

SMALLTOWN, BIG TRAIL
HOUSES OF TODAY, RAJKOT DISTRICT, INDIA

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The earthquake of 26th January, 2001 in Gujarat had devastating results. The settlements in regions of Gujarat went through a very difficult time. The shock of this kind of a natural disaster and the prospect of a new start shook people. Under these circumstances help from government and foreign humanitarian aid played major role. The provision of necessary relief and rescue in terms of shelter became a reason of migration, detaching the living environment of people within the affected areas.

This paper under the theme of resettlement and traditions, discusses various approaches followed by the villagers and the outsiders. In most traditional environment any start is always based on precedents. This could be a reflection of a tradition followed from centuries, which has become the genius loci of the place and people. Also, the wisdom to utilize available local resources and doing something innovative applies universally to any indigenous culture.

Any disaster creates a sense of vacuum in the continuation of traditions and built-form. The villages in Halvad faced tremendous pressure against their very existence. The idea of a new shelter was to give immediate respite to the people. Resettling and that to a new location was completely alien and not acceptable to the locals. In these circumstances people

started creating their own environment within the newly established conditions and the place started to transform.

This paper is based on my field research in the region of Kalvad. After eight years of aftershocks the life in these villages seems settled and has a sense of belonging and meaning behind it. The framework of analysis is based on how people lived in their villages prior to the disaster in comparison with the post earthquake dwellings and discusses the new emergent environment created by local manifestations.