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A TALE OF TWO INDIAN CITIES

Crisis, Post-Crisis Administrative Leadership and Reform Initiatives

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Abstract

Crisis often proves to be a turning point in human life. The same is true of an organization, or for that matter a city or a country. Does crisis lead to change? Are these changes for the better? To put it in one single question; does crisis always lead to reforms? In those cases where a post-crisis reform is visible, to what extent is leadership responsible?

This paper looks at two case studies of cities recovering from crises; Surat after the Plague epidemic in 1994 and Ahmedabad after the earthquake in 2001. At least in the visible spheres and in public view, Surat changed for the better after 1994. Ahmedabad shows no such change-story after 2001. Why is it so? The nature of crisis response shown by the leadership! I have tried to look at the City Governance in the post-crisis phase from the viewpoint of administrative leadership to probe these questions. Politics forms the essence of city governance and beyond all types of leadership is the social leadership provided by the citizens. This paper looks at the complex inter-leadership relationships and leadership styles behind the city governance in a post-crisis phase and searches for answers.

25th September 1994, news report in INN-News service

The western regions of the country are in the grip of panic with the outbreak of plague, which has led to an exodus of people from the worst affected areas, most notably Surat.The media is awash with reports and pictures of people attempting to get out of the affected areas. Everyday brings fresh photographs and reports of people rushing towards the railway station in Surat, where no train is stopping. According to one estimate, over one million people have deserted the city.....Amit Vora, accessed from http://www.hindunet.org/alt-hindu/1994/msg00686.html on 16.11.2005

26th October 2005, 11 p.m in the night, Surat

I was waiting for a friend, standing below a massive over bridge. The roads were crowded. People going back home, after a busy day. The signs of a boom town were all pervasive. Fly overs, luxury cars, malls, multiplexes and migrants crowd this city. The city has clearly changed since the time I worked here; 1992.

Laborers were sleeping below the over bridge, after a busy day. As I watched the silent bodies, one man turned towards me. He was muttering some words; unfathomable. Probably, he was dreaming of his family in a distant, poor village. Shelterless, he was also a part of the boom town's riches. After all, Surat peaked on the arms of the migrant labor. It was difficult to know whether he was happy or not. Yet, he slept peacefully on remarkably clean pavements, below the bridge.....Personal Diary of the researcher

1 INTRODUCTION

'Crisis in the public domain' is the chosen area of this paper. The research aims at studying the role of administrative leadership during the crisis and post-crisis periods. It also looks at the role such leadership plays in initiating post-crisis reforms. It seeks to differentiate crisis management from reform initiatives and tries to test a hypothesis that even though crises tend to provide a base for reforms, they do not necessarily lead to reforms. The process of reform involves a much larger canvas than what is often initially assumed. Two Leadership Studies dealing with City Management in Surat before, during and after the 1994 epidemic of Plague and a similar study in Ahmedabad in relation to the 2001 Earthquake are used to illustrate the opportunities and constraints that leaders face while dealing with a critical situation. Both the case studies are situated in the Gujarat Province of India and provide interesting experiences of crisis and reform initiatives. As the title suggests, this is a tale of two cities recovering from crises.

"There is a popular notion that crises provide key opportunities for reforms. The very occurrence of a crisis is then thought to expose the status quo as problematic, making it easier to gain momentum for alternative policies and institutions" (Boin and t'Hart. 2003). However crisis leaders are rarely in a suitable situation for initiating effective reform. "Crisis management has never been easy. Organizational chaos, media pressure, stress and inaccurate information are but a few factors that make it very hard for crisis leaders to make sound decisions" (ibid). As Boin and t'Hart would put it 'The imperatives of effective crisis containment conflict with the imperatives of reform craft' (ibid). Crisis leaders generally aim for minimization of damage. Hence, the post-crisis leadership is probably in a better position to exploit the language and inheritance of crisis. "It can always portray crises as the result of flaws in the existing institutional order. Reform leaders frame critical contingencies and policy predicaments in terms of crises" (ibid). This makes the subject of crisis, post-crisis leadership and reform initiatives an interesting area of research. To what extent and in

what context does the post-crisis leadership succeed in initiating reforms? How are they different from crisis leaders? What are the priorities and constraints before such leadership? What are the qualities of such leadership that enables or disenables sustenance? The crisis leaders in certain cases may graduate into post-crisis leaders, but in a majority of cases, we see different sets and styles of leadership in the crisis and post-crisis periods. Why is it so?

Administrative leadership, whether in the crisis or post-crisis period invariably operates in a political and social milieu and is intimately connected to the types and styles of political and social leadership. So while, the main focus of this research is on the post-crisis administrative leadership, political and social leadership will be brought in, from the angle of its interconnectedness with the administrative leadership. The two case studies are described in brief, below.

Surat, the second largest city of the Province of Gujarat faced a huge crisis in 1994 when an epidemic of Plague broke out in the city. Though the number of deaths was less than one hundred, a mass exodus of panic stricken citizens brought into sharp focus the failure of the city management in maintaining sanitary standards. The crisis leaders focused on minimization of damage. A new post-crisis administrative leadership in the city management undertook reform Initiatives. INTACH, an independent non-governmental organization voted Surat as the second cleanest city in India. Surat continues to be in the news as an example of reforming city governance, even ten years after the Plague.

Twenty Sixth January 2001 saw Gujarat facing its worst ever earthquake, leaving 13,000 people dead and an immense amount of destruction. Ahmedabad, the largest city was badly affected. Eighty One high rise buildings collapsed and 891 people lost their lives. The Provincial and City Administration came in for criticism and the crisis leaders were often found struggling with lack of planning and resources. The post-earthquake phase saw demands for making the city safer. There was talk of disaster mitigation and the opportunities for reform did exist for a brief period.

However very soon, the crisis had been forgotten and the priorities of city managers had changed. The crisis had led to possibility of reforms, yet the priorities and the post-crisis reform initiatives were increasingly veering away from the main issue. Status quo became the priority and it became apparent within a year that the crisis had not led to any significant post-crisis reform initiatives vis-à-vis the crisis.

Through the analysis of these case studies, I will attempt at studying the concepts of crisis, leadership and reform initiatives. I will try to identify the basic reform agenda, the styles of leadership and the ways of sustenance. The research will try to identify how post-crisis leadership is essentially different from the crisis leadership and whether this phase of leadership in a public sphere is more suitable for reform initiatives. I will also try to identify the seemingly successful styles and strategies in reform sustenance.

The primary question I seek to answer is 'how the 'post-crisis administrative leadership' has strongly influenced the reform initiatives in the Post-Plague City Management in Surat and why we do not find a parallel in the Post-Earthquake City Management in Ahmedabad?' As part of the search for this answer I will probe the reasons of the crises, the way crisis leaders handled the crisis, the differences between the crisis leadership and post-crisis leadership, the relationship between the post-crisis leadership and reform initiatives and what lessons can be learnt.

My justification in studying this subject is two fold; the necessity to look at 'success' in Public Administration along with setbacks and to understand the relevance of leadership in general and administrative leadership in particular. The theories of Public Administration are often designed to understand failure rather than success. Prevalent concepts analyze public administration more from the viewpoint of 'why certain things do not happen' than 'why certain things happen'. However reforms and change do take place. Do the current theories have an answer for that? The answers are often provided in terms of 'crises' and 'leadership'. Changes are assumed to take place because the leadership reacts to a crisis or changes take place

because there was a unique leader. Are the answers so simple? The relevance of this research is to study both the sides of the coin and try finding an answer to 'why certain things happen' and 'why certain things do not'.

The main agenda is that of assessing how important is leadership in initiating or not initiating reforms and for that matter sustaining it. James Burns had said 'Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth'[1]. In this context, the study of public leadership and within that, the study of administrative leadership assumes great significance. "Though there has been substantial research in the field of leadership, administrative leadership research has experienced neither the volume nor the integration of the mainstream" (Van Wart.2003). There has been a general trend among researchers towards finding political leadership as a more exciting subject and also visible, is the often-guiding belief that since powerful forces influence administrative leadership, the contribution of such leadership is limited. However these researchers miss a basic point, which will be strongly argued in the present paper; the point being that initiation and sustenance of reforms is overwhelmingly dependent on the kind and style of administrative leadership that is provided in an organization. Within the limited research available on administrative leadership, those focusing on 'post-crisis leadership and reform initiatives' are scarce. This by itself is the relevance and justification of this research.

City governance is a complex territory. Obviously, I will not be able to look at all factors related to such an issue. Paucity of time and space has led me to focus on certain specific issues. The reader may kindly consider this as the major limitation of the paper.

[1] Cited in Van Wart (2003)

The study comprises of the following sections:

- The conceptual framework in the next section is divided in five parts. First, a brief explanation of the risk and safety debate will be given. Next, the concepts of crisis, reforms and leadership will be taken up. Third, the prevalent crisis-reform theory will be explained. Fourth, a discussion on recent research, which points out the difference between the imperatives of crisis and imperatives of reforms, will be taken up. Finally, this section will end with the statements of hypotheses, which will guide the research.
- My research methodology is presented in section three. I have collected the data from primary fieldwork in Surat, Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad in India as well as from the works of researchers in this field.
- In the subsequent section, a brief description of the Province where both the case studies are situated will be given and 'Urban Gujarat' will be introduced.
- The fifth section would introduce the reader to city management in the province and would explain the role of leadership in such management.
- The sixth and seventh section would elaborate the two case studies taken up in this work. The sections would concentrate on the pre-crisis, crisis and post- crisis periods and would analyze the types of leadership in each of the period and the reform initiatives.
- Section eight would comprise results of the research and their analysis and in the final and concluding section I would take up the main question and discuss the meaning of research results for the study of crisis and leadership and in a general way for public administration..

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The objective of this section is fivefold. The reader will be exposed to the 'Risk and Safety debate' in the beginning. The second is to define the concepts of crisis, reform and leadership in the context of this research. Next, I will

analyze what is called the crisis-reform theory. In the subsequent section, I will deal with the relevant studies, which provide connectivity to the concepts of crisis, post-crisis, leadership and reforms. Finally, relevant hypotheses would be elaborated so as to guide my analysis.

2.1 The Risk and Safety Debate

"Authorities will have to come to terms with the symbolic and mass-psychological dimensions of risk and safety debates" – t' Hart, Heyse and Boin (2001)

The German Sociologist Ulrich Beck (1992) observed that we live in a 'risk society', 'in which concerns about personal safety and health as well as collective security have risen to the top of the social and political agenda' (Boin & t'Hart 2003). The risk society is defined as one of proliferation of risk, complexity and tight couplings (t'Hart, Heyse and Boin 2001). They have cited Harvey (1989) who is of the opinion that 'Globalization, new technologies and economic growth have produced time-space compression. Shrinking distances have led to faster movements and higher and higher complexities where 'Couplings between system components become tighter and tighter, turning the world into an error inducing system' (Perrow 1999). This school is of the opinion that mishaps are more likely to happen in a risk society.

I do not fully agree with this concept, to the extent that it does not explain all kinds of disasters, in particular the differences between natural and manmade disasters. However, one can see increasingly that the difference between man-made and natural disasters have started shrinking. The natural disasters often take their toll, since human actions have contributed to the removal of barriers. A case in point is the Cyclone in Kutch in 1998. Workers in the Saltpan industry were the biggest casualties. Excessive exploitation of these areas had seen to it that the workers were in a high risk area. Complexities of prediction and lack of data on part of crisis leaders led to a casualty of two thousand deaths. How far was it natural and how far was it man made? Higher urbanization has often seen closure of natural waterways. In 1999, Ahmedabad

saw the highest ever rainfall recorded in a day in the last century. Lack of exit-ways for water turned the City into a flood zone for days. How far man-made and how far natural? Higher economic activity and growth of technology, which facilitates human control of nature, also brings in higher complexities, lack of information, unpredictability and possibility of error and mishap.

What does the changing nature of society mean to the leadership, both political and bureaucratic? The increasing number of crises raises strong challenges to the existing crisis-response systems. t'Hart, Heyse and Boin have talked about the progression of such societies from 'heroic' to a 'besieged crisis response' and the leadership being increasingly faced with 'continuous crisis management' instead of 'episodic ones'. Gujarat in the theoretical sense is yet to become a post-industrial risk society, yet we see the emergence of multiple crises as an important part of governance. Crises happen everywhere. However with globalization and technology being more and more connected to massive urbanization, crisis response both among the political and administrative leadership is attaining immense importance in recent times.

2.2 Crisis, Reform and Leadership

Crisis

"The term crisis is of Greek origin and denotes a turning point, a point of crucial differentiation" (Zimmermann 1996). 'In matters of public domain and for the leadership there is a limit to predictability' (Blockley 1998). 'In many ways, crises are points of reference in demarcating historical episodes. They help to distinguish between the past and present. Their label alone tends to be self-sufficient, evoking vivid memories. They appear to produce dominant images of success or failure' (Rosenthal & Kouzmin 1993). 'Crises constitute epochs of disruption and discontinuity' (Alink *et al* 2001). For the purpose of this research I define crisis as an episode which denotes

'system failure"[2] and opens up discussions about the past, present and the future of the organization/institution.

From crises to reforms

"Crisis represents a turning point, a discontinuity between the past and future. Whereas the past was one of certainties and routines, the future presents many alternative futures" (Alink *et al* 2001). Acceptance of a 'system failure' also entails finding ways of moving away from a crisis. How does a sector move away from a crisis? It is dependent on the type of crisis response approach that is taken by the leadership. There are two main approaches. 'A conservative approach emphasizes on 'restoring order', back to the pre-crisis phase and a reformist approach, which would move towards re-balancing and redesigning. A successful reform effort results in reconstruction: a wholly new institutional 'fit' developed between an altered institutional structure and the environment' (Alink *et al* 2001). Reform involves fundamental, intended and implemented change (Bannink and Resodihardjo 2005). I have adopted these definitions of Reforms for the purpose of this research.

In reality, often there is a mix of both approaches. Ultimately, it is the leadership, political and administrative; who decide which of the crisis-response approach or mix that fits the bill.

Reforms and Leadership

Reforms are difficult to achieve. "Political science and public administration literature is rife with examples of the barriers that hamper reform" (Resodihardjo 2005). Hence, the centrality of leadership, both political and administrative, in the changeover becomes extremely crucial. However as already explained, this research will focus mostly on administrative leadership. I have borrowed

[2] There can be many definitions, yet system failure is common to all discussions of crisis. Boin (Interview with the researcher on 13th July 2005) feels it is better to go by the common factor than search for a common definition.

one of many definitions provided by Van Wart regarding administrative leadership; it refers primarily to the non-political administrative heads of organizations. (Van Wart 2003). In our case studies, the concepts of entrepreneurs would occur again and again, along with administrative leaders and for the purpose of this research, entrepreneurs are defined as 'those leaders who make practical process and cultural changes that dramatically improves quality or productivity. It shares a change emphasis with the transformational school and an internal focus with the charismatic school' (Van Wart 2003). How do we distinguish the characteristics of leadership from management or administration? Wallis and Dollery are of the view that the primary distinctiveness of leadership is that 'they seek to shape the culture of a following to strengthen the intrinsic commitment of its members to strive to advance the leader's quest. Leaders can strengthen the intrinsic motivation of followers through processes of a) 'Internalization' by amplifying values and beliefs that are shared by both leaders and followers and b) 'Identification' by consciously engaging in behaviors which reinforce and strengthen the sense of personal identification and loyalty which followers place in them'(Wallis and Dollery 1997). For the purpose of this research, I identify administrative leadership with the Municipal Commissioner of the City Government. Administrative leaders can be entrepreneurs, but not necessarily always so. However as we will see in our case studies, entrepreneurship tend to form the core of a reformist administrative leadership.

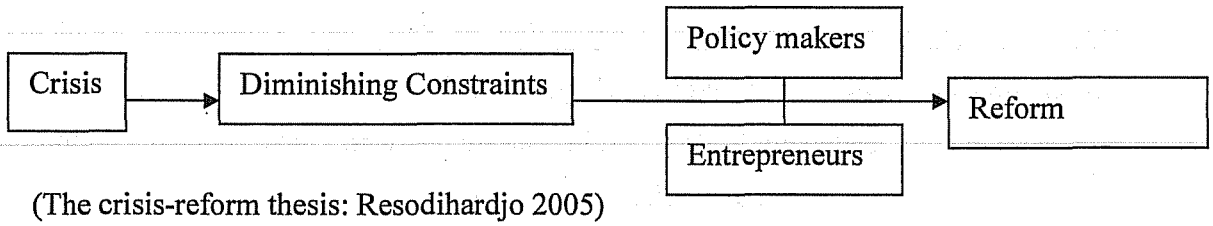
In this paper administrative leadership within the city governance is juxtaposed against the political and social leadership. For the purpose of this research political leadership refers primarily to the political leadership within the City Corporation (Surat Municipal Corporation or SMC and Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation or AMC). The Provincial political leadership which to some extent influences the city leadership is also cited in relevant quarters. I have adopted a definition for social leadership which might differ from the generally accepted ones. For me, social leadership primarily means the leadership provided by the citizens of the city, which influences both the political and administrative leadership. This is difficult to concretize, yet as we shall see, this becomes the hallmark of sustaining reform initiatives. For the

purpose of this research it primarily means concern and support of the citizens or a majority of them towards reform initiatives.

2.3 Crisis-Reform Theory

Despite the over-prevalent negativity regarding the occurrence of reforms, they do occur. How does it happen? According to Resodihardjo three answers are available. 'They are introduced by the political and bureaucratic leaders (Doig and Hardgrove, 1990; Hart 2000; Terry 2003; Noll 2005). Reform is sudden, stumbled upon in the incremental policy process. (Lindblom 1959, 1979; Harrison, Hunter and Pollitt, 1990). In the third explanation reforms occur when incremental policy making may actually be disrupted. Crises disrupt the processes and present opportunities for reform' (Resodihardjo 2005).

Resodihardjo has grouped the works of several authors (Keeler, 1993; kingdom, 1995; Cortell and Peterson, 1999) to put forward the arguments of Crisis-Reform thesis. The crisis-reform thesis tries to advocate the idea that 'policy makers are not only under pressure to find solutions to end the crisis; they also have increased freedom to suggest alternative measures. Crises present opportunities as the incremental policy-making process is disrupted. The 'entrepreneurs' also can use the situation to push for a favorite solution' (Resodihardjo 2005).



(The crisis-reform thesis: Resodihardjo 2005)

It is widely agreed that there are too many theories in this field, much of it non-empirical (Boin, 2005). However crises, risks and uncertainties do establish a context for change and innovation. 'Many crises indicate that change may be

around the corner. Effective crisis management includes creative handling of opportunities' (Rosenthal & Kouzmin 1993). 'It rests on the sound idea that during or in the immediate wake of crises, key institutional constraints that normally militate against non-incremental reforms are temporarily relaxed' (Alink *et al* 2001). In this thesis, the explanation of Reforms is in terms of the precedence of crisis (Punctuated equilibrium model; Krasner 1988)

'The crisis-reform theory has a distinctly deterministic flavor' (Linz 1978). It presumes that crisis leads to reforms and by default the leadership dealing with the crisis is in an eminent position to bring in sustained change, since the constraints have significantly gone down. Is this a correct assessment? Does crisis always lead to reforms? Are there other factors? How important is leadership? Many questions automatically get raised. The research of Resodihardjo in prison systems of UK and the Netherlands interestingly indicate the Crisis-Reform theory to be deterministic. She identifies factors beyond the space created by the theory. It will be my endeavor to examine our case studies against the prevalent popular ideas.

2.4 Crisis, Crisis Leadership, Post-Crisis Leadership and Reforms

"Crises are unusual situations, but this 'uniqueness' rarely allows for a complete overhaul of pre-crisis administrative patterns. Implementation of reforms requires time" (Boin and Otten. 1996). This leads us to doubt the very deterministic tone of the crisis-reform theory. Mr.Boin in an interview with me was of the opinion that the tasks of a crisis and tasks of Reform are different theoretically and they clash. However, till date not much research has been done to empirically prove this point. Can the leaders dealing with the crisis bring in reforms? Boin and t'Hart have tried to explain this by delineating the tasks of Crisis Leaders and Reform Leaders.

'Reform Leaders can exploit the crisis damage, build support for non-incremental reform, portray crises as the result of flaws in the existing institutional order and communicate a strong commitment to make major changes. They

have a plan for new and stable future. Crisis-management Leaders aim at minimizing the damage, alleviation of pain, and restoration of order and are required to reaffirm the existing values and structures. They restore confidence in the effectiveness of pre-existing policies and institutions' (Boin and t'Hart.2003).

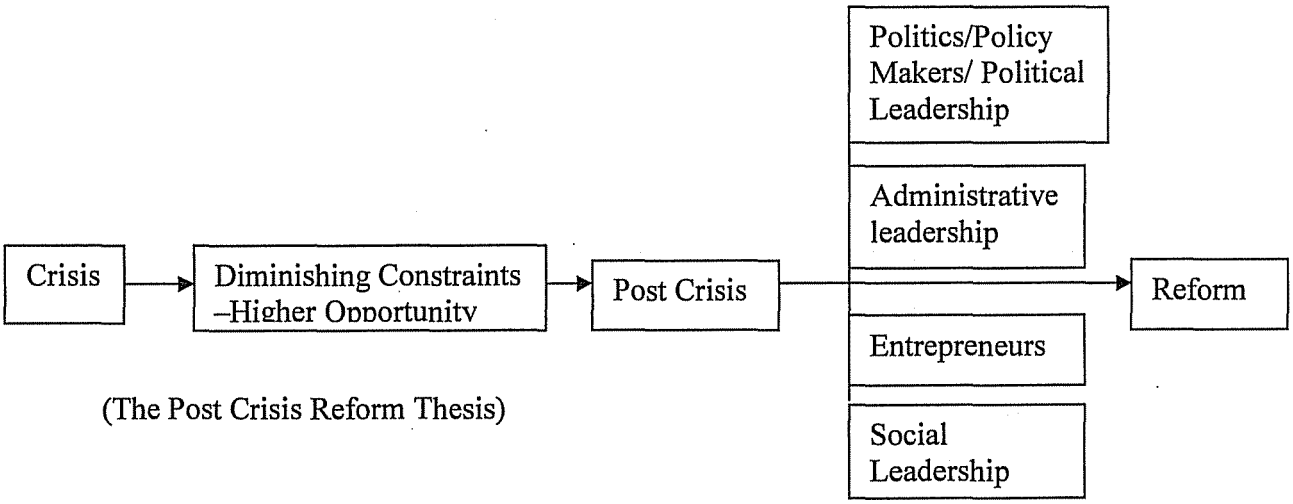
What I intend to do in this research is strongly based on the doubts raised above regarding the deterministic crisis- reform thesis. My basic proposition that post-crisis leadership is well suited for reform initiatives is a continuation of the above idea. Boin and t'Hart explain that the requisites of crisis leadership are at odds with the requirement of effective reform. Their primary contention is that newly incumbent leaders are in a much better position to carry out reforms. When post-crisis reform leaders use the language of crisis they "delegitimize and deinstitutionalize existing values and policies. They dramatize the seriousness of the situation; yet at the same time externalize its causes" (Boin &'t Hart. 2003). My proposition flows from these ideas and tries to show through case studies how post-crisis leadership deals with reform initiatives.

2.5 Hypotheses

"Crises in reality tend to be less homogeneous than what many theories would suggest. Being a social and political construction, crisis reality needs to be explored in terms of multiple realities. More often than not crises give rise to multiple and divergent perceptions and definitions of the situation. Crises may be acute, sudden and self evident, but they may also be creeping, emergent and ambiguous. What is a crisis to some may be an opportunity to others" (Rosenthal, Hart and Kouzmin, 1991). A crisis has a tone of multiple realities. To analyze crisis, leadership and reforms strictly from a deterministic viewpoint is not borne by empirical evidence.

Based on this is my first hypothesis. Crisis provides opportunities for reforms, but there is no causal relationship between both. I have written earlier regarding the essential differences between the crisis leadership and the reform

leadership. It is my second hypothesis that given the basic differences between the imperatives of crisis and the imperatives of reforms, the post-crisis leaders are in a better position than the crisis leaders to bring in reforms. I hypothesize a Post Crisis Reform Thesis.



(The Post Crisis Reform Thesis)

The Thesis suggests that Crisis leads to diminishing constraints and throws up opportunities. Yet, the period of crisis itself is eminently unsuitable for reforms. It is the post-crisis period, which is the playing field of reform leadership. Success of post-crisis administrative leadership to bring in sustained change is dependent on entrepreneurship and the environment of politics, political leadership, policy makers and social leadership.

Being chronologically subsequent to the crisis does not necessarily equip the post-crisis leaders to handle reform initiatives. Based on this my third hypothesis is that reform leadership needs to have elements of entrepreneurship, a mix of tranformationalism and charisma to steer the reform initiatives.

Administrative leadership, however entrepreneurial does not operate outside the immediate environment and is strongly connected to the factors of political and social leadership. It is intimately connected to politics, the policymaking process and society as often represented by societal leadership. Hence, my fourth hypothesis is that sustainability of a post-crisis reform initiative is strongly linked to the capacity of the administrative leadership to evolve a common vision with the political and social leadership towards the reform initiative.

I started my argument by stating that the theories of Public Administration are obsessed with failure. Success gets scarce attention. However Reforms do take place, often after crisis. The stories of change, reforms, leadership and success need to be studied to broaden our understanding of these complex phenomena. I intend to test my four hypotheses and the post-crisis reform thesis against the case studies.

3. THE METHODOLOGY

This section elaborates on the methodology used for this endeavor. I started with the conventional methods. Initially, I wanted to write on what I already knew. Crisis had always fascinated me and I wanted to revisit my experience in the Ahmedabad Passport Agency, where I spent two years and eight months. The Agency had faced a huge crisis of confidence in the year 2000 and I had been brought in apparently to 'bring the faith back'. The allegation of rampant corruption had led to an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation of India into the affairs of the Agency. The agency stood discredited and the employees excluded and marginalized in the eyes of the public. Both crisis management and reform initiatives had been expected of me. It was a period of learning and was difficult times indeed. Initially I wanted to go back to the Agency, which I once headed as a researcher and search for an answer to the question whether outside 'foisted leadership' had any connection with reform initiatives. Yet increasingly, I was finding it an autobiographical exercise.

Thinking about my experience gave me a basic question. Is there any relationship between crisis and reform initiatives and if so, what is the role played by administrative leadership. I realized I had to broaden my research area to find answers; in short, I had to get out of the Passport Agency. To some extent, I believed crisis leads to reforms and administrative leadership is crucial to the exercise. However too many questions went unanswered. Leadership of which period? Crisis or Post crisis or both? I looked around for case studies in the province, where I have worked for fifteen years; Gujarat. I found two hugely success stories. The crisis of Plague in Surat had led to significant reform initiatives, arguably due to post –crisis reformist administrative leadership. To a large extent, similar was the story of an organization called GSDMA, which had been created after the 2001 earthquake. Eminently successful in post-crisis reform initiatives, the organization had recently won the UN Sasakawa award for Disaster Mitigation work in the worst affected Kutch District. Along with Passport Agency, I had three apparently successful reform initiatives, which had a direct connectivity with post-crisis administrative leadership.

I came back to my base-station, the City of Ahmedabad by the end of July and set about studying how the post-crisis administrative leadership has influenced reform initiatives in the three selected case studies. I visited Surat, my old Passport office and GSDMA. Relevant Data was collected; Secondary and some research material. However I was uncomfortable. Fifteen days into my field work, I felt that even if I find why things work, my research will never tell me why the same equation does not work everywhere. I found the answer in my backyard. Ahmedabad City had seen the same 2001 earthquake. A huge crisis! Why is it that, we do not find parallels of Surat here? The commissioners of Ahmedabad had been as efficient, if not more compared to those of Surat. Why does not Ahmedabad have a Surat Story? It had taken me a few months, but I had finally the question which I needed to probe.

I started with collecting relevant material regarding plague and earthquake crises. As City Administration was the focus, visits to SMC and AMC were made. Apart from doing a literature survey of the latest literature on the subject, three

libraries those of ISS, IRMA and SPIPA were used. Latest Data was collected from the field offices and in particular from the City Manager's Council at Ahmedabad. It came as a pleasant surprise, when I found that matters related to City Management were quite topical in the local papers and the main newspapers carried a series of articles on both the cities, during the period of research. No wonder, they came handy.

After collecting the relevant data, I set about discussing the proposed research with academic scholars. I had made a start in the Netherlands itself with Arjen Boin. In India I continued the discussion with Shivanand Swamy, Devi Misra and Biswas .After this phase, I was quite clear on my questions. Kajri Misra; a fellow of Cornell University herself gave me excellent ideas on conducting interviews. These discussions also helped me in referring to concurrent research on the subject. Boin introduced me to Sandra's research and Swamy gave me excellent dissertations by his students on the Surat City.

The main tool in my hand was the method of unstructured interviews. I decided on interviewing six categories of persons. The bureaucrats (administrative leaders), Politicians (City political leaders), the middle-level officials (insiders), the city watchers (Random middle class professionals who showed interest in the subject), the city chroniclers (Journalists) and Slum Dwellers (Poor-Perspective). Whereas, the main focus was on the two cities, interviews were conducted with people related to the Passport Agency and Kutch as well. In many cases, persons interviewed had actually operated in different situations[3]; all equally relevant to my research (Mukim had taken over as District Magistrate of Kutch, immediately after the earthquake and is currently working as Commissioner, AMC). By the beginning of October, this process had taken me to Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat and New Delhi.

Each interview was a revelation and after conducting as many as sixty three, I could see the pattern. Through the months of research, I had collected primary data, referred to secondary and tertiary sources and had interviewed a wide

[3] Please see Appendix B for further details on the interviewees

spectrum of people. What had originally started as an attempt to revisit the Passport Agency had become a comparison of two cities vis-à-vis critical situations. By this time the Passport Agency story went out of the picture. Three months into the research, I was ready to tell the tale of two Indian cities.

4. THE PROVINCE

4.1 An Old Land

To the threshold of this land came the entire world,
From north and west, from east and south
- Sundaram, Gujarati[4] Poet (1908-91) writing in 1960[5]

Gujarat is the western-most province of India. A long coastline of sixteen hundred kilometers makes the State, a thriving maritime zone (Please see Appendix A). The Province is the seventh largest in India with a total area of 196,024 Sq.km. More than fifty million people inhabit the province including a large urban population. The State has exceptional diversity; Deserts are often only kilometers away from major agricultural zones, close-by areas could show severe differences in rainfall leading to drought and heavy rainfall side by side and sea could always shower the benefits of fishing, salt and ports while cyclones could wipe out part of the coastal populace. Politically, Gujarat is a young province. It came into being only in 1960. Post-creation, the predominantly agricultural state saw massive industrialization[6]. Trade and Commerce, which was always a major part of the Gujarati enterprise boomed during this period. Being a sea-faring population, the contact of Gujaratis with the rest of the world was always there. Migrations to other countries were a regular phenomenon, yet it is the post-1950s, which saw Gujaratis migrating to the Western World in big number. Industries, Trade, Commerce and Migration changed the nature of Gujarati society substantially. Affluence and entrepreneurship became the hallmark, yet at the same time

[4] Gujarati denotes a person from Gujarat
[5] Translation done by Yagnik and Sheth (2005)
[6] 19% of the total industrial investment in India is in the province of Gujarat.

disasters and social turmoil became part of life. An increasingly technologically equipped society with better infrastructure than most Indian States, it has faced almost with deathly regularity floods, droughts, earthquake, cyclones, plague, industrial disasters, terrorist attacks and communal riots. Crises have been a regular phenomena and the reaction to crises an important area of study in Gujarat.

4.2 Urban Gujarat

This part is meant to introduce the reader to the urban Gujarat and in particular to the growth of urban societies in Ahmedabad and Surat. My analysis is strongly influenced by the recent seminal work 'The Shaping of Modern Gujarat' by Achyut Yagnik and Suchitra Sheth (2005). The cities of Gujarat were relatively small till the late nineteenth century, when textiles, railways and famine in the countryside in that order, brought in the first phase of migration. By 1951, urban population constituted 27%. Further industrialization, trade and droughts in the rural areas increased the population of urban area to the present 37% .Whereas the nineteenth century urban Gujarat belonged to the elites and trading classes, migration led to transformation of the social character of the cities. The cities started losing their homogenous character.

'By The late 1960s, there were actually three Ahmedabads.First was the old walled city where upper castes, dalits and Muslims lived. The second were the industrial textile townships of Muslims and dalits, the third post-independence Ahmedabad was the western Ahmedabad of elites; upper and middle castes and middle class migrants' (Yagnik and Sheth.2005). With the collapse of textiles and share markets, Ahmedabad increasingly became a city of small trade, industry and business. This according to Mukim, the current Commissioner, AMC created the fourth Ahmedabad in the eastern side, an area of lower middle class Hindus. Bad Riots in 1969 saw the exit of upper caste Hindus from the walled city towards the east or west of the city depending on the economic status. A city of many cities! This was more than apparent during the 2002 riots, when life was normal in many parts of the city, while certain areas burned.

"Surat followed a different trajectory of development. From being the premier trading city in Western India, it went into a decline. It started growing again after the 70s and became a vast workplace with a variety of small-scale enterprises (Yagnik and Sheth.2005). It was becoming a place to make money in, impersonal, practical and often violent. Yet unlike Ahmedabad, it can not be described as a City of many cities. It remains a city of the rich and the labor classes, in a relatively homogenous manner. Today urban Gujarat belongs to Gujaratis as much as to the migrants.

5 MANAGING THE CITY

This section will have two parts. First, we will elaborate the formal structure of city governance in Gujarat. The second part will focus on the internal leadership issues of city governance. This part will also flesh out the situation on the ground, being based on primary data from Surat and Ahmedabad.

5.1 The Formal Structure

The City Corporation forms the core of City Governance in Gujarat. They are modeled on the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act, 1949 (hereafter referred as Act). Gujarat was carved out of the Bombay Province in 1960 and hence the inheritance of the Bombay Statute. The Act envisages a combined responsibility of the political and administrative leadership for implementation of the Act. The most relevant section is Section 4 which is as follows " The municipal authorities charged with carrying out the provisions of this Act are for each city (A) a Corporation (B) a Standing Committee and (C) a Municipal Commissioner" (Act.1992:14). The Corporation is formed out of elected councilors who elect the Mayor and the Standing Committee .Unlike the western model of city governments, the Act is not Mayor-centric. Rather it gives comprehensive execution powers to the administrative head; the Municipal Commissioner. The standing committee looks after the day to day work and thus in effect the Chairman of the Standing Committee is more related to the implementation of specific tasks related to the Act. This to some extent dilutes the role of

the Mayor, who has a more ceremonial role. Tenure of two and a half years is an additional handicap.

The Act envisages the Commissioner to be an outsider since Section 36 (1) specifies "The Commissioner shall from time to time be appointed by the State Government" (Act.1992:32). Though it is not specifically mentioned in the Act, the provincial government in Gujarat has traditionally appointed officers belonging to the Indian Administrative Service as Municipal Commissioners.

To understand the role of and relation between the political and the administrative leadership within the Corporation we need to refer to Section 67 of the Act. "Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Act, the municipal Government of the City vests in the Corporation. Subject, whenever it is in this Act expressly so directed, to the approval or sanction of the Corporation or the Standing Committee and subject also to all other restrictions , limitations and conditions imposed by this Act or by any other law for the time being in force, the entire executive power for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act and of any other Act for the time being in force which imposes any duty or confers any power on the Corporation vests in the Commissioner" (Act.1992:50). Hence, the primary executive powers are vested formally with the Commissioner, who operates within the general control of the Corporation as represented mostly through the Standing Committee. Thus the formal structure puts forward a dual and combined responsibility model of both the political and administrative leadership. Thre political leadership, being elected has tenure of five years, whereas the Commissioners being appointed by the State Government have no fixed tenure and are transferable by the Provincial Government without any assignment of reasons.

There could be situation under which no elected body exists (supersession or delay in election). During such periods the Provincial Government appoints an Administrator from the IAS. At such points, the dual responsibility becomes a singular bureaucratic responsibility.

The function of a city government in Gujarat is wide, the most important being sanitation, sewage, drainage, fire services, roads, health, street lighting, housing and regulatory activities to prevent diseases and dangerous activities. The resources are mostly from Octroi[7] and property taxes. The Provincial and Federal governments also fund specific projects. The city governments have wide spread penalty powers in the interest of the health and wellbeing of the citizens.

5.2 The Inside Story

The formal structure being 'dual responsibility' in nature, an essential struggle between the administrative and political leadership is built into the system. The first possibility of conflict is between the Mayor and the Commissioner. To a large extent, it depends on personalities. However it is very easy for the Mayor to feel that he is not getting enough importance in the Corporation affairs. It is equally easy for a Commissioner to privately treat the Mayor and his ilk as nuisances in service delivery. When we ask the officials in the middle rung, we tend to see the same viewpoint regarding councilors. Most officials did not make direct comments against the higher political leadership (Mayor, Standing Committee Chairman). Yet, when it came to the councilors they were quite open. One official in SMC called them the 'Nuisance 99'[8]. Most officials feel the councilors have short term vision and are not interested in the future wellbeing of the city. Interestingly one finds the opinion about councilors being supported by many city politicians. I asked them a simple question. What is the percentage of Councilors interested in a better vision of the city? While the most optimists put the figure at 10%, the one with the lowest figure came up with 2%. Corruption is quite openly talked about, with both sides accusing each other of the sin.

A common complaint among the administrators and the politicians is regarding the deteriorating standards among the new councilors. Municipal administration was once the preserve of the elite of the City. Ahmedabad at one point of time was called the City of Mahajans. Roughly translated, it means the City of Great

[7] Octroi is a tax levied by the city governments, chargeable on goods , being brought into the city
[8] SMC has 33 wards, hence 99 elected councilors, hence the peculiar terminology.

people. The elite were the textile magnates, big time traders and the leaders of the freedom struggle. Sardar Patel, the first Deputy Prime Minister of independent India started his political career as President of the Ahmedabad Municipality. Though the leadership was elitist, it was also associated with people of a particular stature and vision. In independent India such politicians veered away from city level politics (Considered too small!) towards provincial and federal level politics. Increasingly the city governance became the preserve of the failed politicians and small timers. With the entry of Gandhi in the politics of the Province, the old time politics had adopted a 'high moral standard' However, in post independence Gujarat 'the Gandhian moral order was swept aside as the Gujarati entrepreneurial class and the middle class expanded and consolidated their economic and social control. The pace of their expansion increased dramatically as they grew both in number and in their control over modern financial, political and educational systems. Their own prosperity was their prime focus and all natural and human resources became the means to achieve it. By the 1970s , this group dominated elected institutions, the bureaucracy, the education system and the cooperative sector, including banks, dairies and agricultural market yards as well as, of course, chambers of commerce' (Yagnik & Sheth.2005:241). The story is true of Surat as well. One argument could be that this in effect was democratization of the power base. The new politicians often came from the newly emerging castes and classes. However the new middle class, who often also included the newly emerging castes, became self-interest-focused. The dominant castes and classes were not interested in the city governance any longer. The old moral order of the erstwhile Gujarati elite had given way to a powerbase, undoubtedly more democratic, less elitist but also self obsessed. This probably is the basis of common complaint.

As mentioned above, the administrative classes in the corporations harbor a deep seated feeling that the majority of the political classes are in the game of city governance for their self interest only. This is not to say that there is total absence of visionary politicians in the City governance. However the unanimous view point is that the number is few. The relationship between the ruling party in the Corporation and the commissioner is also dependent on the ruling party in the Provincial government. On many occasions the same political party holds power both in the

Provincial and the city government. However the reverse is also possible. At such times the ruling political class in the city government often treats the Commissioner as an agent of the Provincial Government. This can make the relationship rather stormy. As mentioned earlier the Commissioner is an 'outsider' appointed by the provincial set up and thus the relationship can be quite delicate. The Provincial government, on its side might take decisions on political ground in some cases. Accusations and cross accusation are seen whenever the ruling parties are different and the administrators, in particular the Commissioner has to walk a thin line while dealing with the political leadership.

While interviewing the political and administrative leadership, one aspect became quite clear. Whereas the administrators would often deposit the ills of the system at the door step of the politicians, the political figures normally take shelter under the argument that Commissioner has all the powers and responsibilities and hence all failure lies with the quality of the Commissioner. While researching this paper, I got a distinct feeling that governance is often perceived to be Commissioner-Centric and not City-Centric. There is some truth in the allegation, preferred by politicians that each new Commissioner has his priority and as a result a common vision for the City rarely gets established. Hence, both the camps could accuse each other of lack of vision. However the city governance continues with the background of allegations of nexuses on the other side.

The important point here is the response to crisis among both types of leadership. Whereas the political leaders mostly claimed preparedness for a crisis to be an administrative duty, the opinion regarding reforms varied. Most of the administrators were of the opinion that initiation for reforms in the prevailing situation has to come from the administrative leaders, yet without political support such initiatives will not exhibit sustainability. We have to look at our case studies against this background of the formal structure and the informal reality.

6. SURAT AND THE PLAGUE

"The failure of citizens to emotively identify with their city and not see it just as an adjunct to their commercial progress has been a major cause for their lack of interest in its governance and functioning, resulting in degradation of urban services." - S R Rao (2005)

This section tells the unique story of Surat. It has four parts. The first relates to the history and the current phase. The next one focuses on the crisis. The third part speaks of the reform initiatives and the last part details leadership issues.

6.1 The City

Surat is an old city, dating back at least two thousand years. Situated at the point where the river Tapi meets the Arabian Sea, Surat; courtesy its location of advantage was a major center of trade and business. It was the gateway to Western India. When the colonial powers came to India, Surat was often the first point of business. The British East India Company established its first factory in India at Surat in 1608, so did the Dutch at a later date. The business was two-way. Surtis[9] went out to do business as much as the outsiders who came here. Surtis were known for their business acumen and the old saying was that the soil of Surat allowed money to grow. At the creation of Gujarat in 1960, Surat was the third largest city of the province. All through its history Surat was a center of trade and commerce, primarily facilitated by its unique location and in the post-British arrival period, through its closeness to Bombay[10]. Subsequent to 1960, the city became increasingly industrialized. Two major industries Textiles and Diamond boomed in the City, fed in equal measure by local and outside capital and cheap labor from both inside and outside Gujarat. Till 1981 Surat's growth was like any other city of Gujarat with the 1981 census putting the population at 800,000. Post-1981 the boom period started. Migrants, both in search of business and labor started flooding the city. By 1991 the population had doubled to 1.8 million. The growth story

[9] 'Surti' denotes a man from Surat.
[10] For the purpose of continuity ' Bombay' has been used in place of what is today known as the city of 'Mumbai'

continued. With the 1991 census, Surat surpassed Vadodara to become the second largest city of the province, after Ahmedabad. Surtis and outsiders alike were part of the boom story. The city was a distant priority in the scheme of things. Even in 1992[11], Surat was infamous for dirt and filth and was more a sight of unorganized growth where worshipping mammon was the only credo. The number of people coming from outside Surat had surpassed the original inhabitants. It was a rich city, yet poorly governed. Jha has a theory that the neo-rich wanted the city to be unknown. This according to him was the reactions of a typical black economy. The theory might sound a bit far fetched yet the fact remains that money and not the city was the priority. By the early 1990s with booming industries and poor infrastructure, huge generation of money and city governance, which proved its inexistence by the everpresent filth, Surat was showing signs of a crisis.

6.2 The Crisis

It started as a rumor. Balwant Singh, who was the commissioner in 1994, says they had started hearing of it almost two weeks before the first case was detected. The neighboring province of Maharashtra had experienced a massive earthquake in Latur and a few unsubstantiated cases of Plague had been reported. Rumors had started floating in Surat of the arrival of the disease in Surat from Latur side, may be through migrants. This is the reason, when Singh got the first news, he was not shocked. Same was not true of the residents. Before long panic had taken over and a mass exodus, likes of which the city had never been seen, had started.

Some claims put the figure of exodus almost at 60% of the city's population. This might be a bit exaggerated, yet the fact remains that almost the entire migrant population left the city. Whereas, by the final count 146 presumptive cases of plague had been reported with the figure of deaths touching 54, the panic was grossly overstated leading to the biggest exodus, the city and for that matter the province had ever seen. The economy of the city came to a standstill. Surat was no longer the pot of the gold; it had always seemed to be.

[11] Personal experience of the author. I started my career from Surat as a Sub-Divisional Magistrate

The favorite whipping boy was the city government, in this case SMC. As described earlier, civic governance was never a priority. As a contemporary news report specifies, filth was as much a result of lackadaisical civic governance as the behavior of the citizens, who never really cared for this state of things. When the crisis started, the reaction of SMC was on predictable lines. Major emphasis was on medical help including distribution of medicines. The corporation set about cleaning up the city, spending considerable amounts including giving double salary to the workers for working during this critical period. As Balwant Singh would recollect in 2005, the critical situation and panic lasted for about 15 days. Once the number of persons affected by plague came down, the citizens who had fled the city started coming back.

However, during the crisis a strange phenomenon had taken place. Outsiders started shying away from Surtis as far as doing business was concerned. Socially fundamental changes had taken place. Cases were reported regarding outsiders refusing to give their daughters in marriage in Surat. The city had been defamed and the end of the initial panic did not do anything to retrieve the situation. The city government had mostly put emphasis on minimization of damage and the ire of the citizens put the organization on the defensive. The employees had very rarely identified with the organization. After the plague they distinctly disowned it. The plague had taught the citizens an important lesson. Their business and their social life have a strong relationship with the way their city is perceived by the outsiders. End of the crisis had resulted in the citizens wanting to own the city and the employees of SMC wanting to disown their organization. This was the situation in May 1995, nine months after the crisis, when S. R. Rao joined as the new Commissioner of SMC. Rao was a reluctant entrant claiming that he was sent there as nobody wanted to go to Surat. As he would tell me in 2005, by that time it was back to square one.

6.3 Reform Initiatives

Much has been written about the changeover, the city underwent under the new leadership. As brought out in a film the plague proved to be a blessing for the city (See Box1). There is a general tendency of failing memory both among the leadership and citizens as the crisis recedes away. To some extent, Rao confronted this situation in 1995. His intention to change things was confronted by three main deterrents, the builders, the politicians and the administrative lobby. When I showed bewilderment regarding the third category, Rao explained in terms of organizational politics among the city government bureaucrats. Crisis provides opportunities. But as the Surat experience shows, unless the opportunity is not exploited, chances of sustained change are minimal. Surat presented a situation, where citizens were prepared to accept change. Rao started with implementation of law by targeting the three categories of interest groups, mentioned earlier. As he recollects in 2005, two ideas namely implementation of law 1) starting with the rich and powerful and 2) development for the poor became the most crucial guiding forces. These ideas were central to further expansion of reforms. For example: Rule of law could lead to higher tax collection and the poor-centrality had relation with schemes like 100% water supply and sewage.

Through a combination of effective decentralization of activities, out sourcing, empowerment of the employees and effective implementation of law, the campaign to make Surat, a better city to live in had been flagged off. The period of Rao in SMC was slightly more than two years, yet saw significant changes in the city administration. Leading from the front Rao took on the encroachment and the builder-criminal-business nexus. Strict regulation on all fronts, in particular the health and construction convinced the citizens that the new Commissioner meant business.

After a particular period, Surat saw unheard of actions from citizens. Many people came forward to voluntarily demolish their encroached or illegal constructions. Not only were citizens owning up their city, they understood adherence to law is the best way to make their city better. Corporation employees started identifying with their jobs and in a way they owned up the organization. By 1997 Surat had been

declared the second cleanest city in India after Chandigadh. Rao's exit did not stop the activities. Successive Commissioners Jagadeeshan, Mohapatra, Aloria and Joshi have continued the good work. Over a period the scope and spread of activities has significantly enlarged. Business is back and booming. Surat, pre-94 was a dirty city with a rich city government. Today it is a clean, livable city with the city corporation occupying a well deserved centrality.

Box1

Blessed by the Plague is a thought-provoking documentary that records the astounding change in Surat from being the filthiest city in India to now being the cleanest city. The film looks at Surat's successful efforts to convert itself into a clean and enviable place following the plague scare of 1994. Blessed by the Plague emerged through the filmmakers' (Director Arunabh Bhattacharjee and partner & co-producer Sunil Shanbag) interaction with Dr. Lodewijk Brunt, an urban sociologist from the University of Amsterdam and a co-producer of the film. Dr. Brunt studies cities in crisis for example the role of epidemics in shaping cities. He visited Surat soon after the plague scare and wrote about it extensively in Europe. Subsequently as the makers and Dr. Brunt followed the post-plague development in Surat, they realized there was a film in this remarkable transformation. The title 'Blessed by the Plague' is ironic because it took the plague scare and the international ostracism that India faced to make Surat what it is today. In that sense Surat was truly blessed by the Plague!

From a Review of the Film accessed from moviezone.7.forumer.com/a/why-are-indian-cities-filthy-unclean_post... on 17.09.2005

How did the Surat story take place? Was it simply a one man endeavor? Were much larger forces at work? We will analyze these factors in the final sections.

6.4 The Leadership Issues

It is impossible to disassociate the Surat experience from the leadership issues. The pre crisis leadership was not performing badly. SMC was a rich corporation. Tax collection was good. It was a huge organization and the administrative leaders were more management oriented, in other words the senior administrative leadership was more office bound. The field work had been the exclusive territory of junior employees. As Bhatt, a middle level manager put it in 2005; the bureaucrats of SMC very rarely saw the sites. It was a 9 to 5 job and since there was no crisis, it was a

happy situation for everybody. The citizenry of Surat never really showed any interest in the way in which their city was being managed. Political leadership of SMC was passive. The expected standards were low. The various interest groups were interested in their individual interests and very rarely thought of a common interest. Rao's arrival at SMC has to be seen in this background. Surat probably needed somebody to put it on tracks. The crisis by itself had not produced reforms, but the opportunities were exploited by the post crisis leadership.

Shivanand Swamy is a noted academic who has been working on the evolution of Surat city for about fifteen years. Discussions with him and people associated with Surat and my own personal observations lead me towards the following factors which became important in the post-Rao era.

Leading from the Front

Rao led from the front. He coined a slogan 'A.C to D.C'. A.C stood for Air-conditioned Cabins and D.C stood for Daily Chores. It basically meant that senior executives of the city government were expected to spend less time in the office and more time in the field. Rao himself set the example. Senior executives would leave home by 7 o'clock in the morning and supervise junior staff in the field. They were expected to come to office only in the afternoon. Presence of senior executives in the field made a strong impact, not only on the junior staff, but also on the citizens. SMC developed an image of efficiency in the minds of people. Even during my visit in 2005, the system was continuing.

The Centrality of the City Government

SMC before the Plague was an inefficient organization and after the plague a discredited one. Rao could increase the visibility of both the personnel and activities of SMC. People started expecting performance. The standards of expectation went up both inside and outside the organization.

Owning the Organization

The organization was highly centralized. Most of the powers were either vested in the Commissioner or the elected wing. Rao managed considerable decentralization. The city was divided into zones and each zone head was given considerable financial power. 'Instead of one commissioner, the city now had thirteen commissioners' (Rao: 2005). Officers and employees started taking pride in the organization. Success binds people. The political and social leadership after some time showed the same ownership towards the city government as the insiders.

Rule of Law

The regulations of the city government regarding sanitation and constructions were not being observed. Rao's insistence on implementation of law was faced with resistance, yet his no-nonsense attitude won the day. Strict implementation of law was combined with performance on the development front, thus making the Corporation popular.

Upping and enlarging the Standards

With the achievement of centrality and once the city had owned the organization, the standards got raised. Once a particular standard had been set, the successors did not allow it to fall and in most cases actually expanded the initiatives. Surat today has become a thinking city having at its core a city government, which is thinking ahead and taking up newer and newer challenges. Shivanand Swamy has divided the post-plague phase in SMC into four distinct periods; Rao (Rule of Law, short term and medium term goals), Jagadeeshan (Long term goals, 100% coverage), Mohapatra-Aloria (Projects-Implementation), Aloria –Joshi (Standard setting-24/7 services). This indicates the expanding nature of standards.

As far as opinion goes, this was a divided house. Some politicians felt Rao is overrated and without the support of the Standing Committee, he would have been nowhere. However, Chuango, who worked as Rao's Deputy thinks otherwise. There was no political body, when Rao arrived. In fact, the Corporation was under an Administrator. Rao got about 2 months, before the elections could be conducted. Chuango feels Rao had a lead time. By the time the politician arrived, the momentum and overwhelming support to reforms had ensured that there was no alternative but to support. Rao claims to have had confrontations with both the local and provincial politicians, though his successors claim having greater support. My general understanding of these phenomena is that once the political leadership understood that the citizens support the initiatives, they found it more useful to support than oppose. Some leaders and in particular Chauhan, who was the Mayor during the Rao period had positive opinions regarding the hard work of Rao. He, in fact claimed that the future vision came from Bhanujan, an IAS officer sent to Surat during Plague as crisis-manager. His abilities, even for the temporary period to take on strong measures using the SMC employees convinced the politicians that a new Surat is possible. As it actually happened once a common standard had been set, a common vision of different types of leadership could be achieved.

The crisis gave the opportunity, the administrative leadership could exploit it at a later period and it is entrepreneurship of such leadership which became crucial to sustain the initiatives. Surat had fundamentally changed. Riots had ripped apart this industrial city in 1992. In 2002, when riot started all over the province, Surat was comparatively peaceful. Jha feels the citizens of Surat have become the new voice, believing that investment in the city is more important than individual interests.

7. AHMEDABAD AND THE EARTHQUAKE

"Nobody owns Ahmedabad" - S Jagadeeshan (During an interview with the researcher in 2005)

This section is devoted to the recent past of the largest city of the Province. It has five parts. The first relates to introduction of the city detailing its history. The next speaks about the earthquake. The third part is devoted to reform initiatives in the post earthquake phase. In the fourth part, we go back to 1994 when reforms of another kind had brought the city significant media attention. In the last part the leadership issues are introduced.

7.1 The City

Ahmedabad housed a population of 3.5 million in 2001. Along with its suburbs, which are outside the city limits, the Ahmedabad urban agglomerate is home to 5.6 million people today. Established in 1411 by the Sultan of Gujarat Ahmed Shah, the city shot into international lime light in 1917, when Mahatma Gandhi took up residence in the city. Gandhi established his Ashram (Hermitage) by the bank of Sabarmati River and is often considered to represent the social and political leadership of the city around the 1920s and 30s.

The city was known for its textile industry and was at one point of time known as 'The Manchester of the East'. However post-1960 the main industry showed a sharp decline and practically died out by the end of 1990s. During this phase Ahmedabad saw industries developing mostly in the small scale manufacturing sectors and also became an important point for trade, business, services, education and health. Today the city is the seventh largest in India and was declared a 'mega city' by the federal government in 2005.

However municipal services have not kept pace with the growth of the city (See Box2). Over a period construction activity, often illegal have taken a center stage and as can be seen in a news report in 1997 (Chavda) the problems and the risks were well identified much before the earthquake struck at 9 o'clock in the morning of 26th January 2001.

Box2

Today, over 42% of the population of Ahmedabad city, comprising over 1.2 million people, live in informal settlement clusters. Almost all these people are engaged in the informal sector. A recent report on Ahmedabad city has found the population within these informal settlements to be growing faster than that of the overall population. These citizens have access to highly inadequate service delivery. A performance rating of municipal services in Ahmedabad, conducted by Foundation for Public Interest, found that levels were very low. The environmental and sanitation conditions in these areas are a matter of serious concern. Urban Risk mapping conducted by Disaster Mitigation Institute also found the more poor are exposed to disaster risks in Ahmedabad.

Ela Bhatt, Founder, Self Employed Women's Organization (SEWA) writing in 2000

7.2 The Earthquake

The biggest crisis the city has faced in recent years is obviously the 2001 earthquake. The province was affected in many parts. Ahmedabad saw the second highest number of deaths. Kailashnathan and Srinivas the Commissioner, AMC and District Magistrate respectively on the day of earthquake have vivid memories of the shock and panic that gripped the city after the disaster. The city government had limited resources, very few equipment and worst of all, total lack of skills to face such a crisis. Quite obviously the first task was minimization of damage. Rescue and relief were the priority. Most of the people I interviewed felt that considering the limited resources the performance of the administrative leadership was admirable. What exactly was the crisis? From the earthquake literature, it is found that Ahmedabad falls in a less risky zone compared to other parts of the province. However the threat assessment is much higher.[12] This became visible when the same area in the city saw totally undamaged buildings standing next to collapsed buildings. The main reason was wanton disregard towards the construction laws of the city. Some of the interviewees actually expressed doubts regarding whether the earthquake was the crisis or failure to uphold law on the part of AMC was the actual crisis. They felt, earthquake could not have been stopped in any case. Yet, the damages to life and property definitely could have been prevented, had

[12] Risk Factor is measured at Vulnerability* Hazard, where vulnerability is a function of built environment and social-economic environment (Source:GSDMA)

the laws of construction been implemented in the city. In this sense, the crisis was the failure of implementation. How had this come about?

Over a period, Ahmedabad had become synonymous with a fairly nefarious construction industry; which always put profit above safety. In a way, the vast middle class of the city (the primary consumers for flats and apartments) was responsible. The main criterion was the low cost of the property. The people of Ahmedabad were not prepared to pay for safety and the industry-city government nexus accommodated it. The nexus of politicians, builders and officials allowed it. Cheap and unsafe housing were the norms of the day. When people lost their life, the first reaction that followed the rescue operations was scapegoat hunting. The Provincial government through its police played a big role. Builders, structural engineers and architects of the damaged buildings were hounded out amd many found themselves behind bar. Corporation officials related to clearance of such building plans were also targeted. Somehow, nobody was talking about a safe city for the future. The political leadership was very much interested in scapegoats since media was demanding scalps. Many of the people, who had been put behind bars, were soon out of the gaol. Once the initial excitement had died down it was back to square one. The reader will appreciate the similarity with the post-plague situation in Surat, particularly around the time Rao arrived on the scene. Memories are short. Ahmedabad was soon back to normal. Status-quo became the operational credo. The dead had been quickly forgotten. Kailashnathan remembers that when he wanted to build even a memorial for the dead, he found no takers. The political leadership at AMC actually thought this symbolism to be wastage of resources. Why was the memory so short-lived?

7.3 Reform Initiatives

Faced with a situation, where the overwhelming intention was status-quo and normalcy (go back to the pre-earthquake period), the administrative leadership of AMC was very soon taking up other priorities; water supply being the major one. Finances were a problem. Verma, Commissioner between 1994 and 1997 had called AMC a poor organization in a rich city. Things had not changed, even by 2005.

AMC had stayed on the margin in a city which had too many interest groups trying to control. Post-earthquake opportunities had opened up for the organization to take center stage, yet it receded to the fringe. Certain initiatives took place, mostly spearheaded by the newly created Disaster Mitigation Agency; GSDMA. Successive Commissioners from Panneervel to Tripathy to the current one, Mukim admitted that though they clearly identified the Earthquake as an excellent opportunity for reforms, the main initiative of making the city a safer place to live in , could never be put on the agenda.

The only changes that took place were courtesy GSDMA both in creation of earthquake oriented development control rules and in training and equipping emergency services. By 2002, the provincial government had actually brought in legislation, which allowed for illegal construction to be regularized, with the payment of what was called the 'impact fee'. For AMC the journey from the crisis to impact fee was complete. Mukim remembers the briefing session, organized on his resumption of charge. Earthquake was not even discussed during the session, but progress on the impact fee front was. The city, the leadership and the organization had given the crisis a go by.

7.4 The Other Crisis

We need to go back to the period of Keshav Verma as Commissioner of AMC. Interestingly this period coincides with the reform initiatives in SMC. When Verma joined AMC the crisis was of a different nature. There was hardly any money in the coffers of the organization. The number of employees was huge standing at 40,000. Most of the resources used to go for payment of wages. Development works were at a stand still. Verma was faced with huge nexus between the employees and the Octroi mafia. Karwal remembers the helplessness of the period vividly. Days of brainstorming with stake holders convinced Verma the necessity to turn AMC into a modern organization with better management practices. He came up with excellent initiatives. Recruitment of fresh managers, computerization and better vigilance doubled the income of AMC. The additional resources thus generated were combined with municipal bonds and innovative initiatives in public-private partnerships to build better infrastructure in the city. The crisis that Verma faced had nothing to do with natural

disasters. As Cowlagi told me in an interview "you do not need a disaster to bring about reforms". What Verma managed to do in AMC was 'upping the standards'. City Governments are old organizations, vegetating in slumber, trapped by routinization of activities. Often they need strong reformist leadership that refuses to accept the status quo and shows strong entrepreneurial tendencies. Verma was often harsh and accused of being a showman. However he managed to bring in, what looked like sustained change, at least for some time. Sinha, who succeeded him again, got an empty coffer. It seems high cost loans of the earlier period had upped the expenditure, which was again showing a mismatch with the resources. Astute management and cost cutting became the order of the day. All this certainly got overtaken by high expenses in water supply and a local transport system that was running vast deficits. Kailashnathan performed admirably in adverse conditions and confronted the resources-expenditure gap, when the earthquake sent the city into critical confusion.

7.5 The Leadership Issues

The AMC Commissioners come from the same background of IAS as the SMC ones. However, the ability to exploit the crisis in case of Surat was markedly more pronounced than Ahmedabad. Why was it so? Verma showed entrepreneurial qualities, yet the experience of reforms was short lived. The political leadership during the beginning of Verma's period was dormant. There was no elected party in the Corporation in the first six months and there was another IAS officer as Administrator. Verma, who has subsequently joined the World Bank claimed in 2005 that quite a bit of his success goes to the absence of political leadership in AMC during his time. We can easily see fairly stable stewardship by Sinha and Kailashnathan afterwards who had to combat the resources problem continuously. However the change-story did not continue. Political Leadership generally played a passive role except for one Mayor, who supported Verma's initiatives. By the time of the earthquake and subsequently, we find leadership of both political and social nature, entrapped in their own interests. Why is it that repeated crises in Ahmedabad do not lead to marked, sustained change? Where does the cause lie? Is it at the door of administrative leadership? We need to analyze all these.

In case of Ahmedabad we have to look at both the Verma period and the post-earthquake period. The Verma period is a reaction by an entrepreneurial leader which shows very similar methods to those of Rao's Surat. Karwal, who worked as Deputy Commissioner during this period speaks of similar concepts. Verma introduced the concept of executives being in the field right from the morning. His phase made the city government more visible. Decentralization was the order of the day. However, where both the attempts differ is in the concept of owning the organization. He showed a general lack of faith in the Corporation employees and tried to bring in newer management talent. The initiatives showed initial success, yet frittered away. Karwal told me with a lot of regret that in 2005, AMC has again become an office bound organization. If I analyze both the periods we find interesting conclusions.

Change as the motto

The Verma period was obviously associated with change. The old war horse AMC was tied down with managing the huge work force. Innovations were rare. It was not a learning organization. What Verma brought into AMC was big visions. He taught at least the senior executives the necessity to change, for change is central to visionary leadership. However the financial crisis had restarted after he left. The unpaid commitments of his period were too many. People who succeeded him Sinha and Kailashnathan were able managers, but priorities had changed. Change was no longer the motto, even after the earthquake.

Rule of Law

Verma period saw a no nonsense approach towards implementation of regulations. Yet, very soon the multiple individual interests of interest groups had again risen to dominance, unchecked by law[13]. The Rule of law was combined with developmental activities. The slum networking project, to provide basic amenities in slums was started

[13] It is interesting to note that number of builders arrested after the earthquake originally belonged to the Octroi mafia

during this period. Parallels with Surat can be easily seen. However the actions had run into routinized activities after some time.

Non-identification with the Organization

When I interviewed Tripathy, who was commissioner AMC between 2003 and 2005 regarding his priority in AMC, his answer was symbolic of the non-ownership of the organization by AMC employees. He told me that the employee of AMC identifies with his union, association, but definitely not with the organization. He told me, his priority in 2003 was to break this relationship and make the AMC employee identify with the organization. We had seen earlier Verma's distrust and also the leadership and the junior employees following separate paths in AMC. My understanding was that the different parts of the mammoth organization do not have their loyalty with their job or organization. They do not own AMC.

Sustenance of Standards

Each Commissioner in AMC contributed to a particular field. Kailashnathan brought in the lifeline water supply system for the city, Panneervel introduced e-governance and Sinha stabilized finance to the level that Kailashnathan actually had some surplus when he started. Tripathy introduced out sourcing in a big way. However, unlike Surat the standards of expectation never went up. During the Verma Period it went up briefly, but expansion of standards was not there. Mahajan, a Deputy Commissioner with AMC called the Commissioner-centricity of AMC as the main reason for lack of a vision. He claims it was only during the Verma period that the organization saw both money and vision. Yet, since the vision had a limited acceptance, the organization was back to being Commissioner-centric. The vision, which Surat could achieve, is a still a distant dream for Ahmedabad.

When I interviewed Himat Patel, the mayor of Ahmedabad during earthquake, I was surprised by his frankness. He felt very few councilors have any vision and hence both the policy and implementation would increasingly be with the administrators. At the same time he felt the overarching vision can only come from the politicians. His memory of the Verma period was that of cooperation and he felt, that Verma could take the political leadership along the reform path. Compare this to the initial confrontationist approach of Rao. Being a diehard Congressman[14] part of Ahmedabad blame in the post earthquake period was transferred by Patel towards the Provincial Leadership. Politicians interviewed, openly admitted that the city has learnt nothing out of the earthquake, but tended to hand over the blame-baton to the administrators. Interestingly opinions cutting across the barrier talked about lack of social leadership, Ahmedabad being a city of many cities.

Talking of memories, not many could remember the communal riots which engulfed the city in 2002 leading to 700 deaths. It is bizarre to see one city remembering a 1994 crisis and the other city refusing to acknowledge a series of crises.. Too many crises. Too short a memory!

8. THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH

This section has three parts. First, I take up the issues in the conceptual framework and deal with them. Next I take up the hypotheses one by one, concluding with the post-crisis reform thesis. In the last part I will analyze the results.

[14] A Congressman in the Indian context means a member of the Indian National Congress (Political Party). Patel's criticism was directed against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has ruled Gujarat more or less continuously since 1995. BJP has held power in SMC since 1995 as well. AMC in contrast has been with BJP during 95-2000 and with Congress during 2000-2005. In the latest election BJP has taken over the reins in AMC. SMC is awaiting elections and currently is under Mohapatra as administrator.

8.1 Revisiting the Framework

At this point it is fair to revisit the conceptual framework. The various concepts can be seen in the case studies. Crises, natural or manmade have definitely increased and systems are becoming error inducing. We saw crises in the form of Plague, Earthquake, Riots and Financial Collapse in the Cities, under study. Administrative Leadership could be seen in the series of Commissioners analyzed. Entrepreneurs like Rao and Verma were seen, initiating reforms and trying to give a whole new fit to the organizations they headed. The importance of political and social leadership also became visible in the analysis. Many of the observations are fashioned out of qualitative data, since I doubt leadership can ever be explained by quantitative ones.

The reader may be reminded of the statements of Resodihardjo and Boin. Both had objections against theories proposing causal relationships between crisis and reforms. Both the case studies indicated post-crisis leadership to be in a better position vis-à-vis initiation of reforms. The hypotheses, on testing would indicate to what extent, our theoretical framework holds.

8.2 Testing the Hypotheses

In this part we will take up the hypotheses one by one, to delineate the findings of the research.

Hypothesis 1

Crisis provides opportunities for reforms, but there is no causal relationship between the two

Both the crises under study, namely the Plague and the Earthquake opened up opportunities for reforms. The main organization involved was the city government. The crisis opened up questions about the way the organizations were being run. The media reports, immediately after the crises symbolize these arguments. In fact, as the situation in Surat, nine months after the plague shows, organizations show a strong tendency to turn status quoists. Ahmedabad after earthquake showed initial questioning, yet had

become status quoist very soon. Compared to this is the Verma period in AMC, which had not faced a natural disaster, yet had seized the opportunity of a financial crisis to bring in major response, which could not be sustained. Crisis provides opportunities, but the evidence available suggests absence of any causal relationship.

Hypothesis 2. *Given the difference between the imperatives of crisis and imperatives of reforms, the post-crisis leadership is in a better position to handle reforms*

Most of the people interviewed agreed to this hypothesis. The general acceptance that the aims of crisis management can only be short term and minimization of damage is the main aim of such a period had many backers. As Surat suggests, often the leadership, which is at the helm, when a crisis takes place is questioned regarding its own performance. This makes reform initiatives, difficult. The Surat case shows reforms taking place in the post-crisis period. Significantly, this phase starts after considerable lapse of time, nine months after the crisis. Whether the same leadership can perform both crisis management and reform initiatives. Surat showed two distinctly different leadership. Verma operated in both the phases, but came after the damage had been done. He was not responsible for the mess. The evidence suggests that the crisis craft and reform crafts are different. In general, post-crisis leadership has a better chance at reforms. This does not prove that crisis leaders can not become reform initiators, nor does it indicate that you need a crisis to bring in reforms.

Hypothesis 3. *Steering Reform Initiatives involves entrepreneurship, a mix of charisma and tranformationalism*

It is but obvious that Reforms do not take place in an automated manner. Neither the presence nor the absence of a crisis is the only base for reforms. However in a post-crisis period the response of the leadership is crucial. What is the response? Reformist or Status quoists or a mix? Even if the leadership is reformist, the empirical evidence suggests certain degree of entrepreneurship as a fundamental requirement. Charisma is best seen in the leadership of Verma in AMC. A strong person, often prone to boasting he managed to change the environment in the organization. There was something unusual about his style. Rao in Surat led from the front. His simplicity and bravery against all odds became

part of the local legend. Underlying these experiences was the basic principle of tranformationalism. It is also a fact that post-earthquake Ahmedabad does not show much entrepreneurialism. The evidence suggests that tranformationalism is central to steering reforms. Higher degree of success seems to have a link with charisma. Yet this can not be proven empirically.

Hypothesis 4. *Sustaining the reform initiatives is dependent on the capability of administrative leadership to evolve a common vision with the social and political leadership towards the initiatives.*

When I asked Rao regarding the political leadership, he maintained the he faced tremendous opposition to all his initiatives. However, once his actions started producing results and he started getting the support of the citizens, the political leadership had to exhibit support, at least in public. When I interviewed his successors, the results were different. All of them claimed local political support for reform initiatives. Does it mean Rao managed to raise the expected standards which automatically turned the leadership in favor of reforms? Verma took help of political leaders and was considerably supported by social organizations including the media. The evidence suggests that such common vision is not crucial to the opening phase of reform initiatives, yet they occupy importance in the sustenance phase. Rao in 2005 gave maximum credit to the people of Surat. It could be sustained, because people wanted it. The maximum credit in Surat by both the politicians and administrators is invariably given to the People; the Social Leadership.

The Post-Crisis Reform Thesis:

The reader may refer to the conceptual framework. The thesis was based on three major points. The first one relates to diminishing constraints and opportunities for reforms in the wake of a crisis. All organizations show the presence of interest groups both outside and inside the organization that creates constraints. In the two city governments under study such constraints can be created by non-performing employees, unsupportive political leadership and apathy on the part of citizens. One normally confronts interest groups (Business, Builders) who are involved in pursuing their individual interests. Reform initiatives require identification and emphasis on the

common interest of the organization; in this case the well being of the city. A crisis normally will show diminishing of such interests. In Surat people demolished their own encroachments, because they were afraid of the recurrence of plague. In Ahmedabad, the builders were on the run. At such points the negative constraints decrease and positive interests start dominating. As is seen from evidence, all the crises studied showed diminishing interests and increasing opportunities.

The second point in the thesis is that the period of crisis relates to minimization of damage; shot term goals and as such is not the best time for reforms. Surat shows substantial gap between the crisis and the beginning of reforms. As and when the reform initiatives were taken up they were linked to the third major point of the thesis, namely the dependence on entrepreneurship, political and social leadership. As we will see in the analysis part, this by itself does not ensure sustenance as the post-Verma period in AMC clearly shows.

Whereas my research shows the post-crisis Reform thesis to be more credible than the crisis-reform theory, this also is somewhat deterministic. There is empirically no direct equation neither there is any causal relationship. However this thesis seems to reflect the trends in successful and sustainable reform initiatives.

8.3 Analysis: Inter-Leadership Issues

After testing the hypotheses against the evidence, it will be worthwhile to analyze the major concepts against our findings. The sub title of this paper relates to three concepts, namely crisis, administrative leadership and reform initiative. We have tried to establish the linkages between these three concepts without claiming any direct causal relationship. In this part we will take up these linkages against the studies and in particular try to delineate the special characteristics of the post crisis reform leadership.

What were the findings regarding the inter leadership issues? The relationship between the administrative and the city political leadership provides interesting accounts. Rao, despite his claims got support of both the city and provincial leadership once the initial successes had been achieved. Verma had always followed a

cooperative approach. The absence of councilors in the first few months seems to have helped both, but in the long run many of the changes would not have taken place without political support. Where Rao scored over Verma was in the sphere of common vision building. In case of Verma, it was an individual vision.Rao transformed an essentially individual vision to a common vision. Councilors tend to look forward to short term solutions; a vote oriented vision.Surat however shows a slightly different picture.

In Surat, the local politicians had to bear the brunt of public anger once the demolition campaign started. However, once important politicians started demolishing their own encroachments, people followed suit. Rao targeted relatives of important politicians as a strategy. Despite initial problems, politicians found it useful to back him. Patwa, a councilor amazed me by telling that his current demands are for a mass transit system and better environment. The standards had changed! The Commissioner walks tight ropes with a necessity to balance the Provincial and City leaderships. This at the best of times is a difficult exercise. This capability separates out Rao and Verma from others.

At the cost of repetition the general finding was that the local political leadership would be more prone towards reforms in the wake of a crisis, yet it is for the administrative leadership to initiate. Such actions can also bring the positive part of political leadership to the fore, just like suppressing the negative part of the administrative leadership. However, interrelationships are also severely dependent on personalities. Once reform efforts start getting popular support (once it is generally perceived that the reforms benefit the majority at the cost of few interests), social leadership takes over and a sustainable reform model is possible.

8.4 Analysis: Leadership Styles

We start here with an interesting comparison between Rao in SMC and Verma in AMC. I came across a media report (Desai: 1997), mentioning the exit of both the officers from the respective organization. I am citing from the report 'One a jeans-clad chain-smoker, the other a high-profile corporate-style disciplinarian; both poles apart, but amazingly similar. As Municipal Commissioner, S R Rao and Keshav Verma handled two pathologically diverse cities- Surat and Ahmedabad-but displayed

how similar were the diseases affecting the two cities and how they were to be treated'. The report suggests a media -acceptance of the charismatic qualities seen in these public servants. Was this carefully cultivated? There is no distinct evidence, though most of the politicians interviewed felt so. One ex-Mayor went to the point of saying "The media created a hero out of Rao and disregarded the immense contribution of the political leadership". In a society, where the social leadership is not very strong, the common citizen closely identifies with the rebel. The general impression of Public Servants, being status-quoist and part of the system is confronted very strongly by those rare individuals, who give an impression of 'taking on the system'. Strangely, in Gujarat such cases have been seen in case of Municipal Commissioners, more often than others. Two main reasons can be given. The actions of these public servants affect the day to day life of the citizen and the fact that, urban citizens are more vocal and demonstrative. Often, such support is expressed through emotions, sometimes through public display of violence. When, it was suspected that a certain important politician wants to remove Rao, a mob reached his house and started stoning. The politician started supporting Rao in public. Rajkot, another city in Gujarat had witnessed rioting in 1988, when a Commissioner (S. Jagadeeshan) was transferred by the Provincial Government under rumored pressure of an important local politician. It is a strange coincidence that S R Rao had succeeded Jagadeeshan in Rajkot and in 1997 Jagadeeshan Succeeded Rao in Surat. 'Surat today has brought alive memories of Rajkot. When Jagadeeshan was shuffled out of Rajkot in late-80s amid a wave of protest, the man taking over from him was none other than Rao. When Rao exits, amidst a similar furore, his replacement is the selfsame Jagadeeshan' (Desai: 1997). Jagadeeshan had a strong charismatic image from Rajkot, where he had taken on the powerful lobbies of vested interests. Verma took on the Octroi mafia. A hero is created the moment a public servant starts taking on the system, which people identify with lethargy and corruption. In a society where poll after poll suggests the citizens not having trust in the political leadership the rebel public servant is often seen as the last hope.

In their own ways, these rebels personified the aspiration of the common man. Their styles differed. However certain common factors can not be ignored. They are 1) Emphasis on rule of Law 2) Leading from the front 3) Attempts at

empowerment through decentralization 4) Ability to take on the vested interests and 5) Intention to give the organization a new fit. Whether, this is a replicable model is doubtful. After all, number of interviewees wanted to know why Rao can not replicate his Surat success in other organizations, he has since headed! However, there is always some learning in every experience. We move towards our final section, regarding the answer to our main research question.

9. DIVIDED CITY, FRAGMENTED VISION

'Cracks in institutional stability offer opportunities to agents of change'-Alink et al 2001.

The main question which I seek to answer relates to the influence of the post crisis administrative leadership in Surat on post-crisis-reform initiatives and the reasons for absence of similar trends in the post-earthquake Ahmedabad. This section has three parts. First, we analyze the underlying causes of the difference of trends between both the cities. Next we move to answer our main question. Finally we take up the main learning of this endeavor.

9.1 The Obvious Factors

My findings related to the obvious causes of difference between the post crises experiences is as follows. There are seven main reasons.

The Scope of the Crisis

At the first glance, more people died in the Ahmedabad earthquake than the plague in Surat; Close to a thousand versus less than hundred. Does it mean that the effect of the earthquake in Ahmedabad was higher than 1994 Surat? Not necessarily true. The nature of crises was different. Earthquake was clearly a natural disaster. Plague could be linked to man made deficiencies. Earthquake did not affect everybody. People in low-rise houses were not affected. Even among, high-rise houses, 81 buildings were severely

affected. Particular segments of the middle class, people who inhabit such high-rise buildings were affected. Plague affected everybody, rich, poor and middle class alike; if not in the body, in mind definitely. This is the reason; plague is still a part of Surat's collective memory. In Ahmedabad earthquake is not.

The Scientific Opinion

Plague's reappearance was a medical shock. Even as on date, debates continue whether the 1994 strain was pneumonic or bubonic. There have been arguments in certain quarters regarding, whether this was plague at all. The fear that this was the appearance of an unknown disease creates an interest among people to keep the city clean. Earthquake did not produce any scientific debates. In fact, very soon the scientific community was giving statements to the effect that such major earthquake are not repeated for at least 100 years. There was a scientific certainty about non recurrence of earthquake. There was scientific doubt regarding non-recurrence of Plague. This factor worked towards the dwindling memories of the earthquake.

Marginalization and Exclusion

SMC was the naturally identifiable villain of the piece in 1994. The same is not true of AMC in 2001. The plague was specific to Surat City; Earthquake had affected the entire province. Scapegoats of earthquake at least in the initial period were the builders, structural engineers and architects. It did lead to neither marginalization nor exclusion of the organization. In SMC, a necessity to reassert and take centrality emerged after the plague. AMC's positioning in the city governance hierarchy went unchallenged.

The ownership of employees

AMC was too large. Somehow the employees never really did belong. After earthquake, the situation did not change. Successive Commissioners continued their struggle to make the employee identify with the organization. SMC in the post-Rao phase was a different story. Employees not only owned up, they took visible pride. Mohapatra mentioned that

the blue uniform of a Corporation employee started getting more respect than the traditional khaki of an Indian policeman.

Play of Interests

The Surat city case shows evolution of a common interest and acceptance of a linkage between common and individual interests. The same was not the story of Ahmedabad. In fact, the interest groups for cheaper, unsafe buildings had taken their earlier powerful position very quickly. Thirrupugazh of GSDMA said confidential inquiries have started revealing that the construction industry has started violating the norms again. Some of the old, Collapsed buildings have been rebuilt. The rules, ironically have been violated in the same buildings again. If the new laws have started to put responsibility on structural engineers, as per admission of an insider of the building trade, the more prominent structural engineers have started getting building plans cleared in name of out of work, younger structural engineers. The common interest of the city, to make Ahmedabad a safer place to live in, has been subverted by individual interests.

Relationship with individual economics

We had earlier seen the effect on business was a reason of Surtis feeling excluded. It was very clear in the aftermath of the crisis that even if they forget plague, the outsiders will not. Possibility of flight of capital existed for some time. This not only decreased constraints, it also increased acceptance of reforms in a significant way. The common interest of the city as a clean place developed a strong linkage with individual interests of business. This, I feel was the turning point of the Surat Story. The affected people in Ahmedabad were the middle class. During the days of panic, many people refused to go back to high rise buildings and slept outdoor. Very soon this phase was over. People were back in the same unsafe buildings, which they had deserted. They could not afford otherwise. Earthquake had not affected business in the city. Normalcy rode over change.

A very important factor is the role played by the Provincial Leadership. Surat after plague posed a potential danger to the rest of the Province. Too many people from other parts of the province worked in Surat. Added was the danger of the disease spreading. Provincial Leadership definitely gave emphasis on reforms in Surat and influenced both the political and administrative leadership. The BJP was the ruling party both in the Province and the city. Ahmedabad in contrast was second priority for the Provincial Leadership. World focus was on Kutch (11,000 dead) and that is what tested the credibility of Gandhinagar. There is no direct evidence to suggest neglect of Ahmedabad because Congress was in power. But the fact remains in a political mismatch, the provincial leadership would find it difficult to influence the city leaders. As Patel the ex-Mayor would claim, they looked towards other provinces ruled by the Congress party. There is a reverse argument as well. Some of the interviewees felt, Surat could change since it is 350 k.ms from Gandhinagar, the capital. Politicians of Gandhinagar leave its leadership alone. Ahmedabad is 20 km away, the biggest city and too important for Gandhinagar politicians not to interfere. This opinion would suggest too many cooks spoil the broth. Ultimately, the fact remains the Provincial Leadership put its stake on Surat and Kutch and not on Ahmedabad.

9.2 The Answer is the Local Leadership Factor

However the presence of all these obvious reasons pales into insignificance, when we confront the issue of leadership as the most important reason. We have earlier analyzed the administrative leadership of the crisis and post-crisis period of both SMC and AMC. It is quite obvious that in the post-crisis phase it is the entrepreneurial leadership of a Rao here and a Verma there that managed to ride over interests exploited the opportunities and through a mix of methods initiated change. The sustainability in SMC and the lack of it in AMC can be traced to the presence and lack of ownership by employees of the two organizations. The ability to bring in reforms separated out some persons from being capable leaders. Whereas an already charged atmosphere helped the successors in SMC, similar environment did not help in post Verma phase in AMC. We may remember Burn's statement regarding leadership being a

most observed and least understood phenomena. Can we not agree more? After studying both the cases, it is obvious that transformational leadership made all the difference. However at this point, it is worthwhile to go into the nature of reforms in Surat and Ahmedabad to arrive at our final conclusions.

How comprehensive were the Surat reforms? Did it benefit everybody? When I visited the poor quarters in Surat, it became clears that problem and complaints continue. Whereas number of slum dwellers appreciated what SMC is doing, there were criticisms as well. However I found the memory of plague quite vivid among them. They appreciated the value of cleanliness and clearly identified SMC's work regarding it. On the SMC's side, clear appreciation that lot remains to be done was existent. They have a long term policy of zero-slum and are consistently working towards it. We had earlier talked about the builder-politician nexus in City corporations. Has it disappeared in SMC with reforms? Not many were forthcoming with the answers, unlike AMC, where many would refer to it quite easily. However, I got muted responses in SMC, that it exists, but not at the cost of quality. I was told again and again regarding the fact that only one high-rise building collapsed in Surat during the 2001 earthquake. City Governance can never be perfect, but SMC shows continuously reforming governance, warts and all. We can not run away from the fact that it all started with plague and transformational leadership.

I have often used the word sustained change. To my mind, this refers to organizations which have managed to create a common vision and take up reform initiatives towards the vision. In such cases, the personalities recede to the background and the vision takes over. I had earlier referred to the Commissioner-centricity of City governance in Gujarat. In case of Surat, commissioners receded to the background, once the vision had taken over. All leaderships, political, administrative or social started to believe in the future vision and worked towards it. This was the sustained change. Ahmedabad, being an individual vision in the Verma period lapsed into blindness.

While analyzing the Surat story, I was confronted both with evidence of ownership that I found in Surat (Not necessarily comprehensive) and did not find in Ahmedabad. It became very clear to me that the crisis changed something intrinsic in the people of Surat, whereas it could not do so in Ahmedabad. Surtis, insider or outsider developed identification with the City and ultimately it is their acceptance of change which made the difference. Rao in 2005 gave the maximum credit to the people of Surat. Ahmedabad did not show this. As an ex Commissioner of AMC said, the people who would lose the maximum in case of changes belong to specific upper castes with their strong linkages to both local and provincial interests. The earthquake had affected the middle class; powerful enough politically to get high level of compensations from the provincial government. In the end nothing would have been achieved to develop a common interest with the more disadvantageous people of the city. The very rich in any case were not bothered. The citizens of Ahmedabad did not own up their city in the wake of crisis, the way Surtis did. This made the difference.

Beyond the ownership was the concept of Social leadership of citizens without whose acceptance the reforms in Surat had no meaning. Ahmedabad, the city of many cities also thinks in many ways. This probably does not lead to the kind of vision which Surat has. A divided city also produces fragmented vision. We have an answer, may be a bit qualitative.

"Ahmedabad does not show the parallel of the Surat experience because of lack of transformational leadership and since the existing leadership of the city administrative, political and social failed to evolve a common vision for the city in the wake of crisis".

9.3 The Learning

Urban Governance in India is a complex terrain. Too many actors. Too many interest groups. It is symbolic of a democratizing polity, yet it is also identified with what is wrong with the system. Over a period political leadership with

honorable exceptions has moved towards mediocrity and short term visions. Administrators often function in collusion with the politicians and interest groups, who then call the shots. The roles of politicians and administrators often get mixed up in city government. As Mukim would lament 'Politicians want to do all the implementation. We also want to do implementation. Who exactly does the policy here?' In this context, the quality of administrative leadership has assumed importance in city governance. What is important is transformational leadership, political or administrative, crisis or no crisis.

I may summarize my learning from this research. Crisis exposes the system and opens up opportunities for reforms. Constraints opposing reforms drop significantly in the wake of a crisis. Crisis leaders aim for short term gains focusing on minimization of damage. It is the post crisis phase, which is most suitable for reforms. However, there is no causal relationship between crisis and reforms. In the public domain, it is the transformational leadership, whether administrative or political which seizes the opportunity and tries a whole new fit for the organization. Such leadership tries vision building. But, ultimately it is the acceptance by people which leads to sustenance of such initiatives. Dear Reader; Do you agree?

List of Acronyms used

AMC- Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation

CEPT – Center for Environmental Planning and Technology

GSDMA- Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority

IAS - Indian Administrative Service

IPS - Indian Police Service

INTACH- Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage

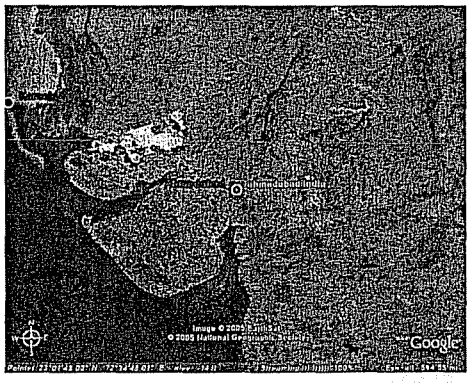
IRMA- Institute of Rural Management, Anand

SMC – Surat Municipal Corporation

SPIPA- Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration

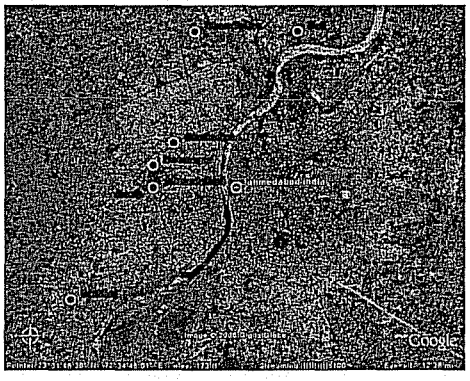
Appendix A

Satellite images of the Gujarat Province, Surat and Ahmedabad Cities



GUJARAT

SURAT



AHMEDABAD

Appendix B

Introducing the Interviewees

The focus of my research being 'Administrative Leadership', it is but obvious that officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) crowd my interviewee list. I interviewed sixteen IAS officers from the crisis and post- crisis periods of Surat, Kutch, and Ahmedabad. Manoj Antani is the lone IPS officer in the list representing the post-crisis phase of the Passport Agency.

As part of my research I had decided to interview academicians along with what I called the City Watchers, persons of various professions who watch a city with a keen interest over a period. To get an insider view of leadership, I conducted interview with middle level personnel in the identified organizations. Journalists as professional City Chroniclers also appear on my list. At the end of three months, I realize that the list has four journalists, six academics, ten city watchers and eight insiders. I am grateful to all of them, for making me realize very early into the research that each man/woman has an individual viewpoint and there is no such thing as the complete truth. Politicians of AMC and SMC were interviewed during October and provided the other side of the administrator's story. Slum dwellers of Surat and Ahmedabad were the last group of interviewees. The brief descriptions of the sixty three interviewees that follow might not do complete justice to their contribution to this endeavor. However I have tried my best to situate them properly within the research framework. The interviews were conducted during July-October, 2005 at Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Leiden, New Delhi, Surat and Vadodara.

Antani, Manoj has a background in Policing. This Indian Police Service Officer introduced significant reform initiatives in the Post- Crisis Passport Agency between

2003 and 2005. He was a very unlikely leader in the sense that he opted for the job as a challenge. He continues in the same job (RPO), as on date.

Baby is a slum dweller of Surat City. She has two sons. A thirty year old, who has moved away to a neighboring slum with his wife and a fifteen year old who stays with her. Strangely she claimed to be thirty five. A medical history! Her earning out of daily manual labor is roughly $70 a month.

Banu, Zaheeda came from the State of Uttar Pradesh at the age of 17 to Surat after her marriage, Today, she is 32. Though living in a slum, the family manages to earn about $200 a month out of a small business of Plaster of Paris products.

Barot, Manjuben Prakashbhai works in a unit for Incense Sticks (Used in religious ceremonies in India) and makes about 1/4th of a dollar per day. This supplements the family income. She, along with other slum dwellers described the 2001 earthquake for me.

Barot, Sanjay runs a successful travel agency and has watched the growth of Ahmedabad city and the Passport office with keen interest. Barot's father was a Federal Minister and courtesy his business, he is close to the powers that be of the City. He proved to be an excellent source of information.

Biswas, Saswat Narain is the Professor of Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management at IRMA, Anand. My interview with Saswat was primarily to understand leadership patterns

Bhatt, Chaitanya works as an Assistant Commissioner, a middle level manager in the SMC. He provided me with an excellent perspective of the leadership styles of the pre and post crisis Commissioners in Surat City.

Boin, Arjen works as Assistant Professor of Public Administration at the Leiden University, The Netherlands. He has contributed significantly to the studies of crisis and crisis management. This paper has been influenced to a large extent by the research of Boin and his co-researchers. I was lucky to catch him at Leiden, just before he left for a one-year sabbatical in USA.

Brahmashatriya, Kamlesh is a Chartered Accountant, operating out of Ahmedabad City. He hails from the Kutch District. I found in him an excellent chronicler of the crisis in both Kutch District and the Ahmedabad City.

Chauhan, Fakirbhai is 65 years old and an important figure in the Surat City politics. He was the Mayor of the city, immediately after the Plague. Chauhan told me about the post-plague Surat.

Chowdhury, Shakuntalaben Bhaskarbhai came to Ahmedabad from the Maharashtra province and works in incense stick unit as a supplementary family income. She has been living in the slums for about 30 years and was quite confident about the statistics about slum dwellers, she provided me with. According to her, about 75% slum dwellers of Ahmedabad are migrants, who came to the city in search of a job.

Chowksy, Ajay is an ex-Mayor of Surat City. He holds a management degree and has an independent business in textiles. He has been involved in the City affairs for almost a quarter century. At 50, Chowksy is a well respected politician and proved to be a store house of knowledge regarding the city.

Chuango, L, an IAS officer was posted as Deputy Commissioner with the same order that posted Rao to SMC. He joined SMC about a week after Rao and stayed for 10 months before proceeding on Federal Government Deputation. He was witness to the Reform initiatives as a participant. He heads an Electricity Utilities Company today and is based in Vadodara.

Cowlagi, V R S retired from the IAS a few years back. Post-retirement, he is active in the academic world. Even when he was a serving officer, he had once taken leave to join the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad as a full-time professor. He helped me out in my analysis of crisis in the public domain and consequent reforms.

Desai, K S has been working as An Executive Engineer with the SMC for about ten years. He could provide details of the pre and post crisis period in the SMC.

Gajjar, Maitrey works as Associate Professor of Pathology in The Ahmedabad Medical College. He spent seven days in Surat immediately after Plague broke out in 1994. Born and brought up in Ahmedabad City, he has watched the city for more than three decades. Dr. Gajjar helped me out with accounts of post-crisis Surat and Ahmedabad.

Gupta, Rameswar Prasad did a double take on Kutch. He worked as District Magistrate of Kutch District both before and after the Earthquake, of course separated by a few years. Another officer working in Kutch during the post-crisis period remembers Gupta's painstaking work and no nonsense approach towards getting people to accept earthquake resistant town planning. Gupta today heads the Settlement and Land Records Department of the Province.

Jagadeeshan, S works as Joint Secretary in the Industries Department of the Federal Government at New Delhi. He was part of the first government teams to reach Surat immediately after the Plague and Kutch immediately after the Earthquake. He took over as Commissioner, SMC immediately after Rao and is credited with establishing and broadening the reform initiatives, started by Rao. Jagadeeshan had earlier experience of city governance as Commissioner, Rajkot and has had excellent experience of both the crisis and post-crisis period in Surat City. I interviewed Jagadeeshan at New Delhi on 6th September, 2005.

Jha, Amarendra is a well known journalist from Surat. He is the Principal Correspondent of the Times of India and understands the Surat psyche, like nobody else.

Jha helped me understand the City and I am grateful to him for that. He plans to write a book on the City in near future.

Joshi, Pankaj heads the SMC today as the Commissioner. This is his second outing in the city after an earlier posting as District Magistrate, Surat District. He has an excellent grasp of city management after working in the past as Commissioner of two other cities in the Province; Jamnagar and Rajkot.

Jyotsna is an interior designer from Surat and understands the mind set of the rich. She provided me a close insight into the world of the rich denizens of the city.

Kailashnathan, K was the Commissioner of AMC, when the ill-fated earthquake struck Ahmedabad City on 26th January, 2001. He had already spent two years in the same post and suddenly found himself in the thick of crisis management. He continued as Commissioner for some time before moving out. Kailashnathan today heads the Urban Development Department of the Province.

Karwal, Anita works as the Deputy Director General of the Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration at Ahmedabad. She had a ring side view of the Post-Financial Crisis Reform initiatives at AMC between 1995 and 1997, when she worked as Deputy Municipal Commissioner (Projects) of AMC. She came back to the City again in 2002 as District Magistrate, Ahmedabad District in the post- Earthquake period. Though no longer directly connected to the City Administration, she has played a crucial role in recent times in significant anti-pollution initiatives in the city through an organization called AIR.

Mahajan, Dilip has a background in the Indian Army. Post- retirement, he joined AMC as an Assistant Commissioner. He gave me an excellent view of the leadership styles of different Commissioners. Mahajan works as Deputy Commissioner in AMC today.

Malani, Harish is an employee of the Regional Passport Agency of Ahmedabad. An intelligent and perceptive public servant, he was witness to the pre and post-crisis period in the Passport Agency. Malani continues in the same office.

Manjuben lives in a Surat slum and came as a job seeker from the neighboring district of Valsad. This 45 year old woman was a vocal critic of the SMC. She pointed out the essential hollowness of many of the claims.

Mehta, Harit works with the Economic Times at Ahmedabad. A young, talented journalist, he gave me a ring-side view of the City immediately after the Earthquake.

Misra, Debiprasad is the Professor of Strategic Management and Policy at IRMA, Anand. Widely experienced in crisis management theories and practice, the interview with him gave me a fresh perspective towards my research area.

Misra, Kajri is a Fellow of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University, USA and a close friend for many years. Apart from giving excellent inputs into the concepts of City Planning, Kajri taught me the basics of carrying out an interview. I was lucky that Kajri was collecting her primary data in India around the time I wrote this paper.

Modi, Purnesh is an important corporator in SMC. He claims to have come up the hard way up. He lost his father early and worked even as a child. A qualified lawyer, he has been in city politics for twenty out of his forty years of life.

Mohamed, Hameeda at 50 is a long time resident of Surat. During the forty years, she has moved from slum to slum. The family came from the neighboring district of Bharuch in search of work. The husband earns about $50 a month in the informal sector. The children have moved away, mostly surviving on manual informal sector jobs.

Mohapatra, Guru Prasad is a post- plague Commissioner of SMC between 1999 and 2001. He has a track record of being an efficient manager and became a part of the expanding role of SMC in the Surat City Management. He heads the Transport Department of the Province today.

Mukim, Anil heads the AMC as Commissioner today. He was the District Magistrate posted to Kutch District, within a week of the earthquake. Mukim gave me an excellent insight into crisis management in Kutch and the post crisis period in Ahmedabad City. He has an excellent reputation in crisis management and was chosen by the Chief Minister to head Kutch in the post-earthquake period. The mandate completed in six months, he had left the District on a new assignment. Currently, he heads an organization with 34,000 employees.

Nandarvar, Pushpaben Indravadan is a slum dweller of Ahmedabad, who works in an incense stick unit. She came to live in the current slum in 1984 after the family became too large to live in one room which the parents had in another slum. They purchased a room here, the Gayatrinagar slums for about $300. The area was near a funeral ground and was not very popular in 1984. Today each house in the slums sells foe roughly $2000.

Panchal, Jitendra is an Assistant Engineer with the Slum networking project of AMC. He was helpful in analyzing the rise, fall and re-rise of the project, depending on the changing Commissioners.

Panneervel, P took over as AMC Commissioner in 2001 after the earthquake. He came to AMC with rich experience of disaster management with his background of working as the Relief Commissioner of the Province. His main contribution to AMC is in the field of e-governance. Today, he heads the Education Department of the Province.

Patel, Anand is an Additional City Engineer with AMC. He looks after the slum networking project with NGO partners. Through him, I could see implementation of the scheme in Gayatrinagar slums of Ahmedabad and met the SEWA operatives and the slum dwellers.

Patel, Anil is a Medical Doctor. He started out as a student leader and graduated to city level politics in Ahmedabad. He had just been reelected as a corporator, when I met him in 2005. He is a great advocate of more and more professionals joining the AMC politics.

Patel, Himatsingh came to the Ahmedabad City from the neighboring State of Rajasthan. He was a child accompanying his father, a laborer in the booming textile mills of the City. Partially educated, Patel had quickly climbed the business and political ladders. He was Mayor of Ahmedabad City, when earthquake struck in 2001.

Patel, Praveenbhai, a migrant to Surat started out as an auto –rickshaw driver. Somewhere on the line, this slum dweller became a daily laborer. Completely uneducated, he did not see much improvement in future, whether of the city or himself.

Patel, R P works as a Deputy Town Planner with the SMC. His assignment relates to the Slum Up gradation Programme of SMC. Patel started out as a teacher in an Engineering School, but changed his career as he was more interested in public service. His ambition is to do a PhD on what he calls a 'Zero-Slum' future for Surat.

Patel, Subhas Poonabhai is a resident of Hedgewar slums of Surat. He claimed to be 45, but looked at least 60. A migrant from Nizhar, the tribal hinterland of Surat District, he came to the city 2 decades back. Everyday he goes to the informal labor market in search of work. When I met him, he had not got work for about 15 days.

Pathan, Bashir has been with the Indian Express newspaper as a senior correspondent for a long period. He does the Secretariat beat and as such is in daily touch with the powers that be. He was born and grew up in the Ahmedabad City and was a source of information regarding the changing nature of the city.

Patil, Sumitraben Kamlakar is an unusual slum-dweller of Ahmedabad. She holds a Bachelor Degree in Science and earns her living by giving tuitions. She earns about $ 80 a month, which supplements her husband's income. Being educated, she is a natural leader of the Gayatrinagar slums.

Patwa, Sanjay started out as a student leader. At 36, he is already an important city politician. Representing INC (Congress) Party, the main opposition in SMC, he elaborated the concepts of 'visible' and 'invisible' changes in a reform process.

Rao, S R was a reluctant entrant to the city administration of Surat. Back from a deputation to the Federal Government, he took over as Commissioner, SMC in 1995, and nine months after the Plague. In a period of two years and four months, Surat had undergone a major make over. Rao became synonymous with the post-crisis reform initiatives in Surat and attained legendary status as a successful city manager. Rao heads the Health Department of the province today.

Shah, Nishith is a diary technologist and a self made entrepreneur from Ahmedabad. He gave me a close insight into the business worlds of Ahmedabad City.

Shah, Rajiv has been with the Times of India newspaper as a senior correspondent for a long period. Shah grew up in New Delhi, yet took up profession in Ahmedabad, the city from which his ancestors came from. Shah's perceptible remarks regarding the changing nature of social leadership in Ahmedabad in the last century was extremely helpful.

Sharma, Meeraben Shankarbhai is a slum dweller of Ahmedabad. She does sewing work as a supplementary income. She was not a migrant, but hailed from the city (This is quite rare among the slum dwellers).

Shivanand Swamy, H M is the Director of CEPT, Ahmedabad. A noted academic he has been watching the growth of the city of Surat for fifteen years. As an objective academic, he contributed to my research significantly, by giving me a researcher's viewpoint of Surat city. He was kind enough to share recent works of his students on the city with me.

Singh, Amarjit is currently the Commissioner of Health and Medical Education of the province. Holder of a PhD on Public Health from Oxford, Singh has been known to be a pro-active bureaucrat. An ex-Commissioner of Rajkot city, he showed me examples of reform initiatives, which have nothing to do with a crisis.

Singh, Balwant was the Commissioner of SMC when the Plague struck. I interviewed him after almost ten years of the event, regarding the first months after the plague. He had a photographic memory and I am indebted to him for the vivid description of post-plague Surat. Today, he heads the Energy and Petrochemicals Department of the province.

Srinivas, K was the District Magistrate of Ahmedabad District, when the earthquake struck. Along with Kailashnathan, Srinivas played a crucial role in post-earthquake crisis management. He currently heads the Gujarat Urban Development Company, which has played a big role in post –earthquake reconstruction in Kutch

Tarkar, Ghanshyambhai is from Nagpur (In the Maharashtra province), but has been living in the Gayatrinagar slums of Ahmedabad for almost 22 years. He works for the Government and earns about $150 per month.

Thakkar, Amit is a Chartered Accountant operating out of Surat. He grew up in the city and has been an avid city-watcher. He gave me important insights into the business psyche of Surat.

Thirrupugazh, V was brought into GSDMA immediately after the Earthquake. He has since continued as the Joint Chief Executive Officer of GSDMA and in four and half years has contributed significantly to the field of disaster mitigation in the Province. His name is practically synonymous with GSDMA today.

Topno, Rajiv found himself in the center of things on 26th January 2001 in Kutch. He was in charge of the rural areas as the District Development Officer. Topno is the key link of the pre-crisis and post- crisis period and performed admirably in the changing circumstances. Topno is currently the District Magistrate of Vadodara District.

Tripathy, Radhakant succeeded Panneervel in AMC two years after the earthquake. His leadership is identified with important decisions in out-sourcing. His earlier experience as the head of water supply department of the province helped AMC greatly. Currently, he is recovering from a road accident.

Upadhyaya, Himanshu is a Senior Executive with a Gas Company. He hails from Ahmedabad and the nature of his work takes him to Surat at least once a month. Himanshu was the best city watcher, I could identify. I was lucky that he watched both the cities with a keen interest over the years.

Vaghela, Sarvadaman is a businessman, part time politician and builder from Ahmedabad City. I needed his help to understand the construction industry of Ahmedabad.

Vasava, C B is a Deputy Engineer with SMC and could give me insights into the employee ownership concept which started appearing in the SMC in the post-plague period.

Vavadiya, Naresh is a young man from Surat, who wants to become an IAS officer. He was a child when Plague struck Surat. He described to me the exodus out of the City in 1994.

Virk, Harinder Pal Singh came to Ahmedabad city as a student and settled down to become a successful professional. Over a period of three decades, he has seen the City grow and has had intimate relationship with many of the interviewees. Singh was crucial to show a migrant's perspective of the city.

Appendix C

Commissioners of SMC	Period
Balwant Singh	**13.08.1991 – 02.05.1995**
S R Rao	**03.05.1995 – 08.12.1997**
S Jagadeeshan	**08.12.1997 – 21.06.1999**
Guru Prasad Mohapatra	**22.06.1999 – 22.04.2002**
G R Aloria	**22.04.2002 – 19-01-2005**
Pankaj Joshi	**14.02.2005 - Till Date**

Commissioners of AMC	Period
Keshav Verma	**01.11.1994 – 27.09.1997**
B K Sinha	**27.09.1997 – 24.06.1999**
K Kailashnathan	**24.06.1999 – 18.10.2001**
P Panneervel	**18.10.2001 – 07.05.2003**
Radhakant Tripathy	**07.05.2003 – 27.01.2005**
Anil Mukim	**27.01.2005 – Till Date**

Appendix D

Basic Data regarding both the Cities

Ahmedabad

Area	190.94 Sq.km
Population	3.51 million (City)
Density of Population	18411
Growth rate	30.85%
Population below poverty line	11.9%
City Government	AMC
Number of employees in AMC	40,000

Surat

Area	112.28 Sq.km
Population	2.43 million (City)
Density of Population	21676
Growth Rate	62.38%
Population below poverty line	23.45%
City Government	SMC
Number of employees in SMC	14,000

(Source: Best Practices Catalogue, 2002, City Managers' Association)

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