

Name : Payal Vishwakarma

Roll no : 129 Div : A

Sub : Field Project (Local history)

Introduction:

Mankhurd, situated in the eastern suburbs of Mumbai, Maharashtra, has witnessed significant social and economic transformation over the past few decades. Originally known for its rural settlements and open spaces, the region gradually developed into a residential and commercial locality due to urban expansion, migration, and infrastructural growth in Mumbai. Within this process of local development, small-scale businesses have played an important role in shaping the identity and economy of the area.

One such example is the Madhuram Sweet Shop, established by the Kumawat family. Beginning as a modest enterprise, the shop has steadily grown into a recognized establishment in Mankhurd. Its development not only reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of the family but also illustrates the changing patterns of consumer culture, food practices, and community life in the locality. The study of Madhuram Sweet Shop thus provides valuable insight into the interconnected themes of migration, livelihood, and cultural continuity within the broader history of Mankhurd.

The objective of this assignment is to trace the history and development of the Madhuram Sweet Shop in Mankhurd, while examining its role in the local economy, its cultural significance, and its contribution to the social fabric of the community.

> Aims :

- 1) To trace the history and development of Bombay Sweets and Farsan Shops in Mankhurd.
- 2) To study how the shops have contributed to the local food , economy and culture.
- 3) To explore how such establishments have adapted to changing consumer needs in the age of supermarkets and online shopping.

> Scope:

The time-line of this project would be referring to the glorious years of the shop from 1982-2026, so that makes it 44years .

The project will not cover the entire retail history of Mankhurd, but will highlight this shop as a representative example of small , community- based businesses.

> Singnificance:

The project emphasizes the importance of documenting local history, which often goes unnoticed compared to large-scale historical events.

It highlights how small businesses like Bombay Sweet and farsan shops play a vital role in shaping the social and Cultural Identity of a locality.

By studying this store, the project sheds light on consumer habits , trade traditions , and community relationship in Mankhurd.

It also provides insights into how traditional shops continue to remain relevant despite the rise of malls , supermarkets, and e - commerce platforms. It is also a contribution to the Food and Cultural History.

>Research Methodology:

1. Primary Sources:

Interviews: Conversations with the Shop Owner, Staff, and Long-Term Customers, which are making purchases from the store from last 20+ years which will help to understand the history, growth, and reputation of the store.

Observation: Visiting the store to observe its daily functioning, product display, customer interactions .

Photographs & Field Notes: Documenting the physical layout of the shop and recording field observations for reference.

2. Research Tools:

I have used Interview schedule (not necessarily structured) for this project, the following people were part of my interviews:

- Shri Pappu Kumawat who is the Shop Owner.

- Mr. Mahendra Kumawat who has been a Staff in the shop since 2002.

- Mr. Ramawtar Vishwakarma is a long term Customer of the shop roughly from 2005.

The Conversation that occurred during the interview is the core part of the project, which is a crucial part of my project.

3. Limitations:

Since the shop was not ever mentioned in the news, archives or any classified documents, as such, it makes the First Ever Documentation of the shop through my project which also makes it exclusive, out there where great untold stories eagerly waiting to be told. But in my dew. imitation is a greater factor for curiosity.

The Story of Madhuram Mithaiwala

Nanalal Kumawat belongs to Jodhpur, Rajasthan. The story of his shop goes back to 1982 when he laidd the foundation of Madhuram Mithaiwala. Before that, Nanalalji ran a small sweet shop in Jodhpur, but he always dreamed of growing it into something bigger. In 1979, he came to Mumbai. He spent time learning about the city, its people, and its culture. With that knowledge and determination, he made the bold decision to open a sweet shop here. By 1982, his dream took shape when Madhuram Mithaiwala opened its doors for the very first time. What started as a humble venture has now become a proud family business running into its third generation. Today, it is managed by Pappu Kumawat and Kuvar Kumawat. But their journey was not easy. Mumbai, being such a large city, was already filled with competition. In Mankhurd itself, where their shop is located, there were several established sweet shops — including the well-known Ekvira Sweet Shop. Still, with patience and hard work, they faced every challenge and built their place in people's hearts.¹

In the early days, only 8–10 staff members worked at the shop. Now, there are about 20–25 staff who keep the operations running. The shop offers every kind of sweet, farsan, and snack — from Gulab Jamun, Kaju Katli, Rasgulla, Rasmalai, and Barfi to Mawa, Samosa, Kachori, and Dhokla. But the star of the shop remains their authentic Rajasthani delight, the Rajwadi Mithai, which beautifully showcases their cultural roots and connects the local community to Rajasthan's traditions.²

Quality has always been their top priority. Most items are prepared in their own factory, where freshness, hygiene, and purity are strictly maintained. They use clean water, pure ghee, and fresh ingredients daily. While a few products may come from trusted vendors, the heart of the work happens in his own factory.³

Among their dedicated team is Mahendra Kumawat, who has been working at Madhuram for over 20–25 years as a salesman. Some workers here belong to families that have long

¹ Said by Mr. Nanalal Kumawat, September 17,2025,

² Said by Mr. Nanalal Kumawat, September 17, 2025.

³ Said by Mr. Nanalal Kumawat, September 17, 2025.

been part of the sweets business, while others learned through training and experience. Mahendra proudly shares that Malai Barfi and their snacks are always in great demand.⁴

He explains how, when customers are unsure, they are given a small piece to taste — and once they try it, they almost always end up buying. Employees are not only paid monthly salaries but are also rewarded with bonuses during festivals like Diwali, making them feel valued.⁵

Over the years, Madhuram has built a loyal base of long-term customers. People return again and again because of the authentic taste and trustworthy quality. One customer fondly recalled: “When my daughter got married, we ordered sweets from Madhuram. Everyone praised the taste so much that even today people ask me which shop the sweets came from. That is how special Madhuram is for us.”⁶

While the taste has evolved slightly with modern techniques, the quality has remained top-notch. The shop interiors too have been upgraded, giving it a more professional look. Yet, the warmth and politeness of the staff have stayed the same. Even during the festive rush, they handle every customer with a smile.⁷

With time, Madhuram Mithaiwala has grown beyond Mankhurd, opening new branches in Bhandup and other areas. They have also embraced technology, offering online deliveries through Swiggy and Zomato, making it easier for people to enjoy their sweets from the comfort of home.⁸

Conclusion:

The story of Madhuram Mithaiwala is not just about a sweet shop. It is a story of dreams, struggle, culture, and trust. From a small beginning in Jodhpur to becoming a well-loved name in Mumbai, the Kumawat family has shown how dedication and honesty can build a lasting legacy. Today, Madhuram stands tall as more than just a business — it is a tradition, a connection to culture, and a symbol of sweetness in people’s celebrations.

The success of Madhuram Mithaiwala lies in its blend of tradition and modernity. What sets them apart is not just the wide variety of sweets but the trust, purity, and personal

⁴ Said by Mr. Mahendra, September 17, 2025.

⁵ Said by Mr. Mahendra Kumawat, September 17, 2025.

⁶ Said by Mr. Ramawtar Vishwakarma, September 17, 2025.

⁷ Said by Mr. Ramawtar Vishwakarma, September 17, 2025.

⁸ Said by Mr. Nanalal Kumawat, September 17, 2025.

touch that have been built over decades. For every celebration, people in Mankhurd turn to Madhura because they know they will always get authentic taste, high quality, and warm service. This family business is not only a symbol of cultural heritage but also a shining example of how dedication, quality, and customer trust can create a legacy that lasts for generations.

Appendix

Interview with Owner

- 1) How did you start your sweet shop?
- 2) Is this your family business?
- 3) What are the biggest operational challenges you face in running the shop?
- 4) How many people work with you or in your shop?
- 5) What kind of sweets do you sell in your shop?
- 6) What are your best-selling items?
- 7) How do you ensure the quality, freshness, and taste of your products?
- 8) Do you prepare all items in the shop or are some brought from outside?
- 9) Do you see the sweet shop business growing in Mankhurd?
- 10) What makes your shop different from other sweet shops in this area?
- 11) Do you have plans for expanding the business, like opening more branches or starting online delivery?

Interview with Staff

- 1) How long have you been working in this shop?
- 2) Do you work in making sweets/farsan or only in selling?
- 3) What are your daily working hours?
- 4) How did you learn this work – is it a family tradition, through training, or by experience?
- 5) Which sweets or farsan items are most in demand here?
- 6) Do you use machines for preparation, or is the work mostly manual?
- 7) What safety or hygiene measures do you follow while preparing food?
- 8) How are you paid – monthly salary, daily wages, or in some other way?
- 9) How do you convince a customer to try a new sweet or farsan item?

Interview with long term customer

- 1) How long have you been buying sweets and farsan from this shop?
- 2) Do you come here regularly or only occasionally?
- 3) Which sweet is your favourite from this shop?
- 4) Have you noticed any changes in the taste of the sweets compared to earlier? If yes, what kind of changes?
- 5) Since you are a long-time customer, do you feel that any changes have taken place in the shop?
- 6) What is your opinion about the behaviour and services of the staff?
- 7) Have you faced any problems or difficulties while shopping here?
- 8) Why do you prefer this shop over others?
- 9) Do you recommend this shop to others? If yes, why?
- 10) Can you share any memorable experience you have had while shopping here?

