

**OVARAS AS AN URBAN OPEN SPACE\_A CASE OF SURAT****Ar. Tulsi Koradiya\***

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**DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.253882****KEYWORDS:** Cradle of Human Civilization Evolution of Ovaras and River Tapi with the City Growth.**ABSTRACT**

Many people enjoy the amenities that urban parks, open spaces & river front provide. Some people consciously appreciate these urban nature amenities; others may fail to realize how civic nature contributes to the livability and quality of life of their community. Civic nature differs from degree of intensity of management needs.

**INTRODUCTION**

Many people enjoy the amenities that urban parks, open spaces & river front provide. Some people consciously appreciate these urban nature amenities; others may fail to realize how civic nature contributes to the livability and quality of life of their community. Civic nature differs from degree of intensity of management needs.

The relation between design of urban space and civic sense has long history. The relation between usage of buildings and attendance of people in urban space, the relation between art of architecture and interest and consideration of people, the relation between the form of community places and relaxation of citizens and so on have a historic life. It is combination of experiences of relaxation and safety in city. It includes the relationship of people with their surrounding environment and with each other. Relation is resulted from contacts which are pleasant and made satisfactory feelings. So safety and relaxation are the two basic factors in civic sense. With these two factors we can have some places and situations in city that create memories.

Urban space is one of the components of city that forms and transfers during the history of a nation in several periods. It is a place to flow civic & social habitat. Relation between form and surrounding façade and being similarity or variety of them, proportion of façade to wideness and length of space, the passage or routes that reach to squares and finally the situation and place of historical buildings, waterfronts and fountains or 3D elements that all we can emphasis on them.

**Cradle of Human Civilization**

We can call these spaces a pleasant environment. Creating this pleasant environment has a direct relationship with organization and management of urban spaces, this pleasant environment actually is a cultural environment that forms social behavior inside that.

Every important city was developed near the river course so as the Surat on the edge of river Tapi. Tapi plays very significant role in every citizen's lifestyle - direct as well as indirect. People of Surat have strong connection with it and it has been seen in the past also. During the initial settlement of surat, river edge played prime important role for public gathering as well as trading. It is been tracked down that there were series of ovaras ( small development on river edge) which were used for different activities by the public.

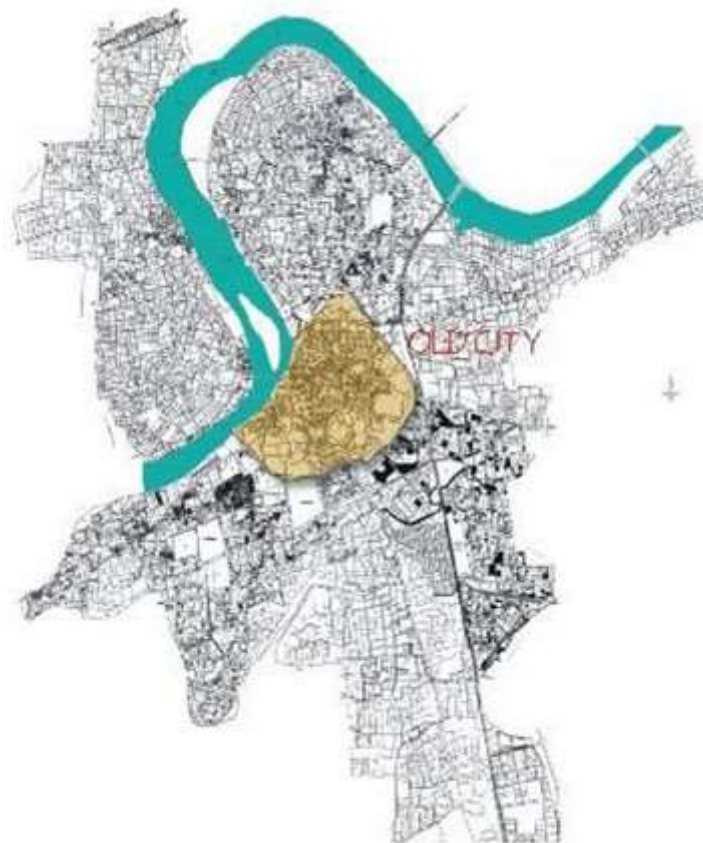
“Rivers are the last open valleys of the urban terrain, the last remaining paths where many may re-establish his rights of access and employment. More than any other catalyst; river sides hold the greatest hope for beginning a revival of confidence in urban physical environment.”

**Surat River Edge**

Surat is very well knows for diamond and textile. And is even famous for its industrial belt on the coast line. The Tapi River has played a crucial role in its economic growth and development. Today the river is a major source of water and the river bank & bed shelter & livelihood support to the poor. People here without any caste barriers any economy arrogance live together a very relaxed and joyful life. They believe in working hard



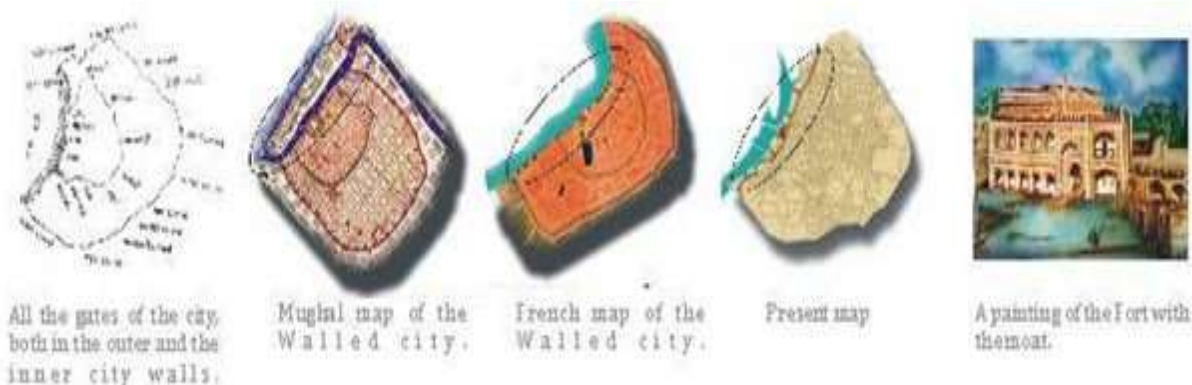
throughout the day and party hard all over the night. Surti culture is not moving to elite restaurant but to enjoy with family and friends at some very basic informal outlets or public parks which one can find full during the dusk.



*Fig. 1. Surat City map Showing old city area and river and location of Ovaras*

**Evolution of Ovaras and River Tapi with the City Growth**

In 18th century emperor had constructed two fort walls. Though this wall is almost non-existent at present, it does occur in some parts as a portion of historic buildings, demarcating the earlier to the inner walled city. Inner wall city were covering inner most part of the city fabric known as Shehar pana and the outer fort wall was covering surrounding developing areas.



*Fig. 2. Shows different Walled City*

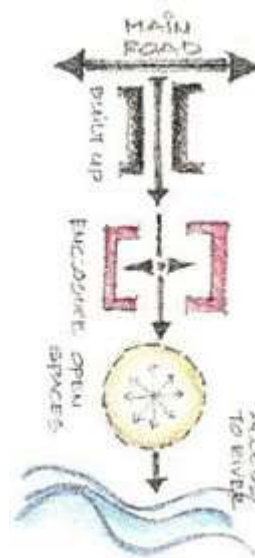


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“Paras” known as Alam Pana. This inner wall has gates which were opening on River bank for trading in 18th Century which were known as Bandar. The construction of the wall began after the attack of Shivaji in 1664, but it took many years to complete. The wall after its completion has been described as varying from 20 to 28 feet in height, and from 8.5 to 12 feet in breadth. There were 12 gates to enter the city – to the north the Variavi, to the east the Sayedpuri and Burhanpuri, to the south Navsari and Majura; to the west the Mecca and the Badashai; and along the river front the Dacca, the Raja Ovara, the Mir Beher, the Lalgate and the Mulla Khadi. These gates were later on used for human interference instead of trading in 19th Century and people started identifying these Bandars as Ovara in Gujarati.

These twelve gates were named after the major trade routes they were facing, or the major city institutions to which they were facing or were connected to.

Because of the port which used to ferry the Muslim pilgrims going to Mecca for Haj, one of the gates on the west was named as the Mecca gate.



*Fig. 3. Schematic dia. Shows the typical access from main road to River*

### **Ovaras as an imp element in the civic life**

Every ovara has got a strong connection with our tradition and its identity in the form of temples. Established since the origin of ovaras, temple have always been one of the very strong point of visit. Our religion has always connected strongly with river edges and festival activities and ovaras have always provided great platform for it.

Now a days, it is used regularly by local public and because of that other occupation has developed around it.

The surrounding space has to be taken care of to get enough spill out space.s.

The active part of the Dacca Ovara - The boats seen in the distant backgrounds is the beginning of the site and going further upwards. This part of the site has a vehicular access for the fisherman to tow their boats or for trucks to carry the mined sand, also, every Saturday, there is the weekly market that takes place here.

Approach to the Ovara directed by a street has distinguished character in terms of language building existing on the edge of street, scale and proportion.



*Fig. 4. Ganesh Visarjan*



*Fig. 5. Saturday market*

**STUDY AREA**

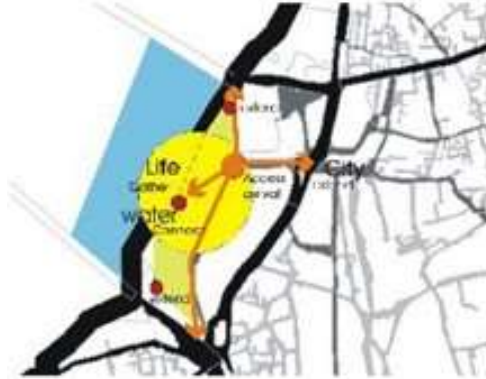
(Street network, Present scenario activity pattern, during different time how surrounding affect the elements of Ovara)Dacca ovara holds very significant location on the river edge of the old fort. It is extended to a whole stretch which runs parallel to the famous and very old Gandhi baug till the other end of macca gate. Macca gate was once used as a place for the muslims and on the other side is Dacca Ovara with a temple. A Stretch was evolved later for the weekly market which was very popular for trading and this weekly market runs today as well on every Saturday.

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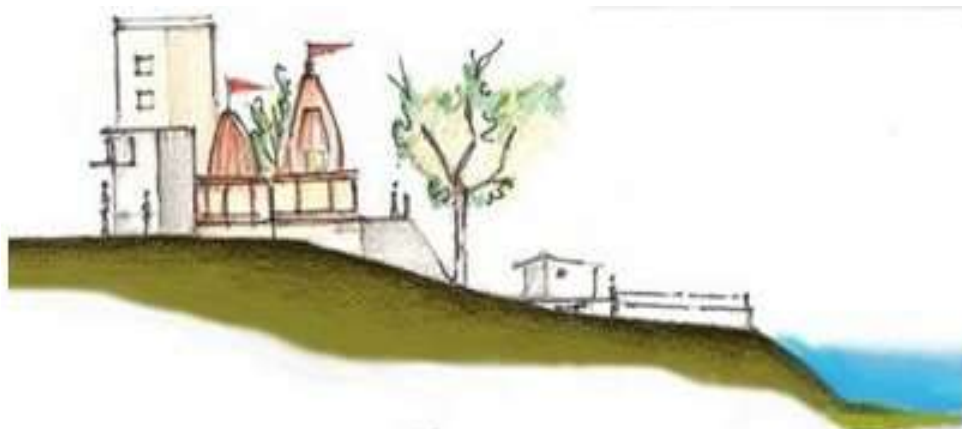
*Fig. 6. Sows the Ovaras on stretch*



*Fig. 7. Shows the Schematic diagram With the time and context in respect to the city growth*



*Fig. 8: Plan Shows Access towards Ovara*



*Fig. 9: Schematic diagram towards Ovara*



Fig. 10: Different kinds of Activity on Ovara

## SUMMARY

Summing up the study, I conclude that the Ovaras in the Surat city are the open urban spaces valuing the emotions and attachment of original citizens to the River Tapi.

The distinct characteristic of different ovaras is developed as a result of civic response to that particular Ovara. For instance, the characteristic of development at Navdi Ovara is consequential of religious approach of the people to the river edge. On the religious occasions, rituals are being conducted on this River Edge, and for this purpose, a temple of Devi Tapi is existing and the open space around this temple is seen for performing the rituals. Citizens respect this place as they have religious importance of this place in their mind.

And the characteristic of development at Dacca Ovara is resultant of mixed activities of weekly market and religious occasions, where the hawkers' community extensively uses the said urban space, which leads the Ovara to be place to leisurely passing the time or as picnic spot for hawkers like community on the days other than the market day. The attitude of using the urban space by such community leads grubby surroundings and polluted environment on such a beautiful urban open space.

Thus, development of Ovaras, the value adding Urban Open Space in the city of Surat displays the sentiments of people to the river Tapi and their response to that particular river edge.

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