

GUJARAT CARNAGE : A WOUNDED HUMANITY

How would you describe Gujarat of 21st century ? What exact nomenclature would you use to describe a state which witnessed, nay, engineered the most heinous crime against the humanity ? One thing is sure ! Whatever happened and still happening in Gujarat from February 27th can not simply be called a communal violence. It was much more than that. It was frenzy of a man intoxicated with the *sura* of hindutva riding on the bandwagon of Sangh Parivar whose life-line has always been tucked to a single agenda - the agenda of hatred and bashing of the minorities in India.

What made Gujarat a defiled state was its readiness to serve as an easy conduit for the communal designs of the frenzied man. The way the state machinery remained a mute spectator and in many cases an active participant in the bestialism of a frenzied man is a sad commentary on the state of the health of the democratic institutions and social conscience not only in the state of Gujarat but in the whole nation.

Hundreds of women were disrobed, raped and burnt alive; wombs of pregnant women were slit opened, their foetuses taken out, hanged on the tips of swords and then thrown into the fire; many teen-age girls were raped before the eyes of their mothers, their younger brothers and sisters; and hundreds of men were slaughtered by sword - trishul wielding kar sevaks. Most of these victims belonged to the minority community.

Amidst these insane and barbaric acts of the frenzied man and his cohorts we also heard the voices of sainity coming from all around. The Gujarat carnage was widely condemned by all sections of society and demands were raised to dismiss the Gujarat Government. Not only this, a number of teams from the various segments of the society went to Gujarat to personally investigate the scenario, gather the facts and record the statements of the victims and the witnesses to the violence so that the records could be put straight. The report released by various groups are a telling account of the brutalities committed against the innocents and the unhygienic conditions in which the survivors of the carnage have been forced to live. But the most moving accounts have been of small children of the minority community who have been witness to the rape, mutilation, murder and burning of their family members, friends and neighbours. They have been severely traumatized by their experiences. Apart from the experiences of men, women and children, these reports also touch the issues of media coverage of the violence and the public health crises.

In this issue of **Infopack**, we have focused on the various fact-finding reports released on Gujarat Carnage.

- Piyush Pant

GUJARAT CARNAGE

2002

A Report to the Nation

By

An Independent Fact
Finding Mission
Comprising :

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Bird's Eye View

'Among those killed and injured by marauding mobs in Ahmedabad from February 28th onwards were prominent Muslims as well as poor Muslim families. Some were fortunate enough to be able to flee. This was the case with retired Justice Akbar N. Vivecha whose house was burnt down. The Special I.G. of Police, A. I. Saiyed had to run for his life. The former Congress MP, Iqbal Ehsan Jafri was burnt alive along with his family members (barring his brave wife who managed to escape the wrath of the marauders).'

- From the report (Murder Most Foul)

The Independent Fact Finding Mission was set up to investigate the Gujarat carnage of February-March 2002. Its terms of reference were to find out the truth of the Godhra incident in which a bogie of the Sabarmati Express was burnt and 59 people were killed, the possible use of this tragic incident in regard to the communal conflagration that followed, and to ascertain whether there was any official complicity in that conflagration, and if so, to what extent. In this connection the team visited Ahmedabad and Godhra from March 22nd to March 26th, 2002. The members of the team met a large number of victims of the communal violence, eyewitnesses, administrative and police personnel (serving as well as retired), journalists, judges, lawyers, NGO and civil society activists, relief camp managers, and others. In view of the sensitive nature of the informations provided, and the communal surcharged atmosphere of Gujarat, the report conceals the names of all those with whom the team members interacted.

This 40-page report is spread into 3 major sections and a number of boxes. Four appendixes have also been attached to it. Section one is titled 'The Sabarmati Express Incident, Godhra', section two is named 'The Use of the Godhra Incident' and section three has the heading 'State Complicity'?

The report starts with a box item tracing the history of communal riots in Gujarat. It says that the first major communal riot involving large-scale massacres, arson and looting occurred in Gujarat in 1969. Then 1984 anti-reservation agitation took a communal turn and L. K. Advani's Rath Yatra in 1990 led to the highest number of communal riots in the State. Between 1987 and 1991, an estimated 106 major riots took place in Gujarat. Political rivalry and conflicts during elections were responsible for triggering around 40 per cent of these riots. But the year 2002 has written a new chapter in the history of communal riots in Gujarat where post-Godhra incident, more than a thousand innocent lives have been lost in the unprecedented fury of the communal violence.

Section one of the report deals with the Sabarmati Express incident at Godhra on February 27th. After tracing the origin of the incident, its detailed account, the mechanism of perpetrating the crime and the possible suspects involved in it, this section concludes that -

1. The attack does not appear to be pre-planned in the sense in which it was claimed publicly by high authorities in the immediate aftermath of the incident of 27th February. Neither available information nor the circumstances then prevailing provide support to the theory of any deep-rooted conspiracy, with or without the involvement of foreign agencies.
2. It was an instance of a ghastly communal riot in a place that has a long history of communal riots.

3. The tragedy could have been averted or at least, minimised if strong preventive measures had been taken in the wake of the communal incidents/irritants that were taking place on the train route and which could have been anticipated once the Kar Sewaks started leaving/returning by train in large numbers for/from Ayodhya.

Section 2 of the report is titled - 'The Use of the Godhra Incident' and mainly deals with the political and media reactions to the incident.

Entitled 'State Complicity', section 3 of the report talks about the penetration of the BJP, RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and associated organisations in Gujarat's institutions and organisations during the BJP rule. For example, the report says, "in the Home Guards, it is claimed that there was widespread recruitment of Sangh Parivar activists and sympathisers. Promotions, postings and transfers in all government institutions or those influenced by it, favoured Sangh activists and sympathisers, and conversely punished those officers or ranks who were neutral and secular". (Sic)

Section 3 also points out that the politicisations of the governmental machinery, especially the bureaucracy, led inevitably to the erosion of the functions and powers of the government machinery. For instance, in the case of police deployment, decision making powers were illegitimately transferred from police officials to the Sangh Parivar thereby eroding the powers, neutrality and accountability of the government machinery. This erosion of the governmental machinery adversely affected its efficiency.

This section of the report supports the observations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) regarding the State Government's complicity in Godhra incident. The NHRC has pointed out the "serious failure of intelligence and action by the State Government (that) marked the events leading to the Godhra tragedy and the subsequent deaths and destruction that occurred."

Under the sub-title "The Post-Godhra events and the February 28th VHP Bandh" in this section, it has been pointed out that the governments' decision to swiftly transfer the bodies of the Godhra victims to Ahmedabad and elsewhere and to allow public funerals was enough to inflame the passions. This act was compounded by the government's decisions to allow the February 28th bandh.

Section 3 also talks about the partisan role of the State Police and the important role of Sangh Parivar in suborning the administration to carry out its ideological and political agenda.

In its conclusion, the report observes that -

1. The events in Gujarat do not constitute a communal riot. Barring the tragic attack at Godhra on February 27th which was a communal riot, the bulk of the violence that followed was state-backed and one-sided violence against Muslims tantamount to a deliberate pogrom.
2. For the first time since 1969, the communal violence in Gujarat has assumed a comprehensive State-wide dimension. But unlike 1969, several new areas hitherto unaffected by communal tension (both in cities and in the state as a whole), including large swathes of the rural areas, have been affected by communal tension marked by attacks by the largely tribal people, often from neighbouring villages, on the Muslim minority.
3. The casualties have been very high. While the official estimate of deaths is below 900, unofficial estimates start at 2000 and go even higher. A

major reason for this underestimation is that the deaths in rural areas have not all been reported as entire settlements have been wiped out, with no one left to report the losses to the police, which, as shown above, has generally been reluctant to file FIRs even in the urban and semi-urban areas. In view of the Administration's attempt to minimise the violence claiming that it was under control within 72 hours, it would be interested in understating the actual extent of casualties.

4. Certain crucial aspects of the carrying out of the pogrom required systematic planning well in advance of the Godhra incident. The lists the rioters possessed and used must have been compiled over time. The targeting of Muslim homes, institutions, establishments and shrines was very precise and accurate. Even when there was only one Muslim shop or home in a congested Hindu-dominated area, it was attacked, ransacked and burnt. Businesses that had Hindu or non-Muslim names, were identified and targeted along with others in which Muslims were minority or sleeping partners. The mobs were huge, at times several thousand strong. They were brought in buses and trucks. Vehicles were also used to ferry thousands of LPG gas cylinders, which in turn were widely used as explosives to destroy property. There must have been official connivance to release such large quantities of LPG gas cylinders.. In the weeks before the outbreak, Ahmedabad was experiencing a widely reported shortage of such cylinders. Vehicles were also used to transport looted goods. The leaders of the mobs allegedly had mobile phones as well as water bottles, and regularly communicated with others, presumably also their political bosses.
5. It is a measure of the virtual breakdown of large areas of police functioning that intelligence reports of this Hindutva planning were either not compiled or ignored by higher ups. These types of preparations should not have gone unnoticed since, at the very least, hundreds must have been involved. Further, this mass movement of men, materials and vehicles could easily have been curbed by decisive police action, which would have led to a dramatic fall in casualties, rape and destruction of property. Virtually no preventive arrests were made, further emboldening the mobs. Later arrests reportedly had a disproportionate number of Muslims. In sharp contrast, in places like Kachch, Surat, Amreli, etc., where tough, decisive and extensive action was taken by the administration and police, the situation was kept under control. This would indicate that the breakdown of law and order in Ahmedabad, Vadodara and elsewhere was a consequence of the politicisation of the administration and police.
6. The suborning of large sections of the administration and police to permit, and in numerous cases to facilitate, the Hindutva agenda, was critical for the spread, intensity and persistence of the communal violence. As was the blind eye turned to the provocative propaganda by sections of the Gujarati media, Sangh Parivar affiliates notably the VHP, and at times by State functionaries themselves. The government statements immediately after Godhra virtually accusing the Ghanchis of Singal Faliya of acting as Pakistani ISI agents, and their decision to publicise the transporting of the charred bodies to Ahmedabad for public funeral, can only be seen as a cynical attempt to foment communal tension and hysteria essential for the attacks that inevitably followed. This was compounded by the State government's sanction and support for the VHP bandh and their instructions to the bureaucracy and police to minimise their intervention. Since then the government has systematically tried to cover up, minimise, and even justify, the extent

of violence, while protecting the guilty and those guilty of dereliction of duty. This is why the events of February-March 2002 can only be called a state-sponsored pogrom.

7. Instead of intervening and taking decisive action against the State government, the Central government has chosen to minimise the seriousness of what has happened, with senior Central government leaders early on alleging without proof, foreign involvement in Godhra. Without this sustained and consistent support, the Modi government could not have continued in power or have been emboldened to continue with its bloody, anti-constitutional and anti-national activities. Since the defence of the Constitutional order is its primary duty, the Union government itself has failed to fulfill its primary duties, and uphold its oath of office.
8. What has happened in Gujarat is not only a gruesome tragedy for that State, or a national tragedy as the Prime Minister keeps saying. It is much more than that. If those guilty, whether for the Godhra killings or for the carrying out and covering up of the state-sponsored pogrom are allowed to go unpunished, it will have severe consequences for the continuation of India as a secular, multi-cultural democracy. If minorities along with all those who disagree with Hindutva fanatics, (together the large majority of the people of India) can be attacked in this manner then a secular India cannot survive.

Having done a thorough investigation of the communal incidents in Gujarat and making certain observations based on that, the report finally makes the following recommendations so that the communal carnage is not repeated in Gujarat and the desired peace and tranquility could be restored there.

1. In view of the Constitutional breakdown, (in Gujarat patent in the concerted and systematic challenge mounted to the secular foundation of the polity; in the failure to protect the life, liberty and safety of a sitting high court judge belonging to the minority community; in the monumental break-down of law and order, in the very heart of the State, and elsewhere; and in the large scale looting, arson and killing to which the minority community was allowed to be subjected systematically) under the obligations enjoined on it under Article 355, the Union government should impose President's Rule under Article 356.
2. During President's Rule, stringent and extensive measures must be undertaken to depoliticise and decommunalise the bureaucracy and police at all levels. The impartial and efficient functioning of the Gujarat administration and police must be restored in accordance with the provisions and injunctions of the Constitution.
3. The K. G. Shah Commission of inquiry should be replaced by a Commission of inquiry headed by a sitting Supreme Court judge and including one or more sitting High Court judges, with more extensive terms of reference and constitution similar to that of the earlier Justice Jagmohan Reddy Inquiry Commission.
4. Special courts should be set up to try the guilty, including leading politicians. CBI inquiries be instituted against senior police officers and bureaucrats suspected of dereliction of duty.
5. Recommendations of the National Police Commission (1979-81) to establish the autonomy of the police and free it from undue political control should be accepted and implemented immediately.
6. Immediate measures for relief and rehabilitation. Peace committees

must be set up in all localities, including unaffected ones. These committees should be involved in creating a conducive atmosphere for the victims to return home, once their residences are reconstructed. Adequate compensation should be given for the reconstruction of commercial and industrial establishments. The necessary rules may be revised, and the Centre can give the necessary financial support. When this is not possible, peace committees in the area of relocation should be involved. All efforts must be made to prevent further ghettoisation of the Muslim community.

7. In view of the trauma, victims especially women and children have suffered, free medical, including psychiatric, care should be provided. As there has apparently been widespread rape including of girl children, special counselling by medical personnel as well as by social workers should be organised.
8. The role of sections of the media, particularly the Gujarati language press, should be investigated by the Press Council and deterrent and remedial action be taken.

Apart from the spectrum of investigation, what makes this report a complete document are a number of appendixes attached to it. These appendixes contain secret circular of Gujarat Police, a communally charged leaflet circulated in Kalol, Justice Ravani's submission to NHRC and a list of collateral damage in the communal violence.

GENOCIDE IN RURAL GUJARAT: THE EXPERIENCE OF DAHOD DISTRICT

A Report

By

Forum Against Oppression
of Women
and
Aawaaz-E-Hiswaan,
Mumbai

Bird's Eye View

This document is a comprehensive account of the communal violence unleashed in the whole of Gujarat, particularly in the rural Gujarat. The report has been compiled, written and edited jointly by members of Forum Against Oppression of Women and Aawaaz-E-Niswaan (both are women groups hailing from Mumbai) over three visits made to the district of Dahod - a small new district carved out of the Panchmahals, on the eastern end of the Gujarat State - from 23rd of April to 10th of May, 2002. The Report deals substantively with the violence that occurred in the rural areas of Dahod district, and in the Santrampur Taluka of Panchmahals district.

While there were many similarities between urban and rural violence, there were significant differences as well. Part of the reason, as mentioned in the report, to bring forth this report had been to look into the specifics of the violence in the rural areas of Gujarat.

All informations compiled in this report were collected through group and individual interviews, observations and tabulated informations on the size of local minority population and their property. And the report itself has been compiled using the interviews and observations of all teams during all three fact-finding trips.

Though primarily focusing on the rural areas of Dahod, the report is not a comprehensive document on all the villages and talukas of Dahod district. However, it does give details of representative areas in Dahod, and a substantive overview of the district.

This 32-page report talks about - i) the pattern of destruction in Dahod district; ii) situation of camps; iii) violence against women; and iv) compensations to the heirs of the 'missing'. Besides, it records, in detail, the sequence of events, their nature and the subsequent repercussions in Taluka like Fatehpura, Jhalod, Limkheda, Baria and villages like Sanjeli (Jhalod), Sukhsar (Fatehpura), Santrampur (Panchmahals Dist.).

In the end, the report lists the following demands and recommendations :-

- I. At one level is the actual and meticulous implementation of the various GRs that have been made. These include:
 - Ensuring payment of cash dole to all affected people;
 - Resurveying the low assessments and payments that have made to people when they have lost entire houses, shops and livelihoods. The Government has a low ceiling of Rs. 50,000/- in assessment of house damages. The vast majority of payments are well below this amount; some assessments and surveys have claimed the damages are as low as 5,000/- and 10,000/-. Even at a preliminary glance, it is easy to see that in the majority of cases, the damages are much higher than the ceiling. In light of the almost uniform and extensive damage of the houses and shops, a minimum of Rs. 50,000/- should be given to all the people whose houses and shops have been damaged.
 - Ensuring that everyone gets the compensation for deaths and injuries including the money that has to come in fixed deposits.
 - Ensuring that ration reaches camps and people and that all compensation and damages due to the people is reached to them without being subjected to further humiliation.
- II. At the second level is the need to critique the GRs and other Government measures and attempt to extend or even change them. This is especially important in light of the unprecedented and planned nature of the attacks and systematic violence perpetrated on the bodies, lives, livelihoods and property of the minority community. The losses have been immense, which is not even acknowledged by the measly figures the state government is talking about. This would include among other things:
 - Changing the GR to increase the ceiling for damage compensation to houses as well as shops.
 - Changing the Government policy on limited rations to camps as well as shutting down of camps. The State should in fact take complete responsibility for the running and maintenance of the camps in a humane manner. It is imperative that the appalling sanitary conditions be improved and better health care be provided in the camps. Adequate facilities to address the health needs of pregnant women and the trauma of all the camp residents, particularly women, must be provided.
 - The state should allocate land for people who want to shift from camps into safe localities of their choice and a special rehabilitation package for single women and female headed households.
 - Changing the Government policy regarding compensation to heirs of `missing' persons. The policy needs to be reviewed in light of the abnormal circumstances in which the people `went missing'.
- III. In particular looking at the situation of people in the rural areas, we have specific demands to make regarding the camps. Keeping the camps open until people have a safe place to go is the most urgent need. The situation is such that most people are extremely afraid to go back to their villages, and are actively and aggressively threatened by their non-Muslim neighbours when they do. There is also an extreme concern around the coming rains, and the fact that the vast majority of displaced people lack shelter or funds to rebuild their homes. Hence it is important that the camps be continued for the following reasons:
 - Safety for displaced people, many of whom face threat of severe

violence in their villages

- Making sure all available relief supplies reach all victims
- Time to plan a fair rehabilitation scheme for displaced people, including providing just government compensation for destroyed property
- Time to plan for people who do not fall under current rehabilitation schemes, especially widows, female headed households, and single women.

IV. We also believe that no rehabilitation is possible without the guilty being brought to book. Wherever the accused have been named the government needs to take necessary action and instill the confidence back in people to restart their lives. We condemn all measures of forcing compromises in the form of withdrawal of names of the accused. Instead we demand that:

- Proper FIRs be registered and action be taken immediately.
- Wherever possible searches be conducted to get back the goods that have been looted from people's houses.
- In view of the extraordinary circumstances under which the crimes against women were committed and evidence that state machinery was not accessible to the victims, there is a need to make the "normal" requirements of a legal process contingent on these factors.
- Wherever plots of land have been occupied illegally by the Hindu villagers, as in Piplod and other places, urgent and immediate action be taken to restore the land to the rightful owners.

V. At another level is recognising problems and issues that have not been acknowledged and to seek redressal for those:

- The nature of violence against women has taken unprecedented levels. Women and entire communities have been traumatized to such an extent that the entire impact of this has yet to be realised.
- Mental trauma as well as insecurity of an extreme form are issues that need to be dealt with.
- The deliberate communization of communities and politics of hate are likely to have both short and long term impacts on the social fabric. These impacts cannot be wished away and need to be recognised as issues that need work and strategizing.

VI. At the national level, it is necessary to deal with the forces of communalism and of the politics of hate. This needs to be done politically as well as by exposing the financiers and the beneficiaries of this hate-politics.

VII. The national legal mechanisms are very inadequate to deal with crimes at this level both because of the nature of state complicity in the crimes at every level and because there are no laws to deal with issues of genocide, sexual violence against women in these circumstances, and so on. There is urgent need for international agencies to intervene and help in the process of justice:

- To ensure impartial assessment of damages, we call on the Indian government to bring in the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and other UN agencies for various treaties that India is signatory to, for investigation and assessment.
- To legislate mechanisms for the implementation of the Genocide Convention, which India has both signed and ratified, and to use these mechanisms to prosecute and punish all those who participated in the planning and execution of murder, sexual violence, theft, and destruction in the state of Gujarat in the recent months.

"WE HAVE NO ORDERS TO SAVE YOU"

State Participation and Complicity in Communal Violence in Gujarat

A Report

By

Human Rights Watch
Asia Division

April 2002, Vol. 14, No. 3

Bird's Eye View

"They took young girls, raped them, cut them and then they burnt them."

- Samuda Bhen, Ahmedabad

"Some girls even threw themselves into the fire, so as not to get raped."

-Name withheld

"I washed the ladies' bodies before burial. Some bodies had heads missing, some were like coals - you would touch them and they would crumble. Some women's bodies had been split down the middle. I washed seventeen bodies on March 2, only one was intact. On March 3, fifteen more bodies came. Then I just threw water over them. I couldn't stand to be around them anymore."

- A woman who washed the bodies of female victims before burial.

The report is full of such testimonies. In fact what makes this report of Human Rights Watch different from others is the documentation of testimonies of victims and eye-witnesses recorded not only by it but also by other organisations and fact-finding missions. The report itself starts with the testimony of 38 year-old Mehboob Mansoori who lost eighteen family members in the massacre of Muslims in the neighbourhood of Gulmarg Society, Ahmedabad.

In its summary, which appears in the beginning itself, the report observes - "the attacks on Muslims are part of a concerted campaign of Hindu nationalist organisations to promote and exploit communal tensions to further the BJP's political rule - a movement that is supported at the local level by militant groups that operate with impunity and under the patronage of the state. The groups most directly responsible for violence against Muslims in Gujarat include the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal, the ruling BJP, and the umbrella organisation Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, all of whom collectively form the Sangh parivar (or "family" of Hindu nationalist groups). These organisations, although different in many respects, have all promoted the argument that because Hindus constitute the majority of Indians, India should be a Hindu state.

The summary further observes that " in almost all the incidents documented by Human Rights Watch, the police were directly implicated in the attacks. At best they were passive observers, and at worse they acted in concert with murderous mobs and participated directly in the burning and looting of Muslim shops and homes and the killing and mutilation of Muslims. In many cases, under the guise of offering assistance, the police led the victims directly into the hands of their killers. Many of the attacks on Muslim homes and places of business also took place in close proximity to police, fire brigades, and even ambulance services generally proved futile. Many witnesses testified that their calls either went unanswered or that they were met with responses such as : "we don't have any orders to save you"; "we can not help you, we have orders from above"; "if you wish to live in Hindustan, learn to protect yourself"; how come you are alive?" You should have died too"; "whose house is on fire? Hindu's or Muslims?"

Problems documented in this report include serious delays in government assistance reaching relief camps, inadequate state provision of medical and food supplies and sanitation facilities, and lack of access and protection for non-governmental organisation (NGO) relief workers seeking to assist the victims of violence.

However, this report is by no means a comprehensive account of the violence that began on February 27th. The report itself admits this : "Ahmedabad was only one of many cities affected. Reports from other areas indicate that the violence was statewide, affecting at least twenty-one cities and sixty-eight villages. Informations from these areas also suggest a consistent pattern in the methods used, undermining government assertions that these were "spontaneous communal riots". As one activist noted, "no riot lasts for three days without the active connivance of the state."

What makes this report different from other such reports is its documentation of the retaliatory attacks on Hindu along with the documentations of the genocide of Muslims. Chapter V of the report regarding retaliatory attacks on Hindus observes : "Hindus have also suffered greatly from the violence in Gujarat. In addition to the fifty-eight people killed during the torching of the Sabarmati Express in Godhra, over ten thousand Hindus have also been made homeless as a result of post-Godhra violence. Many also feared retaliatory attacks by Muslim communities promoted in some areas by false reports in the local language media or fear of being mistaken for Muslim by Hindu mobs.

The report further observes, "Human Rights Watch visited Mahajan No Vando, a fortified Hindu residential areas situated within the Muslim dominated area of Jamalpur on March 23. Mahajan No Vando was the site of a retaliatory attack by Muslims on March 1. According to residents, approximately twenty five people were injured in the attacks and at least five homes were completely destroyed. Residents closer to the periphery of the fortified compound and its entrance also suffered extensive property damage. Muslim residents attacked the compound from the higher Muslim-owned buildings that surrounded it using light bulbs filled with acid, petrol, and crude bombs, and bottles filled with kerosene and set some Hindu-owned houses on fire".

The report further observes that, "like many Muslim victims of the attacks, the Hindu residents of Mahajan No Vando were surprised at the overnight animosity of their neighbours".

This 68-page report has 9 chapters and 2 appendixes. While the chapters are variously entitled Summary, Recommendations, Massacres in Godhra and Ahmedabad, Overview of the attacks against Muslims, Retaliatory attacks on Hindus, The context of the violence in Gujarat, Impurity in the aftermath, Relief camps and rehabilitation and National Commissions, the appendixes contain National Human Rights Commission recommendations and pamphlet calling for Economic Boycott of Muslims.

The report contains a long list of recommendations. What is unique about the report is that different sets of recommendations have been made to different agencies. These agencies are - State Government of Gujarat, Government of India, India's donors and Trading partners, International lending institutions, international humanitarian organisations and United Nations agencies.

RIGHTS AND WRONGS

Ordeal by Fire in the Killing
Fields of Gujarat

Editors, Guild of India Fact
Finding Mission Report

By

Aakar Patel
Dileep Padgaonkar
B. G. Verghese

New Delhi, May 3, 2002

Bird's Eye View

This report prepared by the Editors Guild of India after visiting Gujarat, is in response to the blames and allegations made against the print and electronic media for aggravating tensions and inflaming passions by their graphic or sensational coverage. It was also in response to the divergent voices emanating from the media alleging impediments threats and attacks to thwart their independent and objective functioning. Accordingly a three-member team was constituted consisting of Dileep Padgonkar, Executive Managing Editor of The Times of India, Aakar Patel, Editor of Mid-Day, Mumbai and B. G. Verghese, Columnist. The team visited Gujarat between March 31 and April 6, 2002.

The team visited Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Anand, Godhra and Vadodara and met the Chief Minister and his senior officials as well as district officials, both civil and police, and the Railway Station Superintendent at Godhra. Besides, it met various people from all walks of life.

The report is well-documented as it touches almost all the aspects related with the role of media during the communal violence in Gujarat. It starts with the Freedom and Responsibility of the Media and ends up with the Media Codes and Ethics, in between covering topics like the Godhra Episode; the role of Sandesh, The Gujarat Samachar and other Gujarati papers; Meeting with Narendra Modi and criticism of the "Secular Media". The report also extensively probes the role played by TV and Radio Networks, Local Electronic/Cable Networks, Pamphlets and Handbills, Digital Media, and the Rumours. The attacks on the Media and media persons have also been thoroughly probed in the report.

Regarding the findings of the Guild team, the report observes -

There were certain inadequacies and lapses in general media coverage but the charge that the media was a major aggravating or even causative factor in the situation is specious and self-serving and must be dismissed.

The official information machinery of the State was clearly inadequate to the task and preferred to sing the praises of the Chief Minister rather than deliver timely and authentic information. Official attitudes encountered ranged from complacency to helplessness; but some officers were clearly uneasy at being disabled from doing their duty.

Gujarat was the first large scale "television and Cable riot" covered in real time. This poses delicate issues and difficult choices that merit discussion. The role of the digital communications, the mobile phones, SMS (smart mail service), E-mail, websites, autonomous computer generated handbills and posters, and the digital camera was pervasive, insidious and often dubious, being prone to misuse. This "new media" has introduced an altogether new dimension of global and person-to-person communications that must be carefully assessed. Censorship is not the answer; sobriety, training, professionalism and codes of conduct are necessary.

The report concludes - "our broad conclusion is that the national media and sections of the Gujarati media, barring some notable offenders, played an exemplary role in their coverage of Gujarat, despite certain lapses, many of them inadvertent or minor. There were, however, some notable offenders, especially Sandesh and Gujarati Samachar and certain local cable channels. Technology has introduced a new learning curve and there are lessons to be learnt, internalised and developed into codes of best practice. But the notion that the media should shy away from telling the country how it really is must be firmly rejected. The freedom of the media derives from the citizen's inherent right to expression and information. This freedom carries with it an equally great responsibility that must be honestly and honourably discharged.

However, the report also takes notice of the failure on the part of media to issue appeals for raising the relief funds for the victims of the carnage, unlike national disasters when hoards of appeals appear on the pages of newspapers and relief funds are even created by the newspapers themselves.

Finally, the report makes the following recommendations for the media -

1. The golden rule in all but the most exceptional cases would probably be to portray the facts honestly and completely while avoiding sensation, gory pictures and details, strong adjectives and provocative display. Narratives must be placed in context and balanced over time with other available material. Observance of such a code will clearly be more onerous for television, especially with regard to on-the-spot coverage with little or virtually no time for editing. Yet we do know that the national channels did hold back what they considered might be inappropriate footage.
2. Pictures can excite emotions and inflame passions. Repeated replay of footage of the burning train and the charred remains of the victims or other scenes of arson and violence is one of the problems of 24-hours news channels which may have to be differently addressed. At the same time, photographs can capture the essence of a tragedy and evoke far more compassion than words. Perhaps the most poignant image from Gujarat was not of the many dead, but of one living Indian, his face contorted with fear. It shamed and shocked ordinary people and, hopefully spurred many of them to think and act positively.
3. The Editor's Guild has initiated debate on existing codes and practices with a view to reviewing these and attempting to develop a new framework for guidance in the future. Other bodies like the Press Institute of India have been engaged in a similar exercise. Television, especially in relation to 24-hours news channels, is still a relatively young medium led by young professionals. Pressures are tremendous and instant decisions have to be taken.
4. Disagreements about facts and interpretation are best addressed by the right of reply, with appropriate expressions of regret, corrections and clarifications where necessary.

5. The media, jointly and severally, need to review what happened and what lessons there are for the future. Such introspection should be followed by consultations with political leaders, both government and opposition, administrators, police and security officials, and civic and community leaders. Such interaction would be most useful at both national and state levels. Consideration needs to be given alongside to developing norms for live coverage of riots by television and cable networks, naming of communities and such other matters by appropriate media associations. The Editors Guild of India could take an initiative in the matter.
6. Many so-called "leaders" of destructive movements and even known criminals have been built-up, even glorified, by the media howsoever inadvertently. There is need for collective reflection on this issue as publicity and image-building makes megalomaniacs and crackpots, often puny figures, appear larger than life and twice as important. Greater circumspection is required in interviewing them and inviting them to chat shows and panel discussions.
7. The mischievous role certain of Gujarati newspapers cannot be glossed over. Some of them have been named for irresponsible and unethical journalism in the past but have regrettably learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. Wilful incitement to offence, propagation of hate and fuelling disorder are criminal offences. We accordingly suggest that a high judicial officer be appointed by the Government to examine the writings of those sections of the media that are prima facie in flagrant violation of the law and recommend what action, if any, should be taken against them.
8. We further suggest that a similar inquiry be made into the handbills, pamphlets and other offensive material put into circulation, not always by unknown persons. The authorship of some of these has not merely been alleged but admitted.
9. We concur with the NHRC's recommendation that the "provocative statements made by persons to the electronic or print media should be examined and acted upon, and the burden of proof shifted to such persons to explain or contradict their statements". Charlatans of every brand must know that they cannot misuse the media with impunity and get away with it.
10. Official information systems, certainly in Gujarat, need immediate overhaul. Sycophancy and propaganda do not constitute information. They destroy credibility. There is an obligation on the part of the State to enable the media to play its true role. It is in its own highest interest to do so. The media has a constructively adversarial role vis-a-vis the State; but in this information age it is in a sense part of the larger universe of governance.

THE SURVIVORS

SPEAK

How has the Gujarat
Massacre Affected Minority
Women?

Fact Finding by

A women's panel

- Syda Hameed
- Ruth Manorama
- Malini Ghose
- Sheba George
- Farah Naqvi
- Mari Thekaekara

Sponsored by

Citizen's Initiative,
Ahmedabad

April 16, 2002

Bird's Eye View

"I heard girls screaming. I saw a naked girl running with 25 men chasing her. The sweet shop owner was distributing sweets to the rioters. The police fired on the Muslims rather than the mob."

- Saira Bano, Hussain Nagar, Naroda Patia

"The mob started chasing us with burning tyres after we were forced to leave Gangotri society. It was then that they raped many girls. We saw about 8-10 rapes. We saw them strip 16-year old Mehrunissa. They were stripping themselves and beckoning to the girls. Then they raped them right there on the road. We saw a girl's vagina being slit open. Then they were burnt. Now there is no evidence".

- Kulsum Bibi, Shah-e-Alam Camp

"But what they did to my sister-in-law's sister Kausar Bano was horrific and heinous. She was a month's pregnant. They cut open her belly, took out her foetus with a sword and threw it into a blazing fire. Then they burnt her as well."

- Saira Banu, Shah-e-Alam Camp

Such barbaric accounts of the wicked deeds of Bajrang Dal and VHP members and followers are in plenty in this report. The report has focused mainly on the plight of the women and teenage girls belonging to the minority community during the communal frenzy unleashed in Gujarat. The findings of the report are based on the first-hand accounts of those women who themselves have been the victims of the violence or were the witness to it.

The report is the outcome of five-days' labour undertaken by a six-member team of women from Delhi, Bangalore, Tamil Nadu and Ahmedabad. The team visited Gujarat from March 27 to 31, 2002. The objective was to determine the nature and extent of the crimes against women; find evidence of the role played by the police and other state institutions in protecting women; determine 'new elements' in the current spate of violence that distinguish it from previous rounds of communal violence in Gujarat; determine the role of organisations like the VHP and Bajrang Dal in both - the build-up to the current carnage as well as in actually unleashing the violence.

The team visited seven relief camps in both rural and urban areas and spoke to a large number of women survivors. Ensuring that women's voices are heard was a matter of priority for the entire team. The team also spoke to intellectuals, activists, members of the media, administration and leader from the BJP, including its MLA Maya Kodnani.

This 60-page report has five sections and 2-annexures. While five sections cover topics like sexual violence against women, women's experiences of the state, ghettoisation, peace committees and violations of International instruments, annexures have the full text of the recorded testimonies of women subjected to sexual violence. The annexures also contain detailed text of the meetings with BJP MLA from Naroda Patia Maya Kodnani, Sarpanch Nathibehn of Laxmipura village, Sabarkantha and Sarpanch Keshubhai Patel of Chithroda village.

While touring the affected areas to gather the facts, the members of the team were so much shaken and numbed by the scale and brutality of the violence that they registered their feelings in the very beginning of the report - *"despite reading news reports, we were unprepared for what*

we saw and heard; for fear in the eyes and anguish in the words of ordinary women whose basic human right to life of dignity has been snatched away from them.

Findings: The report observes that "while nothing can justify or rationalise inhuman acts such as the burning of the bogie near Godhra railway station, it is clear that the intelligence of the State Government failed in its responsibility to forewarn. Not only that, its aforesaid failure enabled communal elements to take hold of the state. Our findings reveal that the post-Godhra carnage did not happen as a spontaneous reaction to burning one bogie of the Sabarmati Express but that it was a calculated response, the culmination of a hate campaign carried on for more than a decade to promote the Hindutva ideology." The report lists the following main findings:-

- The pattern of violence does not indicate "spontaneous" action. There was pre-planning, organisation, and precision in the targeting.
- There is compelling evidence of sexual violence against women. These crimes against women have been grossly underreported and the exact extent of these crimes - in rural and urban areas - demands further investigation. Among the women surviving in relief camps, are many who have suffered the most bestial forms of sexual violence -- including rape, gang rape, mass rape, stripping, insertion of objects into their body, stripping, molestation. A majority of rape victims have been burnt alive.
- There is evidence of State and Police complicity in perpetuating crimes against women. No effort was made to protect women. No Mahila Police was deployed. State and Police complicity in these crimes is continuing, as women survivors continue to be denied the right to file-FIRs. There is no existing institutional mechanism in Gujarat through which women can seek justice.
- The impact on women has been physical, economic and psychological. On all three fronts there is no evidence of State efforts to help them.
- The state of the relief camps, as mothers struggle to keep their children alive in the most appalling physical conditions, is indicative of the continued abdication of the State's responsibilities.
- Rural women have been affected by communal violence on this scale for the first time. There is a need for further investigation into the role played by particular castes/communities in rural Gujarat in unleashing violence.
- There is evidence that the current carnage was preceded by an escalation of tension and build-up by the VHP and the Bajrang Dal.
- There is an alarming trend towards ghettoisation of the Muslim community in rural areas for the first time.
- Sections of the Gujarati vernacular press played a dangerous and criminal role in promoting the violence, particularly in provoking sexual violence against women.

Recommendations: The report has made general recommendations as well as those pertaining to women, police and UN conventions. The recommendations pertaining to women have been given below -

- The issue of sexual violence is grossly under reported, especially in rural areas. Testimonies from all the affected areas need to be recorded on an urgent basis to understand the nature and extent of crimes committed against women. This task must be done immediately as

many of the victims may soon start leaving the camps.

- FIRs need to be lodged immediately. A special task force, comprised of people from outside Gujarat, to be set up immediately for taking cognizance of the context in which sexual violence has taken place and commence the task of filing FIRs. It should first examine the status of the existing FIRs. The task force should consist of people with legal expertise, women police personnel, women's rights activists, and women leaders from the Muslim community and be headed by a senior woman IAS officer. A time limit should be set within which justice will be dispensed for cases of sexual violence.
- For cases of rape, medical examinations should not be treated as the basic evidence. Given the testimonies that many women were fleeing for several days and did not have access to medical facilities, medical examinations should not be asked for at all.
- The extra-ordinary circumstances under which crimes against women have been committed, and the evidence that the State machinery was not accessible to victims in terms of seeking justice, there is a need to make the 'normal', technical requirements of a legal process contingent upon these factors. In cases where women are unable to lodge FIRs, their testimonies alone should be treated as the basis for further legal action.
- Counselling to be provided immediately, even before registering the cases so that the women are able to give essential information, which they have difficulty speaking about. People with expertise in trauma counselling need to be identified and assigned to this task.
- Women's rights activists be allowed to work freely among the survivors and police protection to be provided to them. Their harassers to be charged and brought to book.
- It is imperative that the appalling sanitary conditions be improved and better health care be provided in the camps. Adequate facilities to address the health needs of pregnant women and the trauma of all the camp residents, particularly women, must be provided.
- A comprehensive rehabilitation policy for rape victims and for their families (where the women are dead) needs to be announced urgently.
- Given the Government's negligence and the negligence of the national commission for Women to make itself available (until the writing of this report), the UN Special Rapporteur of Violence Against Women should be called in for investigation and assessment.
- Immediate assessment of the number of female-headed households and a rehabilitation package for livelihoods to be prepared by a panel of experts drawn from appropriate disciplines, with adequate support from the Government. Special provisions to be made for orphans and children of widows.
- In all the relief works, rehabilitation should be treated as a separate issue and not be confused with relief and immediate cash compensation.
- Evaluate the Government's proposal to set-up Peace Committees. In a situation where the Government lies discredited and implicated in the violence it is hardly likely that they would be in a position to undertake confidence-building measures.

WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

PUCL - Vadodara Shanti
Abhiyan

Vadodara

February 27- March 26, 2002

Bird's Eye View

This is an interim report about women's experiences and perspectives related to the communal violence following the Godhra incident. It has the recorded testimonies of the women who have suffered during the riots in Vadodara. The report has been put together after intensive and repeated visits to the affected bastis, camps run by the Jamaats and discussions with a wide spectrum of women.

The report records that - "the wide range of data collected reveals that the post-Godhra carnage has affected most women living in Vadodara in some way or the other. Lives of minority women have, of course, changed drastically. However, women from all communities are also affected by the reign of fear and the terror promoted by the State and the Police. The Hindu women are caught in a fear psychosis that the 'other' will attack. A lot of this has to do with the rumours that are being systematically spread through various pamphlets and booklets. Livelihoods of all poor, working class women have been affected. The situation in the minority households is far more serious and hunger has become an acute problem because minority men too can not go out to work. The deep sense of betrayal that women feel by neighbours and children 'who grew up in front of my eyes' is seen across all classes.

The report further observes that the unnatural and abnormal situation has also brought out leadership qualities in many women. These women have responded with tremendous courage and against great personal odds to protect their neighbours, their menfolk, or others in vulnerable and sensitive areas of the city. Affected women have been leading others to protest against police atrocities on themselves as well as their arrested under-age sons.

The report also mentions about the positive aspect i.e. the politicisation of many women as a result of the riots. It notes that one section of women seems to have resolved that they have to speak out against the State sponsored genocide that they see happening around them. At the same time, report notes, another section of women became more fundamentalist and rightist.

CARNAGE IN GUJARAT - A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

A Report

By

Medico Friend Circle

11, Archana Apartment,
163, Sholapur Road,
Hadapsar, Pune - 411208

Bird's Eye View

This report is the result of a thorough investigation undertaken by *Medico Friend Circle (MFC)*, an organisation of committed medical professionals looking on health issues. Three of the Medico Friend Circle team members were medical professionals while others were health researchers or health activists.

The motive for bringing out this report has been mentioned in the introductory part of the report. It states - *"several fact finding teams went in and reported on the failure of state agencies to prevent violence. They also documented the complicity of various state agencies in perpetuating the communal blood-letting. However, there was very little information about how the health profession had responded. Disturbing news about the outbreak of epidemics in the camps, and descriptions of the appalling living conditions there, suggested that not enough had been done to provide relief to those who were forced to seek refuge. Hence, as an organisation working on health issues, Medico Friend Circle felt the need to investigate the adequacy of medical relief efforts by the public health system."*

"In the current situation, where there is a deep threat to secular and democratic values, the medical profession must reflect on its own role. It must defend itself from external pressures, and also fortify itself from within. It must ensure that it upholds the humanitarian traditions of the healing profession and desist from becoming an accomplice to human rights violations."

It was against this background that MFC decided to conduct an investigation into the health impact of the unrelenting and horrific violence in Gujarat, and the role played by the public health system."

The report says that the investigation was an attempt to document the experience of survivors as well as health practitioners. The report mentions following specific objectives behind the investigation -

1. To assess health conditions in the relief camps, and the health care needs of the inmates;
2. To look into specific health care needs of women in the camps, including women who have faced sexual assault;
3. To assess the health care services available to camp inmates, with a focus on the public health system, while documenting the contribution of the voluntary sector;
4. To review the response of public hospitals to health care needs emerging from the communal violence;
5. To examine the impact of the communal atmosphere on members of the medical profession, in terms of their attitudes, their involvement in violence and the response of professional associations;
6. To document attacks and pressures on the medical profession in the current context;
7. To review the adequacy of medico-legal assessments of violence victims, for their efforts to secure justice; and
8. To review the larger role of the state in ensuring safety and support (to hospitals and relief camps), rehabilitative measures and policy initiatives relevant to the crisis situation.

The methodology adopted for the purpose of investigation was that the teams of two or three persons including at least one doctor were formed.

These teams visited relief camps, hospitals and riot affected areas.

The report describes, in detail, various aspects of health and hygiene prevailing in the relief camps, public health issues, role of public health agencies, health problem specific to women, mental health issues, health care needs of the survivors of sexual assault, adequacy and regularity of medical staff, voluntary response to the health care needs of camp inmates and medico-legal issues.

Towards the end, the report makes the following observation -

"The team's investigation and analysis has strengthened its conviction that no comprehensive public health effort or rehabilitation in Gujarat today will be complete without addressing the issue of justice."

The report concludes with the following demands and recommendations -

- At no cost should the relief camps be disbanded without proper rehabilitation of the survivors.
- *An independent health commission should be constituted to investigate into the health conditions in the camps, assess rehabilitation needs, probe issues related to survivors of sexual assault, evaluate the response of the state health services to the violence and its aftermath and the impact on health professionals, and examine medico-legal issues emerging from the carnage. The MFC team's investigation was an exploratory effort carried out within many limitations; a comprehensive investigation is essential.*

Camps

- Living conditions and water and sanitation facilities in the camps must be improved. Pregnant and lactating women, infants and young children must be provided special nutrition.
- Camps must be protected by an impartial security force. This force must also support volunteer camp organisers for transporting patients who need referral services or emergency care.
- Health services must be strengthened with resident health facilities, since movement is severely restricted by curfew as well as the threat of violence. Referral facilities are needed as well as specialised services for gynaecology, mental health, physiotherapy , etc. Camp volunteers must be given training inputs, as they have been providing both physical and emotional support to camp inmates.

Health Services

- Better infrastructure is needed for medical facilities. This includes more time to be spent by the health teams in the camps; better drug supplies; transport facilities for patients; improved surveillance and screening and security to medical personnel.
- The health personnel must be reoriented to mental health issues, and to the specific health needs of women, including gynaecology and obstetric care.
- State authorities must acknowledge the clear evidence of large-scale psychological trauma, which is distinct from that which may result from a natural disaster. However, counselling and emotional support to survivors, can be effective only if justice is also sought for the crimes committed against them.
- There is a need to reinstate the sanctity of health care services as inviolable humanitarian agencies. Attacks against health services must be publicly condemned, and the attackers must be given exemplary

punishment.

- Security of patients as well as hospital staff within, around and during transit to the hospitals must be ensured. A vigilance committee should be appointed for each hospital with representatives from all sections of civil society, which would monitor security mechanisms and provide support to the hospitals to function in a non-partisan manner.
- The health authorities must explain why medical examinations were not conducted of women who approached hospitals in conditions where sexual assault would be very likely.
- Medical care should be provided to the survivors of sexual assault.

Medical Ethics

- The Medical Council of India must take heed of the blatant violation of ethics and human rights by doctors who participate in violence (ref. Article 6.6; MCI notification of April 6, 2002, the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) regulations, 2002).
- The Medical Council of India should de-recognise all doctors whose involvement in inciting or participating in violence has been proved.
- Communal attitudes within the profession and its associations are not in consonance with medical ethics (ref. Declaration; MCI notification of April 6, 2002, the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) regulations, 2002).
- Professional associations such as the Indian Medical Association must condemn attacks on all doctors, regardless of their social background. There is an urgent need to draw up ethical guidelines for medical professionals working in communal situations.
- The medical profession must not only provide treatment; it has an ethical responsibility to systematically and completely document medical evidence. (ref. Article 1.3. MCI notification of April 6, 2002, the Indian Medical Council (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) regulations, 2002).

Medico-Legal Issues

Post-mortems : The National Human Rights Commission protocol for conducting autopsies should be followed. Dying declarations must be recorded in case of all seriously injured patients. Post-mortems must be audited, with sample post-mortem reports reviewed by a team of independent experts. The police should preserve all unclaimed bodies for 72 hours under appropriate conditions.

Survivors of sexual assault : There is an urgent need to systematically record details of sexual atrocities. The testimony of relatives or eyewitnesses (if the victim was burnt to death) or the testimony of the survivors (where there was a delay in reporting forced by circumstances) should be given paramount importance in judging the case, keeping in view the context.

Rehabilitation

- Compensation should be decided by an independent committee, taking into account not only loss of property, but also the trauma suffered by victims.
- The state should allocate land to people who want to shift from camps into safe localities of their choice. As long as people do not want to relocate, they should be allowed to remain in the camps. For single

women, the state should provide separate housing if need be, as was done after the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, where single women got free flats. Telephone connections with a help-line should be made available to disabled persons to improve communications between the community and the external world and ensure security, trust building and referrals.

- Shelter and livelihood must include various efforts to restore livelihood to people who have been dislocated by the violence. Livelihood programmes should be designed, keeping in account the concerns and capacities of the affected community, and should facilitate the transition from relief to rehabilitation.

Justice

- To ensure complete safety of the people who want to return to their houses and localities, the state must act to effectively control and inhibit mob or individual attacks. Peace and security must be restored in these localities, and anyone instigating violence must be given exemplary punishment. Failing this approach, there will be no real deterrent to violence, and no real rehabilitation.

THE NEXT GENERATION : IN THE WAKE OF THE GENOCIDE

A report on the impact of the Gujarat pogrom on children and the young

By an independent team of citizens comprising :

Kavita Panjabi
Krishna Bandopadhyay
Bolan Gangopadhyay

Supported by: Citizen's Initiative, Ahmedabad

Bird's Eye View

"I used to live with my mother Amina Bibi and these two brothers, when the tola arrived in our village, my brothers were not there. My mother had 60 rupees with her. When the tola of 30-40 men attacked us, she stuffed the 60 rupees into my hand and pushed me to run. I ran. But then I saw the men get hold of the women and I could not make myself run any more.... I hid myself..... then.... then they stripped my mother naked...."

- Saddam Hussain, 8 years old

"All of a sudden they surrounded us. We were a little ahead of the elders. Smelling danger we all started to run.we ran and hid behind a bush.The mob caught hold of my mother Khatuna Bibi, my cousin Akbar Khan, his pregnant wife Rehana Bibi, his brother Yusuf Khan (15), sister Zeben Bibi and other cousins, stripped every man, woman and child and started beating them mercilessly. They raped all the women and beat up the men. They were being forced to say "Jai Sia Ram", but when they refused and started to run, they were caught and cut up with darias and talwars. When they tried to rape my mother, one of my brothers tried to save her. He was instantly killed with a sword....Then one by one they killed all ten members of our family, cut them up and burnt them near the canal after noon. We were like dead bodies hiding in the Shamshan"

- Mustafa Khan, 10 years old

These are some of the most moving accounts of the carnage seen through the innocent eyes. How the experiences of the carnage traumatised the innocent minds has been quoted in the beginning of the report - *"In Gujarat hundreds of children now look at you with blank eyes and "delightful" smiles frozen on their faces. The only time they express themselves is in the dread of night when they wake up screaming in terror. The violence they have experienced is unspeakable, ruthless in cruelty. What meaning will they find in the savage present that we have bequeathed to them - if they regain the capacity to do so- and how will they in turn, shape it?"*

This report is about the ways in which children and young have been affected by the carnage unleashed in Gujarat since February 27th 2002. It also addresses the systematic build up to the genocide as well as the possible long term outcome of the cumulative impact. The report is the outcome of the assessment carried out by an autonomous citizens team of three women from Calcutta. From May 3rd to 11th May 2002, the team went across both urban and rural areas of Gujarat.

The objective of this 70-page report was to assess the immediate and long term impact of

- The trauma, the children have been subject to.
- The arrests and custodial torture of minority children and youth.
- The effect of the continuing violence on the education of students.
- The implication of the large scale displacements for them.
- Children's perceptions of the role played by the state and the political parties, like the Bajrang Dal and the VHP, in the genocide.
- The changes in children's perceptions of the other community and the role of both neighbours and "outsiders" from the other community.
- The resources available (or lack thereof) for orphans and children of families now headed by women as a result of the carnage.
- The role of the state departments, ministers and government in tackling the large scale and devastating impact of this violence on children's life.

The report also has 8 Appendixes attached to it containing the text of the interview with Anandiben Patel, Education Minister, Gujarat; account of the difference between the majority community camp and the minority community camps and the testimonies of the girls raped and burnt.

Other Publications on Gujarat Carnage

1. 'Maaro ! Kaapo ! Baalo ! - State, Society and Communalism in Gujarat
Published by -
People's Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi, May 2002
Available at -
Sharmila Purkayastha
Flat No. 5, Miranda House Staff Quarters, Chhatra Marg, Delhi University, Delhi 110 007
Suggested Contribution : Rs. 10
2. The Genocidal Pogrom in Gujarat - Anatomy of Indian Fascism
An Inquilabi Communist Sangathan Publication , Published by -
Rohit Prajapati
101, Shri Krishna Apartment No. 2, Kothi, Vadodara 390 001
Suggested Contribution : Rs. 100
3. At The Receiving End - Women's Experiences of Violence in Vadodara
Published by -
People's Union for Civil Liberties, Vadodara and Vadodara Shanti Abhiyan, May 31, 2002
Suggested Contribution : Rs. 20

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- GUJARAT CARNAGE 2002
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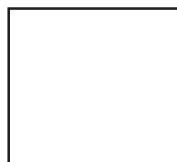
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