Dharohar | a quarterly newsletter



VOLUME 9

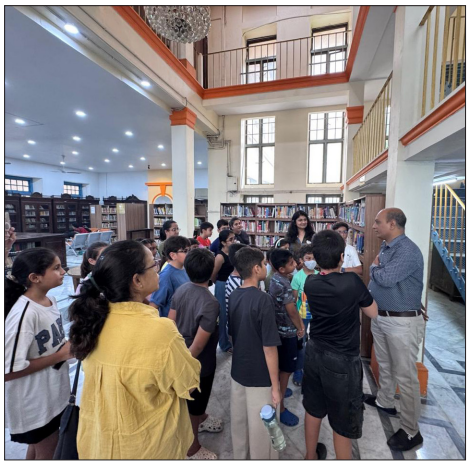
ISSUE 2

HERITAGE TRUST

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धरोहर

Volume 9 - Issue 2
July - September 2026







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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Are Libraries still relevant for Gen Z

With the influx of digital media and the availability of content from around the world, does the print media hold relevance especially for Gen Z ? A visit to the iconic Central Library located in the heart of the city of Vadodara reveals a treasure trove of books in 6 different languages covering various genres that not only entice a bibliophile but also a casual reader. When the library building holds an interesting history and architecture, a visit becomes more exciting !

Heritage Trust arranged a visit of school children to this library. This issue covers the visit and showcases the enthusiasm that can be generated in Gen Z to love books and be part of the library movement.

Other events included the collaboration of Heritage Trust in the celebrations by Bank of Baroda and our Annual General Meeting which was well attended

The temples of Khajuraho are examples of our ancient art and architecture and are designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. However, our country has numerous old beautifuly carved structures nestled in our villages that are unknown and often left to deteriorate. One such group of temples lies in the nearby Dahod district of our state. Sameer Gaikwad explored this site and shares his experience of what can well be called the "Khajuraho of Gujarat."

As we celebrate Gandhi Jayanti this year, it is time to appreciate the far reaching influence that the Father of our nation had on the lives of the young people of that era. Read the important role played by a young girl, Pramila that transformed the lives of women in the princely state of Jasdan written by Mr. R. C. Saxena

We hope you enjoy this issue and invite you to share your experience of exploring interesting heritage sites.

Happy reading and do remember to join our events during the People's Heritage Week in November.

Avi Sabavala

The Khajuraho of Gujarat:

Shiva Temple at Bavka near Dahod

While exploring Dahod district adjoining the hilly MP border areas, we were informed about the existence of a less known but an important Shiva temple of the people in that region. Thankfully there was network connectivity and the temple was listed on Google maps. Located just 14 km south of Dahod town, the ruins of this Shiva temple is located beside the Hirav Lake near Bavka.





Shiva Temple at Bavka

Approaching from Vadodara, one can take two routes ahead of Halol to reach this temple. The first is the Godhra highway via Kalol and another is a scenic but slow, state highway route via Devgadh Baria and Dhanpur. We took the later route to enjoy the undulating hills of Dahod district – also known as Scotland of Gujarat (during the monsoon season).

We found the temple built on a high land which is said to be of 12th-13th century origins (Chaulukya era). This temple is under ASI protection. Well, at least the premises were fenced with an ASI board at its entrance. Otherwise, it has a free entry and there is lack of any information whatsoever. The temple is also active with a resident pujari. A couple of vendors were selling light refreshments, coconuts and pooja material. Because of a newly built gazebo area and some colleges near adjoining villages, the place was humming with young people.

Records say the temple was built during the reign of the last Chaulukya ruler Bhima II (1178 – 1240 CE). And according to local legend, it was built by a Devdasi (temple dancer) in a single night. It was reportedly damaged by Mahmud of Ghazni as per the locals, but no evidences exist. The temple was neglected for years and several artifacts of the temples were stolen over time. The temple was subsequently restored by ASI in 2009.

It is an east-facing Panchayatana type sandstone temple complex; one central temple with four subsidiary shrines in its four cardinal directions and is considered as the finest temple of its period. The four corner minor shrines are completely destroyed. The hall (Rangamandapa) is also ruined. The dwarf pillars of the hall (Mandapa) are simple. The roof of the temple is destroyed. The fragments of collapsed spire and the hall are scattered nearby on either side of the temple.

They are placed in some order but lie unattended, open to the elements and also further damage.

The exploration of the outer walls and the door of sanctum is very interesting. It is filled with carvings of deities and celestial beings (apsaras). The array of jostling elephants jutting out of the walls is most striking. Interspersed on these outer walls are the erotic sculptures that reflect tantric beliefs, celebrating life, love, and the balance between physical desire and spiritual liberation. One also finds stone work having geometrical patterns at the mid layer that show the influence of local tribal art.

Looking at the ruins, I was reminded of the fascinating Virsasat lecture organised by Heritage Trust held in March 2026. Delivered by Padmashree KK Muhammed's, his talk on the successful restoration efforts at the Bateshwar group of temples at Morena, MP was extremely impactful. India needs many more such KK Muhammed's to restore the lost glory of the temples like the one at Bavka. We hope that the new PPP model of monument restoration by the ASI finds such hidden gems and place them on a regular tourist map, boosting local tourism and the economy.

Sameer Gaikwad

Pramila

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had earned himself the monicker "Mahatma" during his relentless struggle for the dignity, freedom and liberty of the non-white residents of South Africa. The story of his non-violent struggle against oppression of the underprivileged in South Africa was becoming a legend in India even before he sailed to India in 1915. The entire country was in awe of this puny Indian barrister who fought the white regime in South Africa. However it was in Ahmedabad that the fervor of Gandhi's heroics was most pronounced mainly for the reason that Gandhi was a Gujarati. This fervor became a pitch when Gandhi came to Ahmedabad in 1919 and set an Ashram and founded two major landmarks. One was the Navjivan Press and the other was the Gujarat Vidyapith. The residents of Ahmedabad embraced Gandhi and his ideals completely, so much so that a vast majority of its residents switched to wearing "khadi" and swore by it. The publications by the Navjivan Press became the medium for message of fight for "Swarajya."

It was in this milieu of ultra nationalism and the struggle from the British Raj that Pramila was born. Born in 1921 and eldest of the brood of eight children, Pramila grew up in the walled city of Ahmedabad. Her father, a businessman, broker and speculator, introduced child Pramila to the stories of Gandhiji's ahimsa (non-violence movement) and Satyagrahas in South Africa and India. By the time Pramila entered her teens, she was, reinforced by the literature from the Navjeevan Press, swept under the Gandhi wave as was most of the city of Ahmedabad. The entire family, took to wearing khadi, a fabric made out of hand-spun cotton yarn, as a proud symbol of self-reliance, strength of character and nationalism. Leaving school after matriculation, as most of her peers did, Pramila devoted her time fully as a volunteer spreading, as a volunteer, the message of Gandhiji.

She would attend the clandestine meetings of fellow volunteers, distribute pamphlets, sing in the "prabhat feris" (the pre-dawn processions), and attend lectures by senior ladies from the educated and business class of Ahmedabad.

She did all these despite her onerous responsibilities at home such as looking after her siblings, the youngest Udayan for whom she was virtually a mother, besides helping her mother in the daily chores. Pramila being fully immersed in the Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and Satyagraha took a vow to always wear khadi.

Crossing her age of adolescence, and the natural human instincts allowing, she fell head over heels for Chandrakant, a recently graduated medical doctor. Chandrakant was from a small princely state of Jasdan ruled by the Khachar dynasty. Chandrakant was under a personal obligation of the Jasdan rulers as they had procured a seat for him in the medical college in Bombay and paid for his fees for medical education as well. He would soon be the royal physician to the ruling Khachar dynasty as was his father before him.

Jasdan, one of the smaller princely states in India, was under the control and supervision of the British Resident. Since many such princely states were not under the suzerainty of the British crown and were not a formal part of British India, they were indirectly ruled for diplomatic and colonial considerations by a British Resident appointed by the British Government. Hence Jasdan, a part of the Kathiawar Agency, was under a considerable influence and dominance of the duly appointed British Resident.

When Pramila's father went to Jasdan carrying a proposal of marriage of Pramila with Chandrakant he was met with severe disappointment. Chandrakant's family at the behest of the Jasdan rulers refused the proposal. The reason for refusal was both political and emotional. At that time the Jasdan state was, like many other states, under the supervision of the British Residency. Though well intentioned, the Jasdan royalty did not wish to displease the British Resident in charge. The British loathed Gandhiji's freedom movement and had warned the princely states of dire consequences if they, directly or indirectly, supported Gandhiji's movement. Anything to do with Gandhi, and Khadi in particular, was an anathema. In this background how could the future bride of the royal physician to the state of Jasdan be a staunch Gandhian and, more deplorably, be clad in khadi? The marriage proposal was, at the threshold, shot down.

Pramila, seeped as she was in the Gandhian courage of conviction, was not the one to give up easily. Chandrakant meant the whole world to her. She sought a personal audience with the senior Khachar (reverentially called "Durbar Saheb") and confronted him with the virtues of Khadi. This was in 1944 when India's independence was being discussed seriously within India as well as in the British Government. Pramila argued before Durbar Saheb that in any case the Britishers would be soon leaving India and the British Resident would be rendered powerless. Durbar Saheb told Pramila, gently, that in the world of politics anything can happen. Moreover, the Durbar Saheb was genuinely concerned as to how the Indian Government would treat him and his State after the independence. Darbar Saheb assured Pramila that he had nothing personal against her or her ideals. Infact, Darbar Saheb revealed that she would make an excellent bride for Chandrakant but for the present circumstances.

After parleys of serious meetings, the defiant Pramila eventually relented and agreed to give up Khadi. However, and this is where Gandhi's character building came out in full flow, Pramila made the senior Khachar agree to a trade-off.

Pramila agreed to give up khadi only, and only, if the women of the Khachar family, in particular, as well as women of Jasdan, in general, started to stop wearing "Ghunghat" or "veiling" their faces. The senior Khachar, after a great emotional turmoil, appreciating the courage and pragmatism of this young woman, agreed. The rest is history. The women of the royal house hold stopped covering their faces in public and the rest of the Jasdan women gradually followed suit. As to when did this transformation happen one does not know. But the fact that it happened was there for all to see in few years after India became independent.

Pramila, my mother, passed away on September 11, 2014 at the ripe old age of 95 years.

R. C. Saxena



Pramilaben

Mindgym Library

Kids visit the Central Library

Sunday the 6th September 2026

Another Bookclub Sunday, and the children of our library were awaiting a new adventure at Mindgym. But this time around, we had decided to take a history tour with the assistance of Heritage Trust to the Central library of Vadodara at Mandvi area.

Tanvi facilitated this heritage walk to every detail and wonderful coordination, making sure the children had a good learning experience. We are also thankful to her for promptly translating into English for the children, and helping them understand the stories that Bhaveshbhai shared in Gujarati.

Apart from giving the kids an introduction to the architecture of building and its inspiration, Shri Bhaveshbhai, the senior librarian had even made extra efforts in offering a tour of their office rooms, where a unique collection of miniature books are safely displayed.



Children browsing through the books at the library

Before we left, the excitement went to another level when we finally reached the children section and Juhididi allowed the kids to explore freely, pick out books and sit and read them.

Grateful to Heritage trust for offering such cultural an educational experience for young minds. We at Mindgym kids library look forward to giving our children many more such tours to different locations in the future and broadening their vision our fascinating historic city of Vadodara.



The group at the library



Bookclub Sunday

Heeral Trivedi

Below is a note of appreciation from one of our avid readers:

My visit to the Vadodara Central Library was so much fun.

I had gone with my friends from Mindgym Kids library and Tanvi ma'am from Heritage Trust, and honestly, I thought we were just going to visit another library.
But then I saw SO MANY BOOKS!

For someone who loves reading, this was basically a little paradise!

I was actually thinking, "Can I just stay here and read all day?"

We explored the library, learned some interesting things about its history and even discovered that it is more than 100 years old. All thanks to our guide, the senior librarian Shri Bhaveshbhai.
It really makes me wonder—how many books and stories have passed through this library before I came here?

I also made a reel about my visit because obviously… a fun visit deserves a reel!

Thank you Heritage Trust and Mindgym for taking us on this amazing little adventure. I got to learn, explore and have fun with my friends—all in one day!

And yes… I came home with one small problem:

My "I want to read this book" list has become MUCH longer!

My feedback:
Learning — 10/10
Fun — 10/10
Would I go again? YESSS!
Thank you for this lovely experience!

Deetya Agarwal
Age: 10 years

A significant step towards preserving and promoting

Vadodara's rich heritage

On the occasion of the 119th Foundation Day of Bank of Baroda, Heritage Trust of Baroda signed a MoU with Bank of Baroda to collaborate on initiatives focused on heritage conservation, awareness, documentation, and public engagement.

The event also provided an opportunity to showcase Heritage Trust's growing range of 'Souvenirs of Vadodara' merchandise, highlighting the city's rich cultural and architectural legacy through thoughtfully designed keepsakes.

We look forward to working together to safeguard and celebrate the cultural heritage of our city for future generations.

Together, we reaffirm our commitment to keeping Vadodara's heritage alive and accessible for generations to come.



119th Foundation Day of Bank celebration



MoU signed with Bank of Baroda

Heritage Trust

Annual General meeting

The AGM of the trust was held on the 8th of August at SEE Linkages. It was heartening to see several members attend this AGM.



AGM held at SEE Linkages on 8th August 2026