujodi around 100 houses are involved in similar kind of work. Some of them are awarded National award for their excellence in the weaving work.





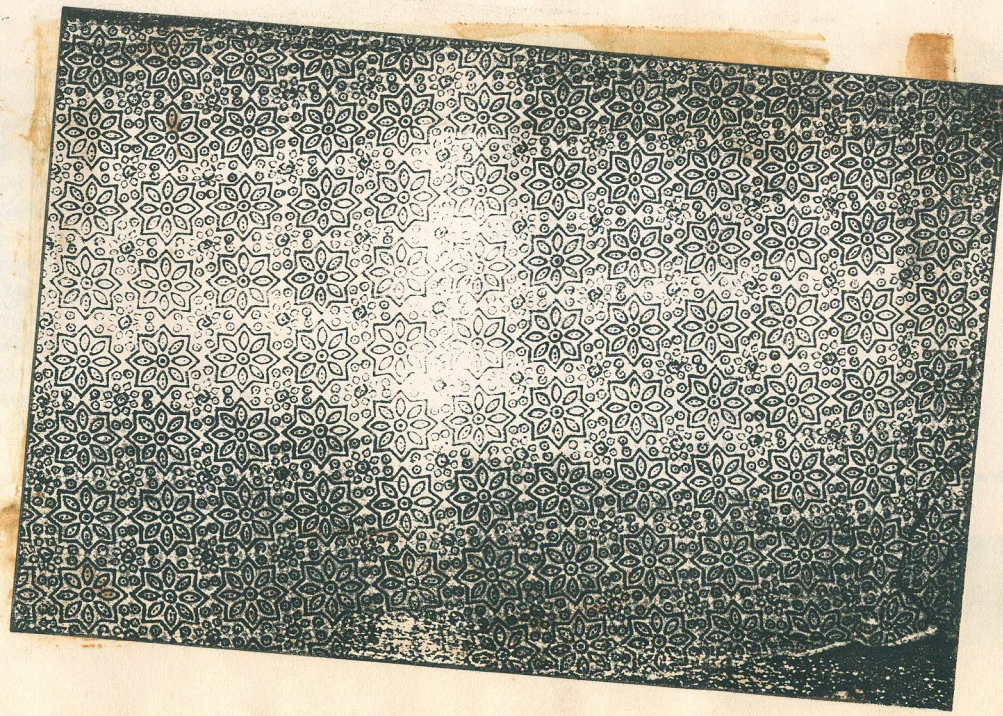
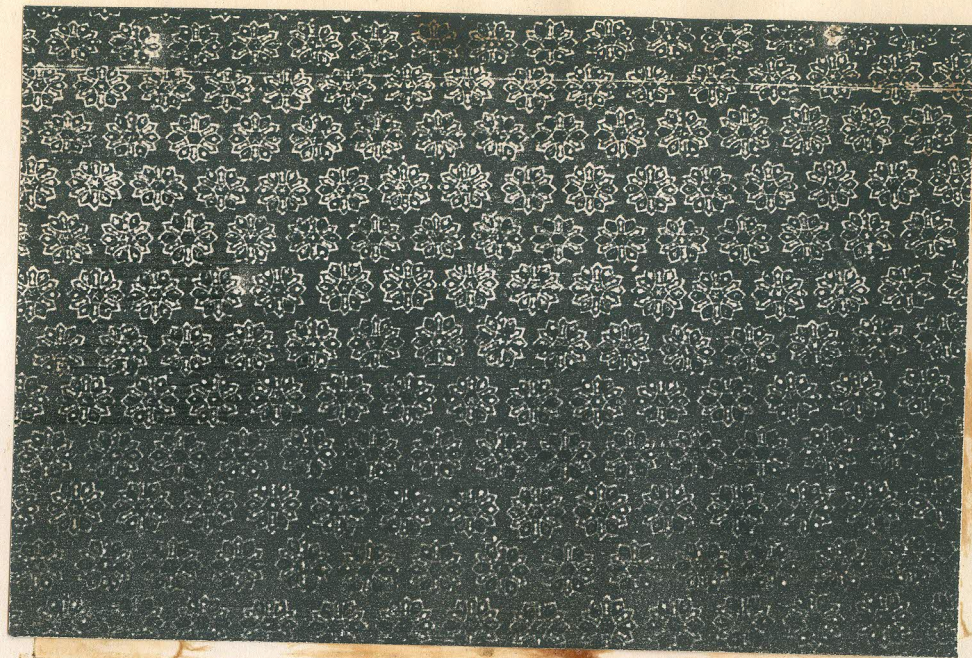
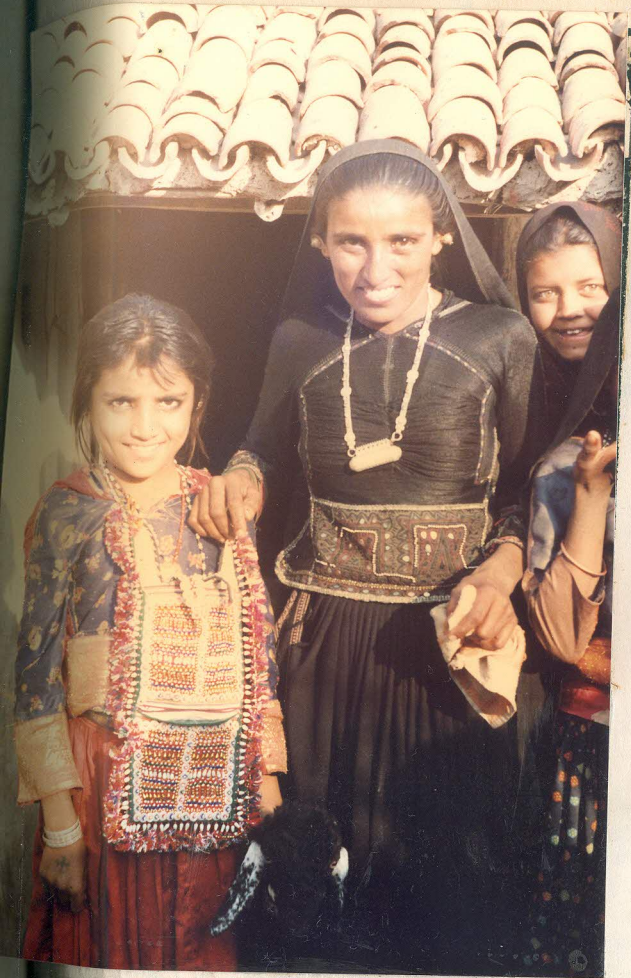


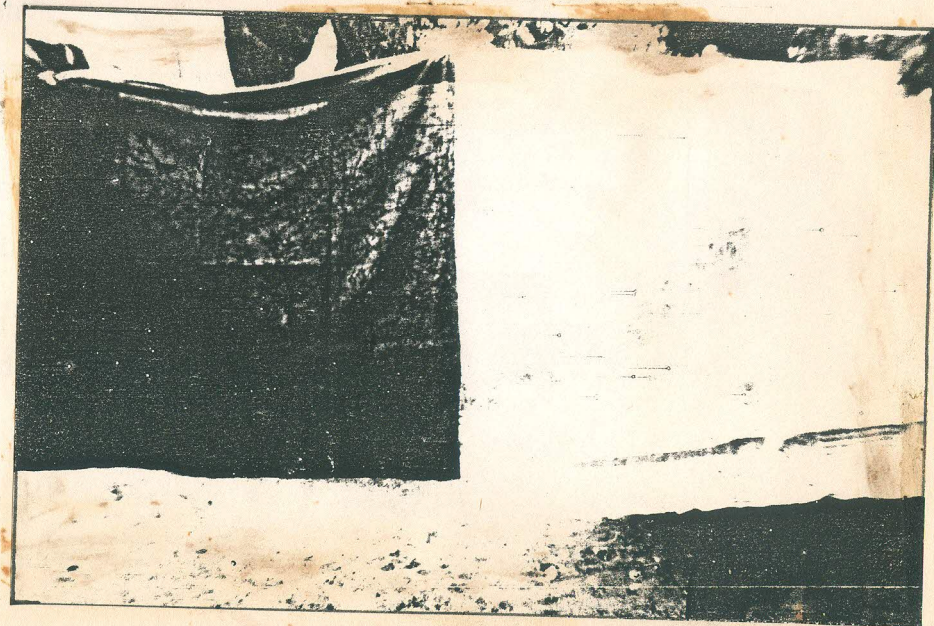
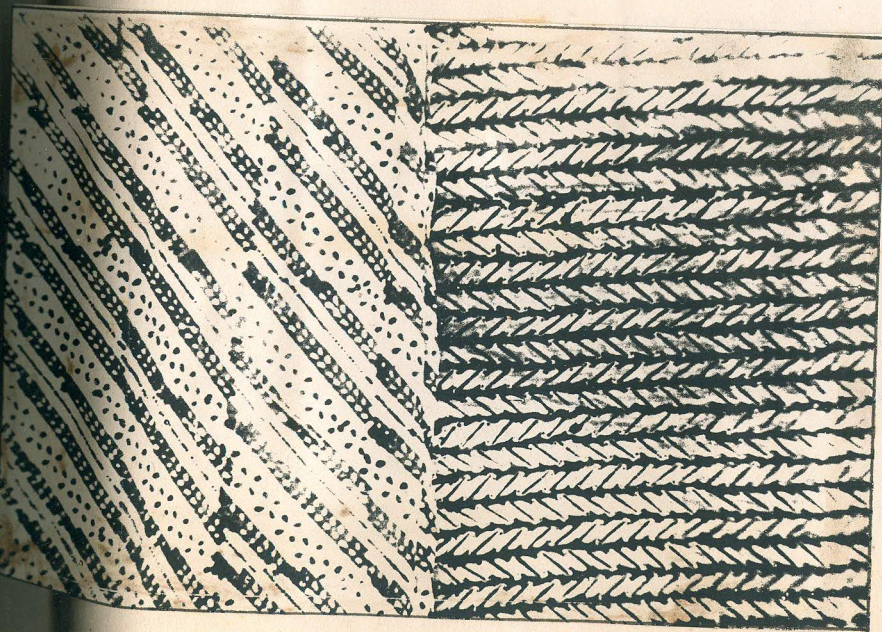
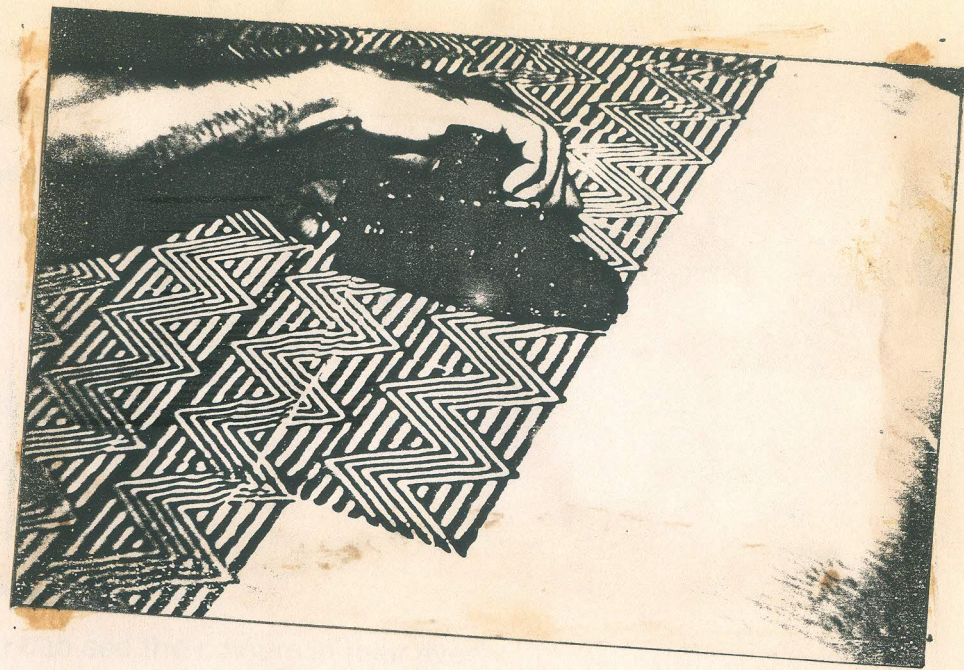
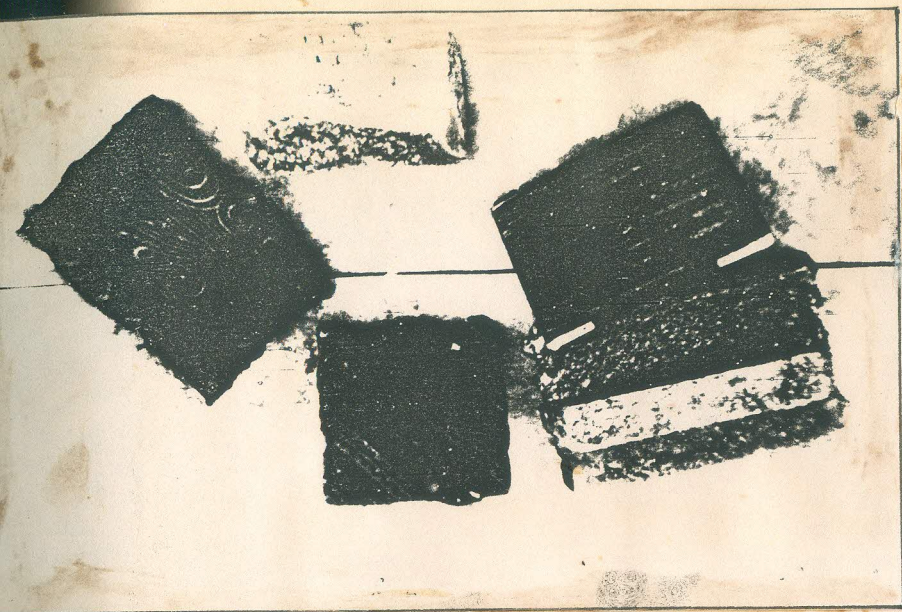
From here we started to village Dhaneti, Dhamadka and Paddhar, where one can find Rabari embroidery which is different from the one found in Banni. Meeting with Abdul Quadir in Dhamadka gave an idea of printing dyes with Indian origin. Introduction of the synthetic dyes fastly replaces the indegenous dyes in use. Still handful of craftsman follow the labourious process of preparation of the dyes and print colours of mellow tones. Indigo, Katho, Lalkas, Haldar, Halda, Majitha, Padvas, Kaiyo, Lac is used for the preparation of the colours for printing and dyeing. Bedspreads, Lungi dress materials etc. are produced here.

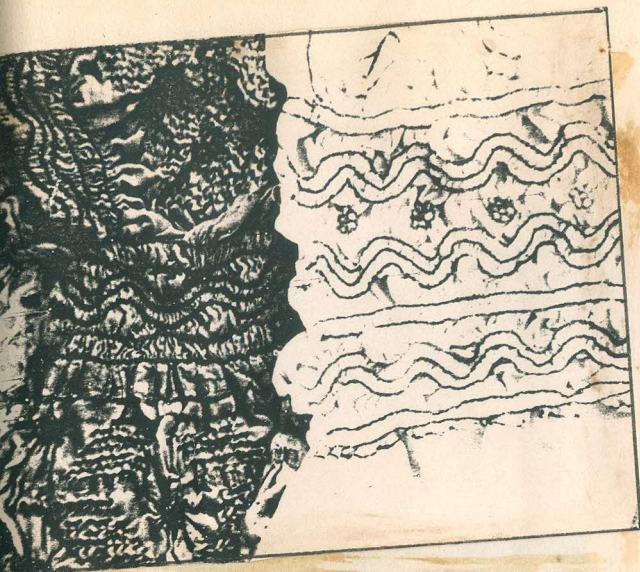
MANDVI From here we proceed further south to Mandvi. Tie and Dye popularly known as Bandhani is the famous traditional handi work of the Kutch district. Bandhanis are deeply associated with the social customs. It is deeply associated with the social customs. It is treated as a symbol of marriage life. It is a must in the marriages of the Hindus and Muslims alike.



On the coastal lines few kms. from Mandavi, we visited Mundra for its batik printing work. Paraffin wax is used with crafted wooden block and printed on the white cloth, kept on a printing table covered with wet sand which helps the wax entering into the cloth and cooldown quickly. This wax retains the white







colour of the cloth which is now printed in colours. This process is repeated as many times as the number of colours required. The natural hairlike cracks in which various colours penetrate, provide wonderful appeal which is impossible in any other type of printing.

Such type of study can be continued for much longer duration but somewhere one has to decide the cutoff and my basic aim was study the way their mind works. The people of Kutch have peculiar taste of colours and still things are very simple. Maybe because of the geography i.e. since the land is dry and not so colorful one can see the colours in their lives.



EPILOGUE The crafts of Kutch are popular in many parts of India. There are few specialities like bright and earthy colours etc. used in their crafts. Ornamentation is part of their life. Even the smallest thing in the house is ornated nicely and well kept. Cleanliness is another exceptional quality found in these people. As most of them are good in their work they need a kind of support constantly. We can find almost all the crafts people smoke and take tea very frequently. A spirit to work hard is reflected in almost all of them.

The source of inspiraton for them can be nature, animals, surrounding and



some of the things of observations in daily life. They do take inspirations from such things knowingly or unknowingly. Appreciation of such crafts has affected their way of living. They earn reasonably well for the work done by them and above everything is they feel very happy about the work done by them.

Nowadays with the help of designers new colours which are quite unconventional for them are tried. Especially in the area of textile weaving, with the help of textile designers of NID they attempt totally new colours and designs in the same old patterns and the ways of making them.

In the market, they get reasonably good prices but again the major profit is shared by the local traders. Also one major segment of market wants some articles of Kutch just to satisfy their interest and not too expensive. This kind of requirements even though it brings good money quickly, it deteriorates the quality of crafts that these people give. Still, things sell very well.

Miles away from the mainland, surrounded by the Rann, and covered by the sand everywhere, these people are happy in their work. Their day rises in the morning with the sunrise and ends with sunset. They carry their creative work throughout the day and what is more important above all is that they are happy in whatever they are doing and that can be seen from their faces.

