IN THE SHADOW OF THE MILL

This book traces the socio-spatial transformation of workers’ neighbourhoods in Ahmedabad over the course of the twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries—during which the city witnessed dramatic and disturbing transformations. It follows the multiple histories of Ahmedabad’s labour landscapes from when the city acquired prominence as an important site of Gandhian political activity and as a key centre of the textile industry, through the decades of industrial collapse and periods of sectarian violence in recent years. Taking the working-class neighbourhood as a scale of social practice, the question of urban change is examined along two axes of investigation: the transformation of local political configurations and forms of political mediation, and the shifts in the social geography of the neighbourhood as reflected in the changing regimes of property.

*In the Shadow of the Mill* combines both archival and ethnographic methods to write a historical ethnography of two workers’ neighbourhoods. Many of Ahmedabad’s economic, social and political transformations—the decline of large-scale manufacturing, intensification of urban planning, rapid rise of politicised religion and spatial segregation—have mirrored national and global shifts and a study of the city’s history presents a way of approaching broader historical processes while engaging with specifically local questions.

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Map of Ahmedabad (1866) showing the location of Gomtipur and Vatva

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IN THE SHADOW OF THE MILL

Workers’ Neighbourhoods in Ahmedabad, 1920s to 2000s

RUKMINI BARUA
CONTENTS

List of Figures vii
List of Tables ix
Acknowledgements xi

INTRODUCTION 1

1. SETTING THE STAGE
A Brief Political History of Ahmedabad, 1920s to 2000s 31

PART I. INCARNATIONS OF THE POLITICAL INTERMEDIARY 63

2. THE TLA AND DADAGIRI
Mediation in the Mill Neighbourhoods 70

3. THE UNDERGROUND ECONOMY, THE STATE AND THE POLITICAL INTERMEDIARY 96

4. CIVIL SOCIETY, ‘SOCIAL WORK’ AND POLITICAL MEDIATION 134
PART II. PROPERTY AND PRECARITY

5. CHAWLS WITHOUT CHIMNEYS

6. VIOLENCE, LAW AND ‘GHETTOISATION’

7. SECURITY AND TENANCY AT THE MARGINS OF THE CITY

CONCLUSION

Appendix 273
Glossary 275
Bibliography 277
Index 297
FIGURES

Map of Ahmedabad (1866) showing the location of Gomtipur and Vatva  
frontispiece
1.1 Map highlighting the growth of the municipal limits and indicating the location of the two neighbourhoods under study  
7
5.1 Map of Rajpur–Gomtipur  
189
7.1 Map showing the major landmarks and architectural forms of the south-western parts of Vatva  
244
7.2 Town Planning Scheme No. 86, showing the areas of Jain Ashram, Darbar Nagar, Navapura and Jafar Row House  
252
7.3 Promotional brochure of Navjivan Apartments  
258
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.1</td>
<td>Population of Ahmedabad</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.2</td>
<td>Growth of municipal limits</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.3</td>
<td>Population growth in the wards of Vatva, Gomtipur and Rajpur</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1</td>
<td>Sample of property tax information for Darbar Nagar</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2</td>
<td>Sample of property tax information for Jafar Row House</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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