

# Typography Day 2014

## - Typography and Culture

### BABUCHAK

Gujarati Display Font.

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to showcase a Display Font on Gujarati script (variant of Devanagari script). Display fonts simply means using the characters in larger point sizes giving appropriate look and feeling associated with it. Rightly called the font is 'Babuchak' (common slang often said in Gujarati.) In simple words it means a nerdy villager. The characters of Babuchak font are inspired by the bits and parts of one of the liveliest and vibrant culture of Gujarat which includes Religion, Festivals, Weddings, Paintings, Architecture, Embroideries, and yes of course most importantly Cuisine! Every alphabet has a distinct individuality. A Gujarati as known to all commonly has obese bottoms and this is likely amongst the women. Observing this feature the skeleton of the characters are round and curvy. The font went through the process of selecting the subject followed by constructing (sketching) the characters, designing it digitally & applying the font.

**Key words:** *Display font, Devanagari, Gujarati Culture, Inspiration, Exploration*

### Introduction

The Devanagari script is a widely used script in India. Devanagari script was discovered to write Sanskrit. It is written from left to right with a horizontal line running on top of the alphabets. Gujarati (variant of Devanagari) script stands apart from others as it is differentiated by the loss of the horizontal line and a few modifications in the characters. Gujarat is a state located in the North-West coast of India with an excess population of 60 million. It is known locally as Jewel of the West. The State took its name from the *Gujara*, the land of the *Gujjars*, who ruled the area during the 700's and 800's. The people are enterprising oriented, cooperative, and supportive. They possess warm and friendly nature with qualities of humanity, Gujarati's are found to be most generous and loyal. The reason creating the font in Gujarati script over any other script is it could easily branch out to people and would carry the state's culture well.

## Objective

The main purpose of this project was to solely create something iconic for Gujarat's culture. One must be able to identify the font as font that represent this beautiful state and it should present itself as a display type that is a balance between art, design and typography. The characters were created using type, graphic elements, colors, etc. inspired from its tradition and beliefs. It had to be bold, emotive and eye catching, encompassing the look of a display font and that should bring out the emotions of every Gujarati. From the diverse culture few important aspects were taken into consideration for creating individual characters. According to the sketch of an alphabet, it was incorporated in the best suited cultural element. One out of the many sketches made for the font was selected. This was then taken to the next stage of digitalizing making it look perfect. The patterns and the various elements combined with the use of colors were then used as mass to the skeleton made.

(Figure 1. represents the sketches that were developed.)

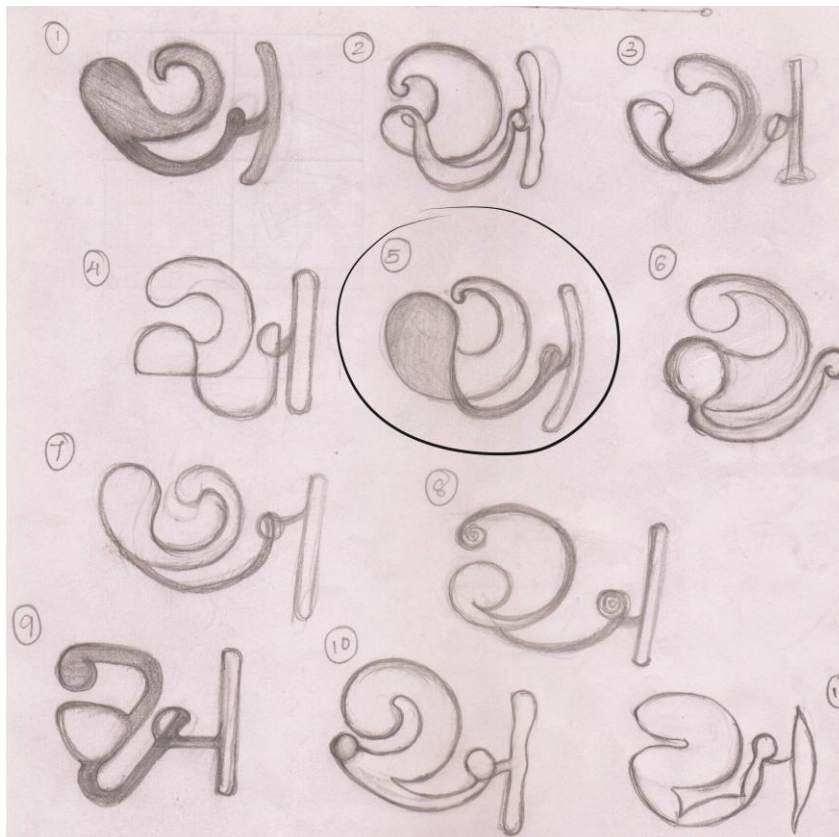


Figure 1.

Sketch '5' was selected as the final structure based on which the other characters were developed. The designing of the font was started with letter 'a' followed by the other alphabets.

The characters of Babuchak were inspired from following features:

Few of the characters are explained in detail to get the overview of the font.

**Religion:** People in Gujarat mainly follow Hinduism and about 89.1% of the population is formed by the Hindus. The main deity of the Hindus of Gujarat is Lord Krishna. He is worshipped throughout the state. To bring out the emotion of devotees, letter 'cha' was created using the elements of the Lord Krishna's idol. The various aspects like his jewellery, skin colour (blue), and butter pot (staple food) were used in the process of creation.

(Refer figure 2.)

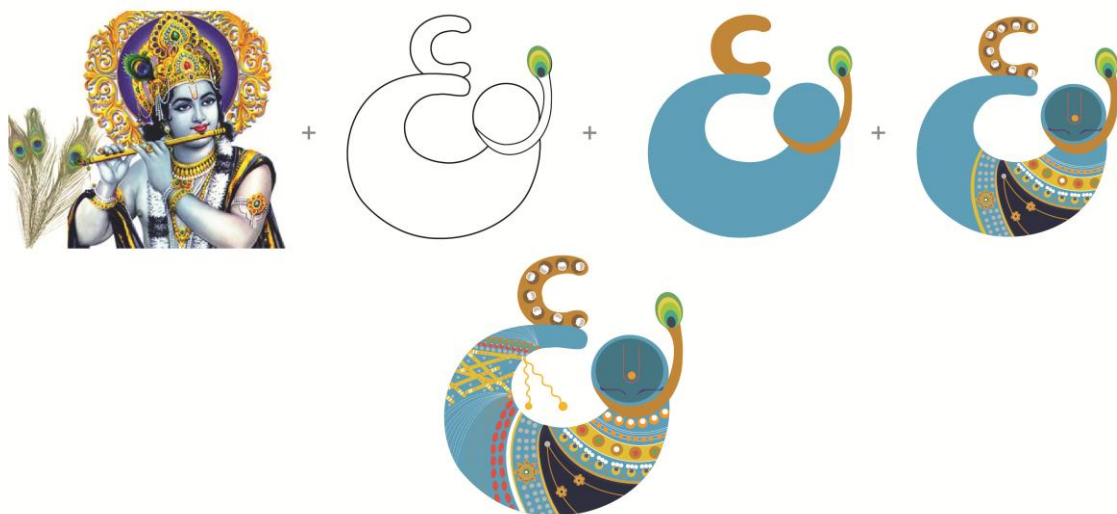


Figure 2.

**Wedding Culture:** When the rituals in the wedding ceremony are performed on the base of Gujarati culture, the bride is dressed in 'Gharchola or Panetar'- (sari) - a Red (symbolizes love) & White (symbolizes peace) traditional attire & gold jewellery to empower the beauty. Cuisine is a major attraction during the ceremony. The following letter 'ksa' is inspired by the wedding attire of a bride.

(Refer figure 3.)

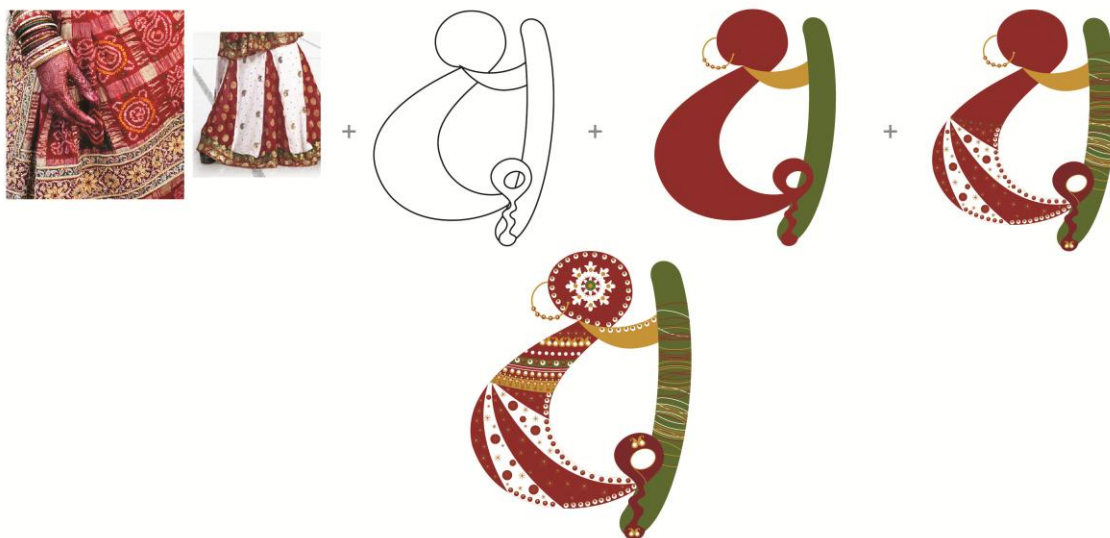


Figure 3.

Festivals: The state is proudly known as land of fests. It is popular throughout India as well as the world for its spirit of festivity.

- UTTARAYAN (kite flying) - A day when the serene blue sky is filled with colorful kites. People of Gujarat gather on terraces to fly kites of various color's to celebrate, the welcome to the sun after the cold winter months. 'Kai Po Che' (I have cut the kite) a common statement enchanted during cutting of each other's kite with glass rope.
- NAVRATRI (Rass-garba) - It is the prime festival of Gujarat. The state is known for its lavish celebrations and fortitude, during the festival. It lasts for 9 days and is performed to worship Goddess Durga's manifestations. The dance is performed in concentric circles followed by the stick dance in groups. The mammoth celebrations continues all night long with the blend of devotion & dance.

Below are the characters inspired by the colorful designs and patterns observed on traditional outfit (Ghaghara Choli) - blouse & skirt worn during the festival.

(Refer figure 4. & 5.)



Figure 4. - Uttaraayan - Kite Flying

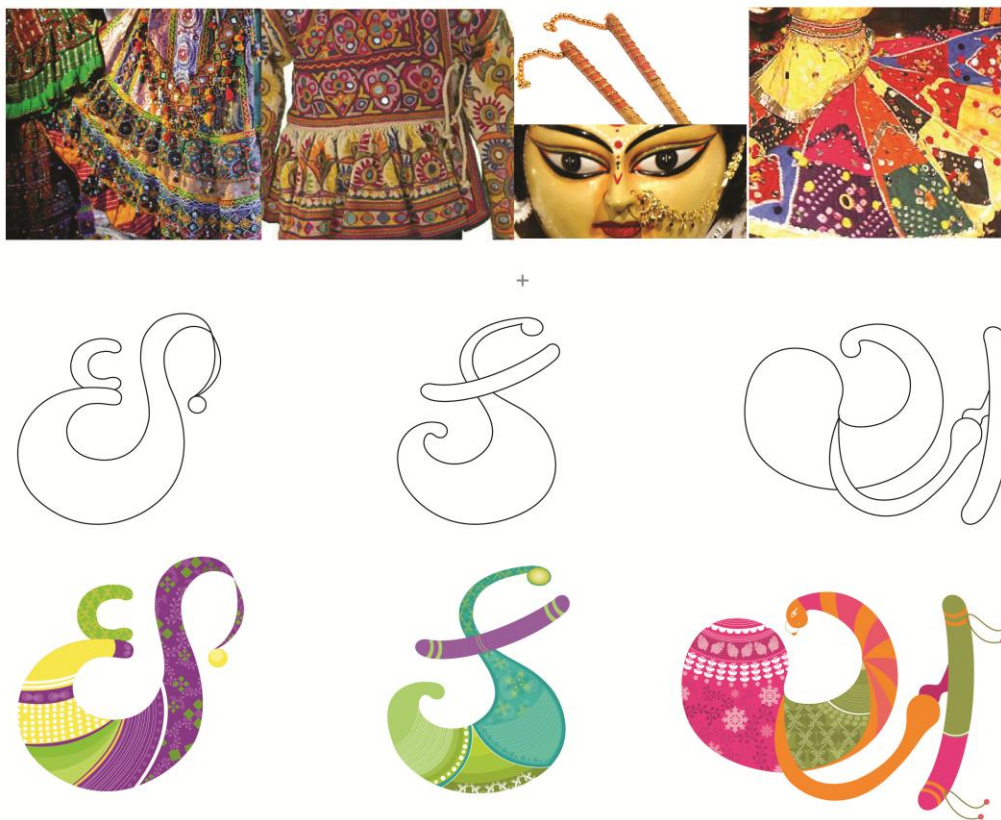


Figure 5. Navratri



Architecture: Sun Temple popularly known as Modhera temple is dedicated to Hindi Sun - god and has an impressive architectural carvings. Inspired by the temple carvings, 'gha' alphabet is constructed.

(Refer figure 6.)



Figure 6.

Paintings: *Pithora art* and *Warli* are most commonly observed in Gujarat. Pithora is art on wall created using childlike figures, shapes, nature, etc. It's done in circular shapes. Likewise Warli art is created using dance poses of women. The pose resembles to that of Garba (one of the festival- part of Navratri).

Embroidery: The embroidered patterns are famous all over for its elegance and accuracy. There are various types of embroideries. To state few of them includes, Applique/Katab - a form of decorative needlework. Comprised using geometric shapes in accurate traditional colors.

- *Rebari* - Kind of embroidery makes use of mirrors along with button stitch.
- *Aari Bharat* - holds intricate and fine floral patterns which flows in poetic form.
- *Mutwa Bharat* - Chicken floral motifs along with various stitches is usually seen.

Group of alphabets are constructed using the extensive research. The colour palette is studied from traditional embroidery as an inspiration to letters.

Patola Silk: Saris (fabric type) from Patan (a town state in Gujarat) are popular. These saris were once worn by royalty. Time taken to weave 1 sari is minimum 6 months to a year. The double Ikkat (type of pattern) styled saris are very expensive.

*Cuisine* of Gujarat is favored by most of the population all over. The sweetness and the spices blend together creating a lip smacking taste. Each and every dish has something different to offer. Gujarati cuisine is a must try!

## **Result**

Considering the research on the state's culture the characters of Babuchak were created differently with above aspects as an inspiration. The entire font was hence developed. (Refer figure 7.)

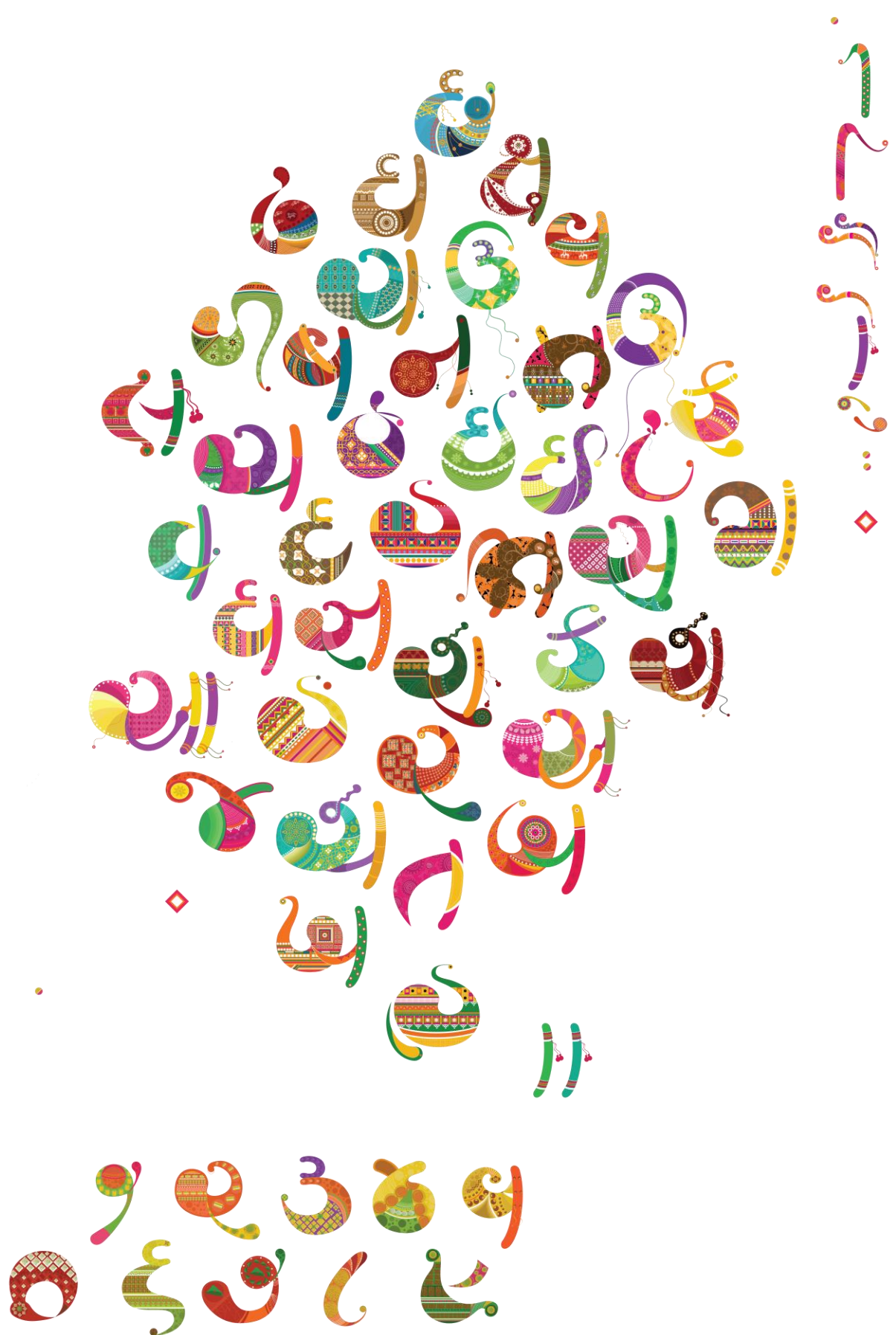


Figure 7.



The few limitations to the font is when it is used in sentence or in very smaller point size, it may not appear appropriate and may look jumbled. Hence, for an appealing look the font has been used in larger point sizes.

### Applications

To prove the look of the font on various backgrounds, applications were essential. The various applications include - Branding for a Farsan (Snacks) shop, Playing Cards design and Package, Badges, Key chains, Totes, etc. A book was created showing the detailed view of the entire font and explaining the characters.

Applications were selected keeping in mind the type of subject.

(Refer figure 8. & 9. Shows the applications created.)



Figure 8.



Figure 9.

## Conclusions

It can be concluded that the state of Gujarat hopefully now has an iconic display font representing the culture. Babuchak would not be visible when scaled down, hence being a display type it should always be used in larger point sizes for a legible view.

## Acknowledgement

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