

CHAPTER 4

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1. WADI-PANIGATE

Wadi is near Panigate in the old city area of Vadodara. The area is congested and has numerous *mohallas* and *bastis*.

1.1 Madarmohalla Basti, behind Ajabadi Mills

Date of incident: 1 March 2002

The area

This is an old *basti* of some 200 houses where people have been staying for the past 20-30 years. Most of the people are daily wage earners. A fact-finding team of members of women's organisations from Mumbai and Delhi visited the area on 22nd March. The following account is based on their report.

Details of the incident / Role of the police

On 1st March, a big mob entered the area and burnt down 5 Muslim houses near the *kabrastan*. According to the residents, there were Bajrang Dal people in the mob.

This was followed by an attack by the police, who were ostensibly searching for those behind the trouble, but ruthlessly targeted the Muslims. They systematically dragged out men from their houses while families were sitting down to dinner or watching television.

The team met 17-year-old Deewan Samina and her mother. Samina ran after the police onto the street when she saw her father being dragged away along with the other *basti* people. In the commotion that followed, teargas shells were exploded to disperse the people. The police forcibly arrested some people. Deewan was badly injured on her earlobe by shrapnel from a shell, causing her to faint. She was hospitalised for 13 days, had been vomiting blood, and was still on medication three weeks later. When the team met her, she was still in shock and unable to speak.

Other people related how the police went on a rampage, breaking down houses and everything that came in their way. Children were terrified and hid in all kinds of places, but the police pulled them out while terrorising all the residents. 42 *basti* dwellers were arrested that night, taken to the Panigate police station and detained for 13 days. The police continued to come to the area for days after the incident, threatening and intimidating the people further.

Effects on people's lives

When the team met the people on 22nd March, they still seemed terrified. People continued to remain confined to the *basti*. Fear of further violence was writ large on every face, young and old. Hazra Bibi (23 years) displayed burn scars on her hands and neck caused by the bursting of a teargas shell. 30 year-old Ismailbhai Mohammed Bhai Mansuri (30 years) had three fractures on his right hand where he was beaten with a baton. He has no hope of going back to his welding shop, where he used to earn Rs. 3000/- per month. He does not know whether his fractures will heal properly.

Almost all those affected were daily wagers who have stopped working since 1st March, and have no idea when they can resume work or whether they will be able to find any work at all. Children have missed their exams and have not attended school ever since the incident.

1.2 Panigate Gaurav Society, Panchayat Quarter ke Saamne, Bade Masdada ki Chaali

Date of incident: 28 February 2002

The following information was gathered by the women's team from people staying in a camp that was set up by the local people to house the affected persons. There were around 200 people in the camp, which faced an acute shortage of relief supplies. Residents of the camp had lost all their belongings. Their houses were burned down in the communal riots in 1990. They had rebuilt everything from scratch and were barely managing to eke out an existence, when the same thing happened again on 1st March.

Details of the incident

The *basti* was attacked on 28th night by a big mob of some 500 to 1000 people. There were police jeeps accompanying the mob. The attackers came armed with *talwaars* and other weapons. When the police were approached they said, "Save yourselves, we cannot save you." There were policewomen present too. The people fled, leaving behind everything they owned. Their stuff was first looted and then their houses were burned to the ground. The police also hit them. Some people sustained injuries, including two people with serious head injuries for which they had to be hospitalised. They took shelter in a nearby *dargah*, witness to the all-night burning of their houses and belongings. Whenever they attempted to go to the burnt and discarded structures that were once their homes, they were pelted with stones, abused and warned not to come back.

Twenty-five people have been named in the FIR.

Effect on people's lives

What the refugees felt most terrible about is that, after living in the *basti* for 40 years, they were attacked by the very Hindus with whom they had been sharing their lives, eating together and visiting each other. Ganibhai Qureshi said, '*Hamare saath salon se khane waale bhi hame bhagaye us din. Aaj hamara aur kisi par bharosa nahin. Saara bharosa toot gaya hai.*'

Asha Maayuri Sheikh, whose husband is a *laariwala*, has 3 daughters. She wonders whether suicide is not better than dying bit by bit each day like this. She had left her job in plastic factory years earlier when in the midst of similar communal violence she had cut her hand badly and stopped working. Her youngest child Seema, who is barely four, keeps asking for her school bag that got burnt along with the house. Asha Maayuri showed the team the burnt structure that had been her house, with the charred iron almirah in which she had tied all her valuables in small bundles – also completely charred now - before fleeing. She continues to keep the house locked in the hope of returning some day.

Many other women, who had worked as domestic labour or as cooks for wedding feasts, earning around Rs. 50 a day, are without work. Almost all the residents are daily wagers working for paltry wages in plastic or embroidery, plying rickshaws or hired auto-rickshaws. They said there was no money even for tea to kill their hunger.

Role of the police

When the *basti* was first attacked police, who not only refused to protect the residents, but also beat them, accompanied the mob. Even as the team was at the camp, they saw a young well-dressed man with a briefcase desperately running from the police, who were chasing him because of the curfew, even as Hindu boys were moving around freely on scooters. An elderly man came stumbling into the lane bent over double with pain because the police had stuck a rifle into his abdomen.

1.3 Wadi Taiwada

Date of incidents: 15 March- 30 April 2002

Background to the area and incidents

This is a very old and prominent area of the walled city, which has a majority of Muslim households, but also quite a few Hindu families. It has always been prone to communal violence. Police points had been set up during *Ramzaan* in December 2001 and have been there since then, indicating the sensitive nature of the area. There had been small incidents since December and Muslim residents felt things were not going well. The Godhra incident provided the final blow. Sherbano, a member of Sahiyar (a Vadodara women's organisation) described the tremendous stress she and her neighbours had undergone trying to maintain peace after the Godhra incident. After 28th February they formed peace committees to convince residents of the area not to be provoked by the events taking place. Although there are quite a few Hindu households in the area, there were no serious problems between Hindus and Muslims during the worst phase of violence on 28th February and 1st March. Most of the problems they encountered were with the police, who constantly harassed the Muslim community, often very provocatively. The area was affected in the second phase of violence, starting 15th March. It was also severely affected in the third round of violence in Vadodara. On 30th April, two residents were killed by the police when they were on a night vigil outside one of the houses in the area. The police tried to justify the firing by manufacturing a scene of rioting. Women were subject to physical assault by the police under the pretext of 'combing'.

On 2nd March George Fernandes visited the area. Sherbano along with her husband and eight others had planned to give an appeal to the Defence Minister, urging him to visit the worst affected areas. They waved at the car but Mr Fernandes did not look their way and the convoy sped by. They were then roughed up by the police. Sherbano

was hit on her hips and legs. "Any effort to get the attention of those in power even by risking our own lives only invites more police repression," she said. "The language used by the police was so sexually abusive. It is so humiliating. Anger fills us."

Details of incidents

15 March 2002

On 15th March, the Muslims had finished their *namaaz* prayer early and everyone was on the alert and trying to maintain calm. From 2.00 p.m. onwards the situation was tense. The Muslims were repeatedly warned by the police to stay indoors, but Hindu boys were allowed to roam freely. The *aarti* in the temple that day was very aggressive and provocative.

Early in the evening the streetlights suddenly went out. Acid was thrown at the house of Kalubhai, whose family was out at the time, and its door was set on fire. The house was right next to the Gajrawadi Police Chowk, and the *masjid* was there too. The police sitting there said they could not do anything, and calls to the DCP office also brought no help. The residents themselves doused the fire, in the presence of the police. The people felt that the attack was an attempt to provoke further violence, but the women controlled the situation and asked everyone to stay indoors.

That night, around 7.30 p.m., Saiyyad Photo Studio was completely burned down. The owner, Saiyyad Masood, lives with his wife and two children in a large joint family. Masood had invested all his resources in the studio, which he set up 7 years ago. He has lost equipment and goods worth Rs.1.5 lakh. As Saiyyad Masood described it: "There was commotion outside and we kept indoors. It was around 7.30 p.m. and we were watching TV. We heard firing. We went out and saw our studio on the corner in flames. We were too shocked and terrified to step out. The police point was right next to the studio, and so was a temple. If they had wanted to, they could have prevented it. Undoubtedly the police have abetted it. If we had stepped out, we would have been killed that night. We helplessly had to watch all of it go up in flames. We rang up the police several times, even giving Hindu names because they just were not responding to any Muslims on the phone that night. They said on the phone that they were taking orders from only one side that night. Local Bajrang Dal people were certainly involved, with help from the police and outsiders. We saw elders from their houses cheering and urging the younger people to carry on with the violence and not to fear anyone." The ACP came and changed the police personnel on duty. Saiyyad Masood took photographs of his studio from various angles and hopes to be compensated somehow. The family named Sandip Bhonse, Mukesh D. Sirsagar, Hitesh R. Dhomse, and Bharatesh Desai of the RSS.

Police combing operations

That night, the police began combing operations. One reason for this seems to have been a rumour that the Swaminarayan *Mandir* in the area was going to be attacked by Muslims; a senior police official was reportedly at the Swaminarayan *Mandir* on the 15th. Shamsuddin Navsariwala said that he heard him telling the police force to round up Muslims. At 10.30 p.m., 15-20 policemen, all in plainclothes and wearing helmets, arrived in the Taiwada area. They were led by PI Kanani of the DCB. While the police version is that they came on a tip-off about stone-throwing in the area, residents claimed that there was stoning in a neighbouring area but not in Taiwada. They said that the combing took place in Taiwada when the police should have been deployed in nearby Rangmahal, where a *masjid* and Muslim homes were burnt.

In the words of Shabir Khan: "On 15th March the police came, thinking that firing was going on from our house. We were sleeping. They broke open our door and took us out. They used unspeakable *gaalis* and eyed our women with *huri nazar*. I told them that we were businessmen, we don't participate in this sort of thing. Twelve men came in, six on one side and six on the other and said, 'If you lift your hands or cry out we will hit you again.' Obviously I cried out when I felt the *danda* on my back and they hit me again. They damaged the furniture in our house. They took all three of us brothers and hit us. A Police Officer looked my wife up and down. God forbid, even if he'd done something to her, I was in no position to do anything to protect her. I requested him to leave at least one of us brothers. He said, 'No, we'll burn you all alive'. In the lock-up the police said the same thing: 'We will burn you Muslims alive'. We were given neither food nor water in the lock-up. I heard them fabricating a case against us - a case of murder when no murder had taken place and no weapons had been found on us. A hammer was taken away from my home as a weapon. In the Central Jail where I was for seven days, there were 25 Muslims for every 5 Hindus. The Hindus in the jail with me were Bhois. One was caught with an *astra* (blade), another with a *gupti* and another with a *khanjar*. One of them admitted to me in the jail, 'We'll be released and we'll collect our *saadhan* from the police station. *Hamara to yeh sab chalta hai*.' These were their words. I suspect that among the people who attacked our house, there were some policemen in plainclothes. The others were from outside. I recognised

the policemen because I live opposite the DCB office.”

Combing operations were arbitrary and brutal, and women were targeted for highly abusive treatment. The team met a number of women who had suffered in the police action.

Hamida Banu Ibrahim Sheikh (40) had her right hand in plaster. Four fingers were broken by the police. She is the sole earner in the family with her husband ill and with cataract in both eyes. She has a single son. She barely makes Rs. 300-500 per month from making kites. She used to make a bit more of money during Uttarayan, the kite-flying festival.

On 15th night Hamida Banu stepped out to go to the toilet, which is right behind her house. There were around 15 policemen along with PI Kanani. “They asked me where I was going. I told them. They would not believe me and started abusing me. I simply asked them ‘why are you doing that’ and I got beaten badly. Had I said anything provocative, I would not have minded being beaten, but I only asked them why they were abusing me and they hit me so badly.” She had four fractures on her right hand, for which she underwent four operations at SSG Hospital. Because of the injury to her hand, Hamida Banu did not know whether she would be able to make kites again and who would fend for her family. She said, “The police have no right to lift a hand on women. They should not be allowed to get away with this. Whatever happened to me happened, but other women should not ever suffer this. If anyone has erred they should be punished but without any reason, the police should not abuse them. The police case has been registered in SSG Hospital but no action has been taken in the last two weeks. The police have not come around to take any statement. “

Besides Hamida Banu, 13 women were similarly injured in police attacks that night in this area, all requiring medical attention. 19 year-old Zarina had delivered hardly a month earlier. The police smashed open the house door and it fell on her back. They smashed her foot with the butt of a gun. Zarina has three small children. She pleaded with the police not to take away her husband. They hit her on the back. They took away her husband after beating him up.

Halima Bibi, who lives opposite the *mandir*, said, “They hit my son-in-law a lot, upturned all the grain containers (*atta* and rice) in the house, did a lot of *nuksaan*. They stepped on the 6-month old baby. The baby was crying a lot; one person put a foot on her to shut her up and said, ‘Let them all die’.”

Naseem Bano lives in Raffai *Mohalla*. She is a social worker, helps widows and gets loans for poor people. “That day I tried to stop the police. I tried to tell them that there was no *toofan* in this area and don’t torture the women. If I hadn’t done this, much more would have happened. Afterwards they hit me too and gave very bad *gaalis*. I told them I would register a case against them. We filed a report at Jamnabai hospital. But no enquiry has been held. Yesterday I was at Bavamanpura. A kite landed at my feet. It had things written on it like ‘We will burn you, we will burn your houses and your children. We will play *Holi-Dhuleti* with your blood.’ We showed this kite to the Commissioner. His response was, ‘This will go on. Do we have to focus on you people or focus on these people?’ I told him that he should conduct a full enquiry into this incident. I told him, ‘You have to protect us. If we take *kanoon* in our own hands we become *goonhagaars*; if we don’t, we die’. I also told him ‘ You can not be *ek-tarfa* (partial). Don’t be selective in arresting people. We have to protect ourselves. If they come after us with *talwaars* we will have to use stones to defend ourselves because you don’t protect us.’ The Commissioner himself said ‘*Aap aamne saamne lar lo*’.”

14 women were hit that night, including old women. The police broke down doors of homes. They took away 25-30 men in the combing operations. First they beat them up on the road, and then took them away. The beating continued for two hours, although no weapons were found. The men were arrested under Sections 307 and 436. They were also beaten heavily in the lock-up and jail and were released after 7 days.

Women’s experiences

As described earlier, women had played an active role in maintaining calm in the area by forming peace committees and trying to dissipate tension. Even after the combing operations began, the women continued to be vigilant. Sherbano said, “The whole area was under curfew and it was these women who were more on alert and preventing untoward incidents instead of the police.” Women kept vigil on terraces, balconies and verandahs to prevent trouble by the police. “We had to keep the men inside because they get beaten more easily. If we women do not do it, who will?” asked one of the women.

But trying to keep the situation from going out of control was not easy. The area had continuously been under

curfew and everyone was tense with lack of sleep. There was no school, no work, no exams. Buying even essentials like medicines was an ordeal. There were angry voices against the state and government, especially among the younger men. One person said, "Give us 24 hours and we will do more than what has happened in 72 hours." There were young men in utter despair and some cried in anger and bitterness. They felt that bullets are being manufactured only to kill Muslims. "We are answerable to God," they said, "We cannot tolerate injustice forever. Even if they burn all our *dargahs* we have to give our *hisaab* to God." There was rage at the losses, the fear and the humiliation.

Sherbano said, "It is so difficult to deal with the anger of people. Our mental stress is tremendous. Even after we finish our vigils we get no sleep. We feel terrorised and repressed all the time. How can we sit quietly? These are our people. This is our area. We were born and belong here. We have to protect ourselves. I feel very responsible for everyone here. Otherwise I wouldn't be taking these risks."

Details of incidents 26-30 April 2002

According to residents of Taiwada, from 26th April onwards, attempts were made to engineer retaliation by Muslims through provocative stone-throwing from some neighbouring Hindu localities like Neelkanth Mahadev Mandir. Residents said that the stone-throwing was not from Dabhoiwala Chaal (which has a mixed population) and the Hindu-dominated Papatwala Chaal and Saatkalmiwala street, but were coordinated by the VHP/RSS office in Pratap Rudra Hanuman Mandir. There were also incidents of stone-throwing from Shivaji Faliya. A resident, Mehndi Hussain, was injured in an acid attack.

On 26th April, the police fired a number of rounds in the area, in which three persons were injured. One of them, Irfan, who had come to visit his maternal grandmother, was still in hospital when the team investigated the incidents in early May. About 20-25 vehicles were also damaged. A goat was killed. Bullet marks are visible in the narrow lanes of the locality. Haji Jamalbhai Master (around 50 years) and Mohammed Yunus Karvania (45 years) were arrested under Section 307 and had not been released up to early May.

On the night of 30th April, around 1.30 a.m., two men - Abid Ibrahimbhai Delawala (26), who worked in a cupboard factory, and Noorbhai Yaroobhai Karvania (40), a self-employed car mechanic - were killed in police firing. The police version of the incident is that the two men were shot when police fired to disperse a mob which had attacked a temple, tried to burn a State Reserve Police tent, and was indulging in throwing stones, bottles, acid bulbs, etc. Two Gujarati newspapers, *Sandesh* and *Gujarat Samachar* carried this story in their morning issue. While other mediapersons who came in response to the phone call from the locality immediately after the incident were not allowed to enter, the local VNM and DEEP networks covered it under police protection and gave out the police version.

Residents of the area, however, have a very different story to tell. Their evidence is recorded in a complaint to the Police Commissioner and in the depositions of widows of the two men before the Citizen's Tribunal, which held hearings in Vadodara from 8-11 May 2002. According to these submissions and descriptions of eyewitnesses such as Mohammed Sharif s/o Mr.Chand Bhai Tai, Abid Delawala and Noorbhai Karvania were shot by the police in cold blood.

According to residents, six persons, including Mohammed Sharif, were sitting on night vigil on the verandah of a house near the mosque. Five policemen, in uniform, one of who was PI Parmar, quietly entered the area from the street in front of Dabhoiwala Chaal. They shouted to the men to run or be shot. Then, without any teargas firing or *lathi-charge*, they opened fire from close range, killing the two men as they tried to run away. Both were shot in the head, indicating that the police were shooting to kill. Hearing the commotion, Suleman Walibhai Tai had come out on the terrace of the first floor of his house opposite the mosque. He was witness to the firing.

The policemen approached the bodies of the two men to see if they were dead. They were overheard saying that their work was done, though they had to 'finish 10 of them'. About half an hour later, 30-40 policemen arrived. While other vehicles were parked outside the locality, one vehicle came into the locality. While entering they fired a shot near the entrance. A crowd had gathered by that time. One Liyaqatbhai went towards them to speak to the police. While one policeman named Yadav talked properly, others were quite abusive and threatening, so he turned back. Thereafter advocate AJ Pooravala, brother-in law of Abidbhai, one of the persons who had died, and Bafati Shah Deevan, a social activist, attempted to talk to the police. They were also threatened and turned back. All this while, local people tried to contact the Police Commissioner, whose phone was constantly engaged. When they finally got through, he asked them not to bother him with such small details and to get in touch with the local

police. The local media was contacted, and an ambulance was called. However the police stopped them from entering the locality saying that the situation was volatile.

Abidbhai Delawala's 19 year-old wife Wahida and Noorbhai Karvania's 35 year-old wife Zubeida were called from their houses. In the words of Wahida, " When I reached there, my husband was crying out for water. I pleaded with the police to allow me to give water to my husband, but they pushed me aside with rifle butts. Then they burst teargas shells near the two bodies. The police said '*pathi gayu*' (it's all over) and began dragging away the bodies as if they were dead dogs."

Initially, the police tried to cart away the body of Abidbhai in a sweeper's cart. Someone later offered his handcart in which Abidbhai's body was carted away. Noorbhai was simply dragged away. Before moving out they fired teargas. Nobody was allowed to accompany the bodies. Police transferred the bodies to an ambulance, which had stopped outside the locality. The bodies were returned after the post mortem, but none of their effects were handed over to relatives. The key to the factory where Abidbhai was working and Rs. 1500/- were missing. Abidbhai's widow Wahida, who has a one year-old child, said, "He kept all our savings in his pockets for fear that we may have to run away any time. He would give me twenty rupees every day for milk for the baby and household expenses. At present I don't have a single paisa. My sisters help me but this can't continue, as they are very poor. My family is very poor. My parents-in-law are dead. I worry about how I will pay bills for electricity, gas, etc. Will I ever get back my savings and my husband's clothes? How will I support myself and my one year-old baby?"

Zubeida, Noorbhai's widow, has four children, aged 15, 13, 10 and 8, of whom 10 year-old Akil is mentally handicapped. She was called from her house when her husband was shot: "There were policemen around my husband's body, preventing us from going near. They were abusing the women in filthy language. My sister Mehrunnisa was pleading with them, but a policeman pushed her saying, 'If you try to go close, we'll shoot you.' They fired a shot, which hit the house wall of Noorbhai Pulaowala. My son Jabir contacted the local Councillor Mr Bafati, but even he couldn't help us. They dragged away my husband's body by the legs. They have no respect even for a dead human being."

The police thereafter attempted to construct 'evidence' of rioting in the area. An old out-of-order auto (No.3344) was tied to a police jeep and taken to the main road. The police claim to have recovered stones and weapons shown from auto. At 4 a.m., a police vehicle brought stones and glass bottles and spread it near Wadi Navapur-Wadi Taiwada naka 'border'. After spreading the material, the vehicle went over it repeatedly to show that there had been lot of stone-throwing, thereby attempting to justify the firing. The placing of material etc. was witnessed by Mr. Ibrahimbhai Dabhoivala and Advocate Kamaluddin S. Tai, whose houses overlook the venue.

The police also asked the SRP men posted near the nearby temple to burn their tent, so that firing could be justified. However, the SRP men refused to oblige. People of the area were reportedly told this by SRP men who, they said, had initially agreed to give evidence to this effect.

Between 10.30 a.m. and 11 a.m. on 30th April, the Police Commissioner came to the area but did not meet or talk to anyone. Bodies of the firing victims were handed over at about 12 noon. There is a graveyard nearby but since February when people living in its vicinity started creating problems even in cases of natural deaths, it was not possible to use it. Under police protection, the bodies were taken to Kaladabhoie, a graveyard 32 km away. Near Gajrawadi they were stoned in spite of police escort. On their return journey at the Vadodara border when the Vadodara police took over, DCP Gautam apologised for what had happened. He said that it was shameful. He said that now the strategy of communal forces was to indulge in provocative stone-throwing, as a result of which the Muslim community is likely to come out in defence or retaliation. He conceded that in such a situation the police would shoot at Muslims and harass them on the pretext of combing operations. He advised the people that Muslims should not get provoked and in case of stone-throwing, should call him rather than retaliate. He assured them of immediate help. This was conveyed in the presence of A.I Bhojvala and Mr. Mehndi Hussain.

Other incidents in Taiwada

Jameela (17 years) is studying in the 12th Std. On 27th March at 11.00-p.m. two jeep loads of police came to their locality and forcibly entered their house. There were no men in the house at the time. The police abused the women in very filthy language, and made her aunt Fatima open all the cupboards and vandalised their contents. They kept saying that everything happens from this house. When they found nothing they left. On their way out they destroyed and damaged the vehicles in the garage across the road from their house.

According to Mehazaben Hotelwala (26 years), on 26th April, at about midnight, the police forcibly entered her

house, nearly breaking the door. There were only women in the house as the men were sleeping in other places for fear of the police. The policemen abused them in filthy language, asking where are your *bhadwas*, where are your *hijdas*, and threatened to sexually mutilate them. They first assaulted her on her arms and hips and then beat up her 30 year-old sister Ruksana, who is partially disabled and was recovering from a recent appendix operation, on her stomach, thighs and private parts.

Other women assaulted by police in Taiwada: Zubeda Lambawala, Hamida Poorawala and Zubedaapa Master. A five year-old child, Farhana banoo was also hit on her back with a baton.

People's responses

The team spoke to four Hindu families living in the locality. All the Hindu families were met in private with no Muslim people around. One of the families living across the road was sleeping elsewhere but their house was not damaged. Revabehn, who had been staying there for the past 50 years and lived alone, said she did not feel threatened in any way. Prabhakar, an autorickshaw driver, also had no complaints and said anyway being a poor man he could not afford a cheaper accommodation. Another one, a tailor, said that there are all kinds of persons. While no one had threatened them, the way some people looked at him was threatening. As a poor man with similarly placed relatives he could not afford to move out. Since the recent violence, his blood pressure had shot up and he was taking medicines for the same. If he could, he will like to sell off and move out. Nisarbai Boxvala and Mazarbai, brother of Abid, who died in the firing on 30th April morning, particularly seemed to be advocates of peace. We did not come across any one with hatred and anger, there was only pain and resentment.

1.4 Bawamanpura

Dates of incidents: 25 March 2002 (Muharram) and 28 March 2002

The area

Bawamanpura is near Bhoiwada, opposite Bahucharwad in the Wadi Panigate area of the old city of Vadodara. This is a congested area of small *mohallas* criss-crossed by narrow lanes. Most of the people here are vegetable vendors and others are daily wage earners. The following account is based on testimonies gathered from women of the area.

Details of incidents

On 25th March, the tenth day of Muharram, a crowd suddenly appeared at the door of Hamida Abdul Rahim Chandul's house in Imran Chambers and attacked them. Nur Mohammed Fateh Mohammed, a Friend of Police (citizens supposed to help the police maintain peace) from the area was present there. He managed to disperse the crowd. Soon after, some 400-500 people came from the police point. They shouted at the Friend of Police, "What were you doing when the attack took place?" Then the police started beating up all the people. The people identified PI Katara in the police posse.

The police beat up the Friend of Police very badly. The whole night the residents kept awake. At around 5.00 a.m. they heard shouts of '*maro, kato*'. A mob of 500 people appeared. There was firing in the air and the mob ran away, only to return with petrol bombs. Again there was firing and the mob retreated again. A kite landed in Hamida's house with a message: '*Holi khoon se khelenge*'. Says Hamida, "Police were very biased. Islam does not teach such things. We were 27 Muslim families, and Hindus stay just behind our houses. We do business together. We have no problems with them. Two children, Jayanti and Satya, came from Bahucharwad and hit my daughter. The children had swords in their hands."

"Two children were going for their tuition. We saved them. They say that Imran Chamber *walas* kidnapped the children. The police are targeting Imran Chambers. They used *gaalis* and did lots of destruction like breaking our electricity meter with their guns. Why have they targeted us?"

1.5 Kagda Chaal, Bawamanpura

Date of incident: 25 March 2002 19 April 2002

The area

Kagda Chaal is a predominantly Muslim area, with around 100 families. There are also a few Hindu households and temples amidst them. This area is flanked by Hindu shops and households on two sides. On the market side of the chawl is the Ganjkhana Police Chowki, around 50 m away is the police tent and ahead on the same road is the Panigate Police Station.

The people of Kagda Chaal are very poor, surviving mainly on daily wages. Many of the women worked in their homes, doing stitching, kite-making or as domestic helpers. There are two temples in the area, which are totally undamaged. Hindu residents said that there was no problem here and that they felt safe in the area. The people from both communities said that we have no problem from each other but were very tired of police atrocities and the violent attitude of the police towards the Muslims.

From Kagda Chaal, most of the testimonies are of police atrocities, of the police searching for Muslim men and terrorising, beating and verbally abusing women in their homes. Several women have named PI Kanani. In Fatimabibi's words: "All the trouble started on the 10th day of Muharram. The police had acid bottles, stones, everything. The police do not listen to us. We do not have food to eat. If we tell our problems to the police, they just damage our houses and threaten to shoot us."

Even a 3 year-old boy, Arbaz, was beaten by the police. There were instances of pregnant women being beaten on their stomachs. Most of the injuries were in the lower parts of the body, below the waist. A few women showed bruises in the groin area. 9-month pregnant Kaushal Bano Mansuri said, "I told them that I was pregnant (*pet-se*). They still said that they had to hit me. My *saas* also said that I was pregnant. They said, 'We have to kill it before it is born'."

Unwell and elderly women were not spared either. 60 year-old Aminabibi described how the police barged into the *madrassa* and beat up all the people there. The *maulana* too was beaten up and got a fracture. "When we begged them to stop beating him up, they said '*goli mar denge*'."

Tarannum, a 19 year-old student of M.S. University, described how 42 year-old Salmabano Saiyad, who had recently been operated, was beaten up by the police. Tarannum's father added that in earlier riots, the police had not beaten women. However, now they were hitting women very badly, without any reason, he said. 60 year-old Satya Bano Sayed said that she had been hit so hard on the stomach that the stitches from an old Caesarian operation almost opened up. 40 year-old Zahira, who had had three operations, the last one a year ago, was dragged out by her hair and beaten. 60 year-old Noorbibi Gulam Rasul was hit on the head. Sayarabano, who had been operated for a tumour, was beaten on the back and legs. The policemen, she said, were all drunk. Nasrinbano also said the same thing. She said that they had filed an FIR but that no action had been taken. When they went to Jamnabai Hospital they were not treated, and were told that they had wounded themselves.

Some of the women beaten by the police were widows. 50 year-old Husenabibi is a widow who earns her living teaching people to read the *Quran Sharif*. Her one son, who had a fractured leg, was badly beaten, and she was not spared either. Rehana Pathan (30 years), whose 35 year-old husband died a few days before the incident, has 5 daughters and one son. She feels that her husband died because of tension due to the riots. She was in *iddat* (*pardah*). The policemen went into her *pardah* area, pulled her out and beat her. Said 35 year-old Sakeena, another young widow: "I was hit with a *lathi*. They caught hold of my hair. They shouted, 'Where are your men?' I am a widow. My 22 year-old brother was there. He had a fracture and could not even walk. Where could I send him? "

Effect on people's lives

Although the people of the area have not suffered major loss and destruction in mob attacks, they are in a constant state of fear and apprehension, and are bitter about the injury, abuse and humiliating treatment they have had to endure from the police. Hindus also keep up the pressure from neighbouring areas. Salma related how, when she went to fill water with two other women at 5.30 a.m. (*azaan* time), some men threw stones at them, threatened them with weapons and took off their pants. The police point was just 50 steps away, but the police did not tell the men to go back into their areas. "The police come into our *ilaka*, pick up our men and take them away. We don't get *saath* (help) of the police." The despair is poignantly expressed in the words of Sugrabibi: "These people beat us. We are tired of this life. It would be very good if they killed us all. Where shall we go? Even if we fall at their feet (*paon pakadte*) they still beat us. PI Kanani had come in a Maruti car. We heard him order them to beat us. Even an old man of 70 years was not spared. He was doing *namaaz*. Even when we don't possess any weapons, why are they taking away our men-folk? Just because we are Muslims they can't harass us like this. We want peace. We have been tortured a lot. We want safety. Our children should be allowed to do jobs and business."

But this will not come easily. On 29th March at 2.00 p.m., Muslim students in M.S. Girls school were asked to leave by the school authorities. "After that nobody has gone to school. Always there is firing on some account or the other. Three boys have been wounded because of firing. We eat what we earn everyday," said 15 year-old Rubina.

On two earlier instances (25th March and 5th April 2002), there were attacks by the police in Kagda Chawl. On 25th March, at about 9.30 p.m., police staff under Inspector Kanani (according to the information given by some police constables) assaulted Muslim women in their homes with *lathis*, while hurling filthy abuses at them. The people complained about these atrocities to the Police Commissioner but no steps were taken. On 5th April, there was an attack on residents of the locality adjacent to Kagda chawl.

The 19th April attack was most brutal, where the police mercilessly beat women. A PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan team presented the report of the police attacks on 25th March and 5th April to the National Commission for Women. They appealed to the Police Commissioner to take strict action against these policemen for committing such atrocities. The Police Commissioner gave an assurance at the time that such incidents would not occur. Despite this, the police attacked Kagda Chawl on 19th April.

Details of incident

At 8:30 p.m. on 19th April, a posse of 7-8 policemen from Panigate Police Station came into Kagda Chawl and told the residents, "Stay inside your houses. Nothing will happen to you. You will be okay." Thereafter they left. After this, two petrol bottles and stones were thrown at the chawl. The men of the area left their houses and took refuge in other neighborhoods for fear of police action.

Later, between 10.30 and 11 p.m., approximately 30 policemen, in both civilian clothes and uniform, forcibly entered Kagda Chawl area from three sides. They said that they were Mr. Parmar's staff and among them were police constables Deepak and Mahesh Rabari. The policemen were very drunk and armed with thick, metal capped wooden *lathis*.

Since the men had already left the area, only the women and children were there when the police arrived. The policemen then went on a rampage and attacked property and people for around one hour. They broke open the doors of the houses, hit and damaged property like TV sets and furniture, scattered food items and other household effects. They beat up approximately 20 women with their *lathis*, aiming particularly at their breasts, thighs, hips and arms. They also beat up children and household animals and caused extensive damage to homes as well as vehicles. A couple of autorickshaws were damaged when the police broke their windscreens and smashed their lights. Women who were sitting on their doorsteps were beaten and forced back into their homes. Some women attempted to bar their doors from the inside but the police broke down the doors and started a *lathi*-charge. In one house, where there was only one woman and her eight-month old baby, the police beat the woman and threw the baby across the room. Fortunately the baby fell on a mattress. A 60 year-old woman was hit with a *lathi* on her hand, thigh and hip.

During this severe physical abuse, the police also continuously verbally abused the women in sexually explicit ways. They said that they would pass electric current into their water supply; that they would stop their water and electricity supply. Harassment by the police has completely traumatised the women. They were left with the question: "If this is how the police are going to behave, where are we to go?"

Medical examinations were conducted on the women at Jamnabai Hospital. These women lodged FIRs at Panigate Police Station on the same night.

Details of police violence against women

Khatri Najmaben, 30 years

-She was busy in housework and washing vessels when the police suddenly entered her house and began attacking her. They hit her left leg, and her knees were also badly hit and bruised.

Husna Bibi Giasuddin, 27 years

-She already had some trouble with her leg, which used to go numb. They hit her severely on that leg, and she had severe blood clotting on her left thigh, hips and ankle of the left leg. As she tried to prevent the police from hitting her injured leg and knees, by blocking the blows with her hands, she was severely beaten and injured on her left wrist.

Fatema Mohammad Khan Pathan, 36 years

-The police pushed her by hitting her chest on to the floor and beating her, all the while asking where her husband was.

Noorjahan Yusuf Khan Pathan, 32 years

-She was at home doing her kite-making work, when the police entered her house and started hitting her on both legs. She was so severely beaten on her right hand that it was fractured. She had also been beaten severely in an

earlier police operation. After the police left, she ran to the local hospital to attend to her wounds and then went to the police station to lodge the complaint. Someone who was present read what was being registered; apparently the police were recording that she was injured due to stone-throwing. She then got it corrected and lodged the FIR against the police.

Mumtaz Bibi Usman Khan Pathan

-She was ill when the police entered her home and started asking for the men. But she was not spared and was badly hit on the right hand.

Sakina Bibi Sikandar

-She was washing utensils at home when the police forcibly broke open the door and entered. They hit her on her left hand and on the hips, injuring her badly.

Saira Arif Shaikh

-She was breastfeeding her six-week-old baby, when the police entered and started scattering the things in the house. They then pulled the baby from her and held it up, shaking the baby and asking where its father was. Saira tried to get the baby back, fearing they would throw the baby. They beat her on her chest and knees.

Mehraj Bano Pathan

Her 75 year-old father was not spared. He was dragged and beaten by the police. Hero Honda motorcycles, kept in their house, were smashed. They damaged the furniture, broke other household articles and prepared food items. The women including her were beaten badly on their hips and knees.

Noor Bano, 65 years

She was also verbally abused in the most obscene and shameful language, and beaten not considering her age.

Saumiya Gulam Mansuri, Fatema Bibi Abubaker Ingar and Nasim Bano were also, as the other women mentioned above, abused in the most obscene language and then beaten on their hips, knees, and chests.

All the women said, "*Itni gandi gali dete the police wale, ki hum aap ko bata bhi nahin sakte*" (the police abused us in such filthy language that we cannot even tell you what they said.)

Effects on people's lives

In a signed memorandum to the Police Commissioner on 20th April 2002, residents of Kagda Chawl wrote, "We the people of this area appeal to the administration to take stern action against the police personnel who have repeatedly committed atrocities on us and to free us from their oppression. If no steps are taken even now, these persons will be further emboldened and the police department will be dominated by fundamentalists, in that case what will become of common people like us? Such fears haunt us."

Subsequently a Muslim police officer called women from Kagda Chaal and pressurised them to withdraw their complaint. He also visited a PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan member asking for information about one woman who had complained against the police.

Response of the local press

Local language media misreported the incident in the following ways (summaries of the reports):

Loksatta (21st April, 2002)

"Stone Throwing By Mob on Bavamanpura Police Post: *Lathi-Charge* In Response"

A mob of about 200 people from Bavamanpura, mainly communal elements who do not want peace in this city, threw stones at the Ganjkhana Police Chowki and Police Point and attacked the police station. In retaliation, the police conducted a lathi-charge against the women. The window of a rickshaw was broken. The women have complained at the highest level. Sub-inspector A.R. Parmar has registered a complaint against the mob.

Gujarat Samachar (21st April 2002)

"Mobs attack Panigate Ganjkhana Police Chowki"

An armed mob of more than 200 people attacked the police chowki and police point with stones at 11 p.m. Naib police commissioner rushed to the area, called the mobile van and picked up the antisocial elements. Parmar has

registered a complaint against the mob.

1.6 Raja Rani Talav

Date of incident: 27 April 2002

The area

Raja Rani Talav is a *basti* just behind the Panigate Police station. It is a narrow area. The furthest side of the *basti* is next to the *talav*. One side of the *basti* overlooks Bhoiwada. The Shitala Mandir is towards the Bhoiwada side. The *basti* has around 120 houses, 13 of Hindus and the rest of Muslims. The Hindus are Maharashtrians and Ranis (Gujaratis). The Muslims here are Sunnis. Most people are extremely poor, all are daily wagers. Some are 'dholwalas' with marriage bands. This area was completely peaceful all through the two months after the Godhra incident.

Details of incidents

On 27th April at around 5.30 p.m., huge mobs of around 2500 persons from Bhoiwada attacked the *basti*. These attacks continued through the night. In all there were a total of 6 attacks, according to the *basti* representatives. The second attack was at around 8.30 p.m. This time, the mobs started burning houses. At 10.30-11.30 p.m., the third attack started with looting of the houses. In the morning, at around 4.30 a.m., more houses were burnt.

A total of 35 houses were burnt and all 120 houses were looted. Two *dargahs* were damaged. *Madrassa – A – Mohammediya*, a *madrassa* located near the Panigate Police Station was completely burnt down. Everything within the building was damaged or looted. The *Quran Sharif* was burnt. The building had been purchased three months back from one Jayesh B. Pardesi.

Around 520 persons from approximately 100 families took shelter in Doodhwala Hall in Moghalwada from 28th April to 5th May. Amongst these people were also a Hindu family, Dilipbhai Patel, his wife Kokila and their children. Till 2nd May, the camp had not received any recognition from the government despite assurances that rations would be delivered. On 5th May, the camp was wound up. Apparently the police officers gave an assurance that people would be safe in their *bastis*, and they were encouraged to go back. Those whose houses were completely ravaged were shifted to camps at Mewat Hall and Charotar Hall.

One victim, Sabinabano Maqbulhussain, claimed that the mob came from the back of her house and put acid bulbs and *kakdas* inside, before looting her home, including the dowry of her three daughters. From the evening of 27th April, the police unleashed terror on the people in the name of combing operations – hitting people, especially women, with *lathis* and rifle butts, smashing electric meters and tearing wires. Abdul Salam Abdul Sattar Diwan aged 56, came here 14 years ago from Bhopal, and lives off begging. According to him, on the evening of the 27th there was stone-pelting and at 11 p.m., around 200 to 250 persons from Bahucharvad attacked with swords and other deadly weapons. They escaped to others' houses. When he returned, he found his house razed to the ground, and all his belongings, including foodgrain and clothes, stolen.

Perpetrators of violence

The victims say that the attackers came from Bahucharvad. The people of Raja Rani Talav named the following persons: Raju, Ramesh, Ambalal, Mahesh, Kahauja and Ashok Dinla. Some of these persons are from Bahucharwad.

Role of the police

People from the *basti* tried to call the Panigate police two or three times. The police were quite indifferent. (Baba's mother went to complain once at 5.30 pm and then at 8.30 p.m. The second time the police men at the station told her, 'Only the houses are burning, you haven't died yet, have you?')

Hamidsha Babu Diwan (45), a resident of Abadan Tahiya, Panigate, Rajaram Lane, lived off begging. The police came to his house on 27th night as he was eating his dinner. They beat him up with *lathis*, breaking his arm. "The policeman pulled my beard and said, 'You bloody *Mussalmans*, why don't you die?' and started using abusive words. I belong to Haryana but I stay here every year for 3 to 4 months. My belongings and money were stolen. Now I have no money to even return home," he said.

Several women complained of being beaten by the police on the evening of 27th April as well as the early hours of 28th April. These include Ameena Bibi, an old woman, Jamila Bibi Kalubhai Dewan, a pregnant woman in her ninth

month of pregnancy, and several other women (Sakuran Bibi Mohmand Bhai Sheikh, who had a large bruise on her right thigh, visible even as late as 5th May; Feroza Bibi; Nazima; Mumtaz, who was beaten on her head, and her breasts were punched with a rifle butt by the police; Khatun Bibi; Mehrunissa; Abida Bibi; Badrunissa; and Sakina.) Two young men, Vishnu Mangaldas Rana and Ismail Amirbhai Dewan were taken away by the police on false charges. Up to 5th May, they were still in the lock-up.

Police violence against women

Several women have complained about police victimisation, harassment and violence. According to Ferozabibi Abdul Sattar Mansuri (45 years), of Chamboosa Baba Dargah Tekra, Bhois came and attacked them on 28th April at 6.30 p.m., when she was at home with her daughters. Around 10 policemen smashed the door open, and entered inside. They hit her and her daughters on the knees *lathis*. One of her daughters, Tahirabano, 4 months pregnant, was hit in the stomach with a rifle. Nazima, her other daughter was also hit on the knees. The police were in the house for 15-20 minutes. "We told them, 'Go where the attacks are taking place'. They said, 'Why, do you want to go throw stones?' They wrecked the *dargah* and the meter and electric wires with their rifles' butts. They said, 'Let them (the Bhois) do whatever they are doing. We will deal with you.' They used extremely abusive words. I went to register my complaint at the Panigate Police Station but they refused to register it."

Sugrabibi Ghulam Hussain Mansuri (45 years), of Chamboosa Baba Tekra, said that the police hit her pregnant daughter Ayesha in the stomach. Another daughter, 20 year-old Abeda was hit on the legs and knees. Her 7-year-old granddaughter Ruksar was hit on her back. Her handcart was smashed, and the *papads*, which she sells, were crushed. The police used extremely abusive words. ("I will cut you up", one policeman told them.) On 4th May, when she went to Panigate Police Station, the policemen refused to register her complaint.

Hazrabibi Nanoo Mian Khalifa (45 years) of Chamboosa Baba Tekra told a policeman who entered her house on the morning of 28th April, "Sahib, don't do this." To which he replied, "We'll cut you up", and uttered extremely abusive words. Hazrabibi ran away and later lost consciousness. The neighbours gave her water to revive her. Two policemen broke all the bulbs in her house, hit around with their *lathis* and went away. Her family went away to the Jamaatkhana (Doodhwala Hall) the same day. Hazrabibi says on their return after around a week, she found her house ransacked.

In the police firing, Sabinabano's goat was shot dead. (She claims the bullet barely missed her.) She kept the goat's body for three days since she could not go out to bury it. She finally threw it in the lake. When she went to protest about the goat, the policeman beat her on her legs and face.

Zulekhabibi Mohammed, a widow with two sons, has been living near the Havadan Takiya, Gaurav Society for the past 35 years. "One policeman asked me, 'Old woman, where have you hidden the boys?' and hit me thrice on the rear with a stick, using such abusive words as one would feel ashamed to repeat. The police used such foul language even as they began wrecking the house. They caused a lot of damage. I got scared and went to my mother's house opposite the Panigate Bhadra office. When the atmosphere cooled, I returned home, by which time a lot of damage had been done. I had saved for my son's marriage, which had been fixed on 12th May. The saved amount (Rs 50,000) was also taken away by someone." The police refused to take her complaint at the police station.

Damage/loss

The damage to the *madrassa* amounted to Rs 95,000.

Most of the residents were labourers, domestic workers, rickshaw-drivers, *laariwallas*, small tradesmen or engaged in low paying home-based work. Most of them lost their homes and all their belongings. Many families lost gold jewellery, money saved up for children's marriages, and vehicles like cycles and autorickshaws. The losses incurred range from Rs 10,000 to Rs 1,20,000.

2 HAJIMIYAN KI SARA, BARANPURA

Date of incident: 28 February – 22 March 2002

The area

Baranpura is in the Chokhandi area near Panigate, in the southeastern part of Vadodara City, within 1 km of Nyaya Mandir. It lies between Sant Kabir Road and Baranpura Main Road. According to residents, Hajimiyan ki Sara is around 150 to 200 years old. It housed old archaeological documents as well as precious records from the Kazi's

Court. At the corner of Champa *Galli* in the area is a famous old Ram temple.

The locality has around 15 per cent Muslim households, flanked by Gujarati and Marathi-speaking Hindus. The Hindus are Patnis, Rajputs, Pakhali, Chobdars and Machhis. The Marathi Brahmins are an educated group who 'want to keep away from all this kind of trouble'. The other Marathi-speaking people are rickshaw drivers, domestic help and nurses. The Gujarati Patnis are truck and tempo drivers and the women do domestic work. The Machhi Rajput women go out on daily wage labour to support their families.

The Muslim houses are located in two pockets; one is the Chobdar Falia on the Sant Kabir Road side. This pocket is behind Kamubala Hall. The other pocket has the *Masjid* and around 12 shops. As of 15th March, Baranpura had two police points, one near Chobdar Falia and the other near the *Masjid*.

The area has seen communal riots in 1969 as well as in 1992. But residents say that the violence then was not as severe as this time.

Details of incidents

Between 28th February and 22nd March, 39 Muslim houses and 19 shops were looted and burnt and one *dargah* was damaged. 5 to 6 houses have escaped damage, probably because of their location next to Hindu properties. Around 700 persons have been rendered homeless. The following report is based on testimonies recorded from the residents who had to move elsewhere after the incident.

On the 28th, at 11.30 a.m., there was stone throwing from Manjula Khuchachand High School, and there was also one round of firing. At 8.30 p.m., about 2000 people surrounded the area. The police was with them. The mob consisted of people from neighbouring *mohallas*. According to the testimony of Neema Ahmed Gulam Kuvawala, "when all these attacks were happening, the mobs were shouting '*Hai re miyan, hai, hai*' and throwing stones. They would throw stones but stop when the police came, and then start all over again. The people were from our area itself." According to another resident, Sajida Bano, "The lights outside were switched off. People in the GEB themselves switched off the streetlights. I know the person who did it, and we have filed a complaint about this."

Looting started after 1.30 p.m. on the 28th. The entire *mohalla* was looted. There were three houses in the *mohalla* where there were to be weddings which therefore had grain, gold and clothes, all of which was looted.

On 1st March during the *namaaz*, a mob came to burn the bakery near Kuvawala's house. The coal depot belonging to the family built next door was also set on fire. When the residents went to put out the fire, the mob threw stones at them and verbally abused them. As a result both the coal depot and the house caught fire and were completely burnt. According to Neema Kuvawala, "Now we are left with nothing. We had everything, TV, fridge, computer. Now we have nothing. The people in the mob gave threats to my father that they would kill him. They said, 'You did not leave when the police came to take you, now you sit and watch your house burn and then we shall kill you.' My father said, 'I am anyway totally finished. What is left for me to live for? You can kill me.'" Her family was the last Muslim family to leave. They left for Madar Market at 9 p.m. on 1st March.

On 2nd March, Sajida Bano, another resident, heard that her father's house had been burnt and so returned in the afternoon to the area with some other people. She saw her house being set on fire by Ishwar Machhi, Soni Bhooria, Dr Thakore Patel and Vimal Thakur.

On 8th March, when the curfew was lifted, Sajida, Arif (Neema's brother) and a few others went back to Baranpura to check on their losses. Arif found his house still smouldering. The fire brigade was called and they came and put out the fire. The *Masjid* wall on the side of the coal depot was still burning.

On 15th March, after 2 p.m., 17 shops below the *Masjid* were broken down, looted and burnt. These shops are opposite a police point.

On 22nd March, representatives of 8 to 10 families, around 10 people, went to record their *panchnamas* with 3 policemen and a writer. A 500 strong mob came and attacked them. They fled into the buildings. The mob set fire to the scooter on which they had come. Though the police were present they could not or did not do anything. Sajida, who came to warn her family members after hearing that they were going to be attacked, was herself attacked with *talwaars* by one Mania Chobdar. With great difficulty and after much pleading with the police, the people could leave the area and go back. For three houses the *panchnama* is still incomplete because they had to flee after the mob came. Iqbal Bano says, "There were *patrikas* (handbills) stuck on our house walls. The message was to oppose Muslims."

The house of an internationally renowned epigraphist who was with the Archaeological Survey of India, Mr Ganam, was burned in Chobdar Falia. His collections of more than 200 rare manuscripts and hundreds of ancient coins were lost in the fire. Mr Ganam, who was 90 years old and paralysed, was shifted by his 75 year old wife to a safer house, which was also later attacked. In late April, Mr Ganam died.

Damage /losses

39 houses were looted and burnt. Three houses in the *mohalla* where there were to be weddings had grain, gold and clothes, which were also looted. In one of these houses, goods worth 12-13 lakhs were lost. 19 shops were looted and burnt, and a bakery and a coal depot were burnt. One *dargah* was damaged. A cabin, tailoring shop and vegetable shop were destroyed. A cycle shop and two textile shops were looted and burnt. Homes of 7 families were looted of everything.

Role of the police and fire brigade

During the incident on 28th February, the police and fire brigade were requested for help, but they did not do anything. on 1st March, after the *namaaz*, some of the victims repeatedly called the fire station but nobody came. The police apparently had their phone off the hook frequently. The people tried to contact one Prafulbhai from the fire station. A person from the fire station told them that a P.I. from Wadi Police Station was not letting them enter the area. By the time the residents left that area, after 9:30 pm on 1st March, neither the police nor the fire brigade had come. When they went back the next Friday (on 8th March, when curfew was lifted), the fire was still burning. They again called the fire brigade and then two vans came and put out the fire. The next Friday when they went again, they saw that the place where they had kept mattresses in the house was also burning. So the fire station was called again.

According to reports, when the mobs came, the people had the police with them. Most reports emphasised that the police points in the locality were totally ineffective. Kaishalbanu's house was set on fire in the presence of police. According to her, the police did nothing to help.

According to testimonies of victims, the police point has been there for 10 years but they do nothing. On the contrary, it was pointed out that the policemen there often target youth.

The police, however, did make some efforts. According to Neema Ahmed Gulam Kuvawala, when the mobs came to burn the bakery the police did try to warn them but were unable to prevent the attack; some policemen were even injured.

On 22nd March, when representatives of 8-10 families went to get *panchnamas* done with the DCB men (1 writer, 3 police), everyone was able to get it done except for 2-3 houses before the mobs attacked again.

Role of the local people

Local people were complicit in the attacks - according to testimonies, some of the boys were recognised and threatened by victims that they would inform the police. The boys came and told them "Do not give all our names. We will tell you whom to name. We will not do anything to you because you are like family to us. If you want you can come and stay at our house".

According to reports, the ones who came to attack on 2nd March were from the neighboring *falia*, but they were known people. They came from Machhi Falia behind Sant Kabir Kamubala Hall, Machhi *Mohalla*, Baranpura. Those who were recognised were: (1) Bhaya (Machi), (2) Bhuriyo (Soni), (3) Mochi, (4) Ramesh, (5) Dr. Thakor's son, (6) Hardik and Vimal, and (7) Maniyo who lives in Chobdar *Mohalla*, and whose father's name is Ranjeet.

Neema Kuvawala's brother was threatened with death. "On the day there was a Gujarat *bandh*, my brother was going for his afternoon *namaaz* when he saw three of his friends – Vijay, Akhtar and Deepak Soni talking amongst themselves that they would finish him when he came back. Vijay was standing with weapons and Deepak was also there. We heard this and four of us were also waiting to watch out and call out to my brother. Two of us were at the window and two downstairs. But my brother came with the police and so they could not do anything. All three of them were friends of my brother's and all had been part of a function on 26th January on communal harmony!"

Numerous testimonies speak of earlier instances when they would be warned of impending attacks, which did not happen this time. In fact, many women spoke of Hindu women overhearing conversations, passing on information, and going to the extent of beating up women and actually stopping the Fire Brigade from putting out fires.

According to Sajida Bano, "We had good relations with our neighbours, we used to visit each other at festivals and on other occasions. We would invite them to our homes. *Amara thee moon fervi lidu chhe* (now they have turned their faces away from us)."

3 ROSHANNAGAR (TULSIWADI/HATHIKHANA)

Dates of incidents: 28 February - 31 March 2002

The area

Tulsiwadi and Roshannagar are adjacent localities. Tulsiwadi is the name for the whole complex of slums, including Sanjaynagar, Roshannagar and others. The Tulsiwadi area is a mixed area with almost equal population of Hindus and Muslims. However, Roshannagar is mostly a Muslim majority area. Kasamala *Kabrastan*, Fagvel Nagar and Indiranagar are other adjoining localities some distance away. Hathikhana, the wholesale grain market, is also in the area. Opposite Hathikhana, near Gharnala Gate, is Tulsawada, which is predominantly Hindu-dominated. This locality houses working-class, and largely backward caste families.

Since the area is a little spread out, the attacks, although focussed, were sporadic. Certain 'leaders' and the police, who beat up people indiscriminately, led them.

Roshannagar was the site of a camp near the *dargah* of Sufi Master housing around 300 people, mainly refugees from the neighbouring localities of Tulsiwadi and Kasamala *Kabrastan*. Other refugees were scattered. For example, there were 15-16 houses in Gujarat Tekra. All the people left and are now at different places with their families, like Machchipeeth and Tandalja. The following report has been filed on the basis of testimonies from refugees at Roshannagar.

Details of incidents

There were intermittent attacks in the area over the period 28th February to 31st March. Some major incidents are given below.

On 28th February, Tulsiwadi main Bazaar was the scene of stone pelting and attacks. A mob (*tola*) led by Umakant Joshi (ex-mayor), Kanubhai Panwala, Narendra Pandya s/o Parvati, Rajubhai Kuberbhai and Suresh Sharma STD *walla* of Tulsiwadi, burnt houses in Sanjaynagar shopping centre. Hillayyabe, ex-corporator of Ward No. 5, was active in these attacks. According to reports, there were about 500-1000 people, carrying swords, *dharia*, etc. They were shouting '*Maro, maro, miyabhai nikalo.*' (Kill, get rid of Muslims.)

The same night, a plastic godown belonging to Salimbhai Ansari, a resident of Tulsiwadi, was burnt. His residence and godown were also burnt.

On 1st March, Mr Tuteja, the CP, PI Rathod and Bhagirath Singh Jadeja gave orders for homes to be raided and broken. People got beaten up in the combing operation. It was the time of afternoon *namaaz*. Innocent people seem to have been picked up. Poshan Kumar Bengali, a Bengali resident and tiffin server, was picked up. As of 31st March, his wife and small child are unaware of his whereabouts. Among those injured in the process by the police were Hanifbhai Pathan of 5, Roshannagar, Ameenaben (60), Bismillaben (35), and Rehana Younus (15). These women were attacked with sticks and rifle butts.

Mohammed Khan's house was damaged. He and his son Majid Khan were kept in the Central Jail for about 4 weeks. His sons are tanker truck-drivers.

On 13th March, Mehmoodbhai Pathan's house was looted by a mob.

On 15th March, at around 2 p.m., Ruby Bakery belonging to Sadatbhai Bakerywalla and Mohammadbhai Bakerwalla Ratlami (resident Qr No 111, Tulsiwadi) was broken and looted by a mob.

On 18th March, at the time of *azaan*, around 8.30 p.m., the police conducted 'combing operations' in the area after the *jalli* of Tulsiwadi *Mandir* was broken. A total of 58 men from the minority community were arrested during the combing operations. Amongst them was a mentally challenged son of Husha Bano Mansuri (*chhokre ko kutte ki tarah maara, woh behaan hai*). The SRP fired more than 50 rounds. Injured and beaten by the SRP and police in the melee which ensued were Rukshanaben Pathan, a pregnant woman, and Khushboo, a 3 ½ year- old child.

Mukhtiarbhai Baratwale's house was broken and attacked. According to witnesses, including his son Sarfraz, ex-mayor Umakantbhai is alleged to have called in the police to attack it. The house of Murtujabhai Sheikh (*saliya* work contractor) was broken and looted. The house-cum- shop of Rabia Younusbhai Vora was broken and looted.

There was stone pelting by Muslim youth in response. In the police firing which followed, nine persons were injured. The police entered the *dargah* and brutally beat up the elderly (over 70 years) Sufi Master Mastan Baba (or Sufi Ismailian Mohammed Mian Sheikh Mastanbaba). His feet were badly swollen even on 31st March, when the PUCL team met him. The Sufi *baba* looks too old and serene to have provoked any war of words, let alone violence. Witness to all these incidents were Hamida Mehmood Ali Syed, resident of Roshannagar, and Mehmooda Apa, Syedunnisa and Shama Perveen who witnessed these incidents from their homes nearby.

Women were also attacked and abused verbally and physically. Several of them had haematomas and large bruises. They were also extremely upset that their young children, aged between 16 and 18 years, were rounded up by the police and taken to jail.

Some people seem to have filed FIRs. In some cases, the police asked them to file FIRs for valuables from their cupboards only at the place of looting. Due to the unsafe conditions, people have not gone back and so such FIRs remain unfilled. Others have also filled Relief Committee forms. Complaints against police atrocities have not been filed.

Role of the police

Most victims were extremely angry about police atrocities, though nobody could identify any of the offending policemen. They reported about how police broke up houses and joined in the attacking mob. In their combing operations they even took away the rods of a baby's *jhoola* saying that these were weapons. They made abusive and sexually threatening statements like '*tumhaare yaar ayenge, woh tumhe zinda maareng,*' and 'we like to beat you Muslim women a lot. We can also do *ganda kaam*', and 'go away to Pakistan'. The people all say, "*Gandi gaali bolte hai*".

Their attacks were not only verbal. Among those who were injured by the police were:

- A pregnant woman with two bullets who had to be admitted to SSG Hospital.
- Rubina, a 6 year-old-girl, whose hand was injured and contused.
- Mumtaz Bano, who received a black eye from the beatings.
- A nine-month old baby whose eyes were affected because of the teargas shell that burst at the feet of a woman who was holding her.

The women were extremely upset, saying that the police were supposed to do their *hifaasat*, their duty, and instead they had sorely abused them, as well as destroyed their sense of dignity. All the women stated how their boys and men were the breadwinners. With them away, the families had not eaten for days. The women repeatedly pleaded: "Give back our children. That is all we want. We will not eat until our boys and men are released".

According to Raeesa Shaikh, the police came at the same time as the mobs. They pulled her out of the house, rolled her around outside in the mud, beating her all the while. Raeesa was asked whether she had lodged a police complaint with the Commissioner of Police about the atrocities committed on her. Her angry response was: 'what is the point of complaining to him when his men did all this to us? We need to complain to the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister.' Raeesa led a group of 5 women and girls from her *basti* to give their testimony to the NHRC.

In another instance, Hamida, who has one son and two daughters said, "The boy is in 11th Standard. He was at home studying for his exams when the police came. They took the boy to the police station and hit him. They left him only day before yesterday (18th March)."

The people at the camp were agitated at the arrests and said many boys, around 26 or 28, were taken. 22 or 23 of them were very young, maybe 14-15 years. They have registered a complaint. Many people told the visiting team to see for themselves how brutally the boys were beaten by the police.

Zarinabibi filed an FIR for compensation for a burnt *laari* and said, "When we went to complain, they said, 'At the time of Godhra, you should have come to complain'." So she did not write the complaint.

In fact, the people said: "We have been trying to get hold of the Magistrate. We want to talk to the PM directly.

Why do we have to go through the Police Commissioner? The police will not help. '*Maarnewale hamari sahayata nahi karenge.*' We want to talk to the Chief Minister. Send our forms to the CM. We want nothing from the police... (Yes, the CM is part of all this, but we want to talk to the CM). Take all our signatures, all the women here."

Ramzanmiya Ismailbhai Shaikh said that while they were reading the *Quran Sharif*, "they *lathi*-charged us, even the women. My father was hit - he's still got bruises on his foot. My mother fell down and was also hit. My sister came in between. They hit us with sticks and rifle butts. They came with 25-30 cars." When queried, he said most of them were policemen but some were "others". Interestingly, some of them had helmets, some cloth tied on their faces. He says further: "They went to my house. The house was open. They threw everything from the *tijori*. They were searching for weapons. What weapons? They found nothing."

Ramzanmiya spent 12 days in Central Jail and also one day in the lock-up. He says, "They put a case against me in the lock-up under 307 (attempt to murder). We told them we did nothing. We had no idea. They refused to believe us. The police said '*PASA me dal denge*'. What was our crime? That we were Muslims?" It took 12 days to get the bail papers."

Hindu women of Tulsiwadi were also upset at the behaviour of the police. According to one of the women, Maniben (named changed on request), when violence broke out on 15th March, Hindus of the area had evacuated their Muslim neighbours to safer places on the 'opposite side'; residents of Hathikhana had done likewise with the few Hindu families in their locality. Hindus and Muslims on either side of the 'border' protected the houses of families belonging to the other community. Some Tulsawada residents wanted to help out families who had lost their livelihoods in their locality. Many Hindus were jobless because they worked in Muslim-owned shops in Mangal Bazaar, which had been burnt down. According to Maniben, affected Hindus in her area had been threatened to remain silent about their losses. It is not clear who issued these threats. Because of a police point set up between the localities, Maniben and others who wanted to help from the Hindu 'side' were not allowed entry into the Muslim locality. Policemen, one of whom who was habitually drunk, continuously harassed women in their homes on the pretext of curfew violation, leading women to file a complaint. Despite opposition from within her locality, Maniben and a few other Hindus managed to work with a Muslim organisation from Hathikhana side to assess the damage to Muslim homes there. However, because of repeated run-ins with the police, including an injury sustained when she attempted to intervene when the police were teargassing the area, she decided to withdraw from the work. She said categorically that Hindus and Muslims had lived peacefully in the area for years, and that Hindu women in her locality fear the police much more than the Muslims.

Role of local people

Most people were clear that the attackers were outsiders.

Losses

Hamida M. Saiyed of Gujarat Tekra estimates their losses at Rs.40,000 for the cycle shop that was looted and burnt and Rs. 70,000 for the house (they possessed a TV, fridge.)

Rehabilitation

Hamida says she plans to go back once curfew is lifted. She wants to see to the shop that was burnt. She also wants to go back to her house. When asked how she felt after all this, she said: "I feel scared...As if people will come to kill, to throw stones. For 3-4 days people were throwing stones."

4 MACHCHIPEETH

Date of incident: 15 March 2002

Up to 15th March 2002, there were a significant number of areas in Vadodara City where no violent incidents had occurred. However, on 15th March, the day of the Ayodhya *shiladaan*, considerable tension built up in the city. The event at Machchipeeth was used and reported by local media as an unprovoked attack by Muslims on peacefully passing '*rambhakts*', almost on the lines of the Godhra event, to trigger the second round of violence in Vadodara. The following report is based on the findings of the PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan team, which investigated the incidents at Machchipeeth and Rain Basera.

The area

Machchipeeth, in the old city area, is inhabited by middle- and lower-middle-class people of both Hindu and

Muslim communities. Many of them ply businesses and some are in the service sector. About 40 Hindu families and 400 Muslim families reside in the area. Machchipeeth has been regarded as a communally sensitive area, although its past history, going back to the times of Gaekwad rule, hardly bears out this reputation. For example, in 1969 the Bhoi community led by Durga Bhoi stood side by side with the Muslim community in order to prevent outsiders from vitiating the communal harmony prevailing in the area. According to local memory, even in 1985 and 1990-2, no significant instances of 'rioting' occurred here, though there are reports of minor scuffles during these periods. The claim is substantiated by the fact that no instances were reported in this area after the 6th December 1992 demolition of the Babri *Masjid*. The team met Hindu families staying in the area who vouch for the peace loving nature of all - Hindus as well as Muslims – in this area. In fact they have signed the first memorandum submitted to NHRC and are going to submit an affidavit on this matter. One of the major factors in maintaining communal harmony in the area has been the commendable police initiative of holding peace meetings during religious festivals or when rallies were planned by either of the communities. For example, in the last peace meeting held before Bakri Id (23rd February), Muzzafar Khan Pathan (Mojubhai), social worker and Vice-President of Tazia Committee of Vadodara, represented the Muslim community and took measures to ensure that no untoward event took place. It is significant that no such peace meetings were initiated by the police before the 15th March rally or thereafter.

Details of incidents

In the aftermath of Godhra also, harmony prevailed in Machchipeeth, despite instances of violence in the immediate vicinity. For example, between 28th February and 1st March, a mosque and a *madrassa* were burnt in Tulsibhai ki Chawl; 14 houses and 4 shops were burnt and a mosque blasted by means of a gas cylinder in Salatwada; 12 houses and several *laari* gallas were burnt in Haribhakti ki Chawl; and 2 *laaris* were burnt just outside Machchipeeth on the main road. Though all these events took place within walking distance of Machchipeeth, the area itself remained calm till 15th March. Hindu families in the area remained unaffected and felt no need to run away to any Hindu area, before or even after 15th March.

On 15th March, VHP and Bajrang Dal had given an all India level call for prayer and *Ramdhun* and in view of the prevailing tension, Mr Tuteja, the Commissioner of Police, Vadodara, had imposed Section 144 in the city from the same day. In contravention of the above order, a 500-strong rally, composed totally of outsiders, reached Machchipeeth naka around 3.10 p.m. Some 6-7 police personnel also accompanied the rally, on the left flank, on foot, with a police van bringing up the rear. The rally turned violent before reaching Machchipeeth: many Muslim-owned shops (including Indian Boot House and Tower Shoes) and *laaris* en route were burnt and looted. On reaching Machchipeeth, some of the rallyists rushed into residential lanes with *trishuls* and swords. All were shouting provocative slogans ("*Bandiao* [circumcised] go away to Pakistan," "*Babar ki aulado Hindustan chhod do*" and the like). Some even took off their pants and danced around in the lanes.

Such was the scene that confronted Muslims of the area coming out of the mosque after Friday *namaaz*. The situation worsened with stones and bottles being thrown by residents and the '*rambhakts*'. While pelting of stones and soda-bottles was going on, police reinforcements (in about 4 jeeps) arrived shortly. They immediately began firing with service revolvers and sten-guns. The police firing, which lasted about 25 minutes, was, however, exclusively directed at the residents of Machchipeeth. Some tear-gas shells were also lobbed into Machchipeeth. Army personnel reached the spot after about 15 minutes of police firing and the situation was brought under control. While the residents took shelter in houses, the rallyists also disappeared. Thereafter, till about 4 p.m., the police conducted "combing operations" in Machchipeeth. Abusing the residents, they barged into various houses and indiscriminately arrested 34 Muslims. 23 of the arrestees were from Machchipeeth, 11 from Rain Basera. Three 15-year old boys (2 of them to appear in the forthcoming SSC examinations) and a 68-year old TB patient were among the people arrested and manhandled by the police, and all booked under Section 307.

There was relative calm in the area between 4.00 and 7.30 pm in the area.

During the evening *namaaz* at the mosque, small crowds chanting VHP and Bajrang Dal slogans had gathered on the terraces in Mama ni Pole. About 15 were on the RK Roadlines' terrace, about 20 were on the terrace of Kalyan building and about 30 on the Uday Apartments' terrace. Ajay Dave, the Municipal Councillor of Manjalpur, N.K. Rathod, PI of the Ecocell and Niraj Jain, President of the Vadodara chapter of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, were present on the RK Roadlines' terrace. In fact it is from the RK Roadlines' terrace that stones were pelted at Muzzafar Khana mosque at about 7.30 pm. About 20 rounds were fired from the RK Roadlines' terrace at the above mosque and in the general direction of Machchipeeth. The team noted that bullet marks are still evident on the structure of the mosque, and not on any other structures in the vicinity. Thereafter, police again combed Machchipeeth area and rounded up 12 Muslims from Bagh-e-Habib Apartments in the area. Of the 12, Mr Sajid

Khatri, an advocate, was immediately released, while the others were released on bail only on 21st March, along with the 34 Muslims arrested earlier. The 45 arrestees, all Muslims, have been charged under Section 307. It is pertinent to note that the magistrate did not sustain the police charge of Section 307 when the arrestees were produced at court and they were unconditionally released.

Machchipeeth remained tense for days after the events of 15th March. Arson of Muslim property (mainly *laaris* and small shops) continued for several days after 15th March, despite curfew in the area. Stone pelting and slogan-shouting also continued from the terraces of the buildings. Though curfew was still in place in the whole area, on 24th March evening, SRP personnel had to lob tear-gas shells in order to try and curb the belligerence of the crowd gathering on the above-mentioned terraces.

Details about rallyists and rioters

The rally of 15th March that began at Amba Mata ki *Mandir*, Mandvi at approximately 2 p.m. reportedly split into two. Many of the rallyists in one group moved towards Machchipeeth, about 1 km away. Significantly, no local residents took part. The rallyists wore saffron bands, and several carried saffron flags borne on sticks and rods. Video clippings show them making provocative gestures and running in an unruly manner, occupying the whole road. The windows of Gandhi shop just at the entrance of Machchipeeth were badly broken, suggesting the direction from which the stones were coming. Ajay Dave, the Municipal Councillor of Manjalpur, Baka Brahmhatt, a factory owner in GIDC, Makarpura, and Milind Ambegaonkar, of Shikshan Samiti, VMC, were actively involved in leading the rally. This is substantiated by video footage from the news broadcast by Siti News (in their evening bulletin on the same day). Milind Ambegaonkar is seen to direct the police to fire upon the Machchipeeth area, while Ajay Dave's active presence is seen during the rally as well as during most of the combing operations that took place that day, constantly moving with police when arrests were made and talking on his mobile.

Role of the police

-Despite Section 144 being in place, the police, apart from an overall intelligence failure, made no attempts to control or disperse the rally of 15th March before it reached Machchipeeth covering a distance of around one kilometer.

-In the face of an established routine of initiating peace meetings in such a "sensitive" area, neither in the wake of Godhra nor after the communal violence across the state did the police try to implement any such measure in this area.

-After the rally had reached Machchipeeth and the mutual stone pelting had commenced, the police fired only at the local residents of Machchipeeth.

-In their combing operation, they targeted Muslim residents; all the 45 arrestees were Muslims, of Machchipeeth/Rain Basera.

-The police action was arbitrary and indiscriminate; among the arrestees, apart from a sick old man, were 3 under-age boys; the residents and the arrestees in particular were treated brutally by the police.

-Though there was no resistance from the arrestees, police beat them brutally while taking them to the police van; this can be seen in video clippings.

-The fact that all the arrestees were uniformly charged under Section 307 points to the possibility that the police did not sufficiently investigate the events of 15th March. Added to this, is the fact that there has been no injury to any Hindu, nor has there been any damage to any Hindu place of worship. Further no policeman was injured. In spite of this, the police charged the arrestees under Section 307 that indicates intent to kill. Indeed, subsequently the police seem to have endeavoured to spread rumours of private firing in order to justify their actions.

-20 rounds were reportedly fired from RK Roadlines' terrace later in the evening. The collusion of police personnel cannot be ruled out, given the presence of PI N.K. Rathod of the Ecocell, at the site.

-Apart from the involvement of the Municipal Councillors and other local leaders mentioned above, various police personnel were explicitly named in our investigations. They are 1) MS Patel of Raopura police station, 2) PI Bhagirathsinh Jadeja, of the Goonda squad, 3) PI Rao of Karelibaug police station, 4) Kanu Patel of Karelibaug police station and 5) Fatehsinh Patel of Karelibaug police station.

More than a month after the first incident on 15th March, the police claim that the private firing theory is untenable. This, after the brutal violence meted out to so-called 'offenders'.

Documentary evidences

Copies of the following documentary evidences were collected by PUCL and Vadodara Shanti Abhiyan:

- a) Police documents relating to the 45 arrestees and their release on bail.
- b) Date of birth certificates of the 3 underage arrestees.
- c) Medical certificates of the 68-year old arrestee.

- d) FIRs of the burning and looting of Indian Boot House and other establishments.
- e) Video copy of the evening news broadcast of 15th March by Siti News, which corroborates police presence in and around the rally, outside composition of the rallyists, involvement of the police personnel, Ajay Dave and Milind Ambegaonkar.

4.1 Rain Basera, Machchipeeth

Date of incident: 15 March 2002

The area

Rain Basera, which comes under the Karelibaug Police Station, is a slum adjoining Machchipeeth. It comprises of a *Dalit basti*, a Muslim *basti* and a Bhoi (fisherman) *basti*.

On 15th March, police assaulted several women during combing operations. Four policemen entered the *basti* at around 3:00 p.m. They also entered the *masjid*, pulled out the men who were offering *namaaz* and beat them. They indiscriminately beat and threatened women and children, beat and arrested men, and damaged property. At least 4 men were beaten badly, and 11 arrested.

Role/experience of women

- Sabiraben Ahmedbhai Shaikh, aged 45, was beaten so badly that her left arm was swollen and bruised;
- Faridabanu Bachchubhai Shaikh, aged 30, Hajirabibi Gulamhusain Dhobi, aged 32, and Hamidabibi Ahmedkhan Pathan were kicked on the legs. Hajirabibi was also kicked on the chest and Faridabanu in the pubic region.
- Mehrunnissa, aged 18, was threatened with a sword (apparently confiscated), the point of the sword touching her abdomen.
- Sultana Razzakbhai, aged 18, was threatened with a rifle that was pointed and rested on her chest.

All this time, policemen let loose the coarsest abuse, with explicit sexual and religious connotations.

5 NAGARWADA, SYEDPURA

Date of incident: 16 March 2002

The area

A road separates Nagarwada from Amlifalia and Ghanchifalia on one side and Mehtawadi on the other. There are about 400 households of Muslims in this area and very few Hindu houses. Across the road, towards Amlifalia and Ghanchifalia, are shops and establishments of Hindus. Both Amlifalia and Mehtawadi, which surround Nagarwada, comprise of Hindu households. The area had not earlier seen any incident of violence or damage to property. People recollected that a month and a half ago, a group of women who said they were from Gandhinagar had come to their area and taken down details of people from each household.

For a month since 1st March, there was tension and disturbances in the area, with stone pelting, throwing of acid bombs and petrol bombs from the outer areas on to Nagarwada. According to 14 year-old Farida, who studied at Municipal School No. 10 in Nagarwada, on 3rd March, at around 10.30 a.m., a group of boys, all outsiders, came to her school and shouted at everyone to go home. "They also attacked my Madam, Savitriben, who was teaching us. In front, someone shouted, '*Hato, hato.*' They asked everyone to be removed from the school. Nobody moved. Madam was still teaching and she was hit with a stone."

On 15th March there was a rally of *karsevaks* shouting slogans that crossed the area. A *masjid* and a *dargah* near that area were destroyed. The spot on which the *dargah* stood was flattened and tarred over.

Details of incident

On 16th March, as part of the curfew-time 'combing operations', the police came to Nagarwada between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, approaching from all sides through the lanes and by-lanes. They entered the houses as people were eating or praying, breaking open the doors. They destroyed furniture, broke TV sets, and even took money from people's purses kept in the houses. They told the men to come, dragged them, and hit them as they took them away. They told them that if they did not come with them, they would beat their women and rape them. When the men asked them what they were being taken for and that they were innocent, they were threatened, beaten and hauled along.

Hindu neighbours also protested, saying that nothing had happened in the area and that the two communities have been living peacefully, so why were they taking the Muslim men away?

They abused the women in extremely obscene language, threatened them with violence and told them that they would take away the girls. Many women (about 28) were abused and beaten with rifle butts. They had bruise marks on the neck, wrists, and on their backs.

As the police were approaching the houses, people gathered to enquire why they had come – this gave the police reason to apply curfew violation sections on the men whom they hauled away. While this was going on, groups of army men joined them. Two army trucks that were passing by were stopped by the police, and some army men joined them with an S.P. whom the people named as S.P.Rathod accompanying them. There are conflicting reports as some said the army men did not do anything on their own but upon the police telling them joined in the beating up of the women and rounding up of the men.

At least 10-15 policemen entered each house, and a total of 26 men were taken to Karelibaug police station. They were kept there till 6 p.m. and later taken to Chhani thana and then to Narmada Police Bhavan. They were booked under multiple sections such as 143 (rioting), 136 (possession of arms), 188 (violating curfew), and 147, 148, 149, 336. These sections were applied on the first group of persons arrested. Those who were arrested the second time were booked under section 110G for precautionary reasons. The people fear that this is a step for imminent arrest under the PASA (Prevention of Anti-Social activities Act). The ages of boys and men who were arrested ranged from 16 to 75 years. There were more young boys and older men who were taken away by the police. They were detained for 30 hours and released after cases were registered against them and files prepared. They were told that they had to report to the police station every day.

Damage

In most of the houses the front doors were broken by the police. Furniture and things inside the house were broken and damaged. Kamarunnisa, who stays in Anand Nagar, witnessed her house being looted. She says, "I saved my belongings all through my life for my daughter's marriage and they're all gone now."

Four rickshaws were damaged, and their windscreens shattered.

Role of the police

The police combing operations were brutal. Old people were not spared and even a 60 year-old man was beaten severely.

The police came into Mohameddi Bano's house when her children were studying. They arrested all of them along with her 70-year-old husband, N.G. Pathan, who is a retired railway employee. He is a heart patient and was on an intravenous drip at the time. The police pulled out the drip, beat him badly and hauled him away and arrested him along with the others, keeping him also in custody for around two days. According to Naseembano (65 years), the army entered their house on the afternoon of 16th March when her sons were sitting at home. They destroyed the doors and grills of the house and took away her sons. The police, who were downstairs, dragged her sons to the Karelibaug Police Station. Naseembano also mentions that the police threatened the women that if they intervened, they would kill their husbands, saying that they had orders to do so. Moreover, when the women went to go give food to their husbands the police did not allow them to. The men were kept hungry for one and a half days. The police taunted the women, saying that they had fed their husbands with a 'marriage feast'.

According to Karunissa, "My husband was standing in the gallery. They said, 'Please come down, we want to talk to you.' As soon as he came down they caught his collar and took him with them. He is 67 years old. They cheated us. After that when we women went with tiffins to the police station they said, "No need for food, *humne to unhe shaadi ka khana khila diya hai.*" (We have fed him a wedding meal.) By that they meant that they had beaten him. In spite of my pleading with them that he is a heart patient and could not bear their torture, they did not listen."

People said weapons were recovered from a Balaji temple in this area but there were no reports about this in the press.

At the police station the men were not given anything to eat for the entire period. Many people had been beaten severely, and had gashes and wounds. One man who had come from Tarsali after his houses was burnt there, had

to have a wrist surgery for a fractured right hand due to police beating.

Role of local people

According to 14 year-old Farida from Nagarwada, "We saw five people breaking locks in Nagarwada...They were neighbours (*bajuwale*), those who were eating and drinking with us. Yes, we saw everything. My big sister and I saw everything from upstairs. We then went inside - my father, sister, brother and other boys. Then the people started throwing stones from downstairs. Big stones. They were Hindus, the neighbours - they threw stones."

Effect on people's lives

A few people refused to talk about the incident to the fact-finding team. The women were severely traumatised by the verbal abuse of the police and the beating. They say that the government and the police who ought to protect them are attacking innocent people. They did this during curfew time when no one can go outdoors. The women said that those men in their community, who took children of other people, especially Hindu households, in their rickshaws to school, were asked not to take the children anymore. Those who worked as casual labour for a daily wage had lost their livelihood for nearly one and a half months. Many people had been ill for some time and were unable to seek proper treatment, due to tension, lack of money, employment and livelihood. People feel terribly insecure, scared and helpless, and desire a return to peace in the neighbourhood.

Shardaben, who belongs to one of the few Hindu families among 400 houses of Muslims in Syedpura, Nagarwada, works in Narmada Bhavan as a sweeper. She says she feels safe and secure in that area. She further says that as an eyewitness she can say with conviction that the police are very biased. She has a request to the government to stop the violence and take proper measures to bring the situation to normal. She said that the police and the government are responsible for the prevailing condition.

Katyabibi (75 years) said that since the curfew has been on for more than one month, her family is experiencing financial losses. "How do we acquire food? We are sick and can't get medical assistance. Moreover we are scared. We can't even sleep at nights. We want peace."

Jamilabibi has three sons who are labourers. Since they are unable to go out, the family is without food. "All the people in our family are greatly depressed. We want peace. Our children are scared and want to go back to school. We have no complaints about anyone, all we want is peace."

Karunissa says, "I don't know where and when this is going to end. We are really worried about our future. Will this discrimination remain in people forever now?"

Zubeidaben (42 years), came to Nagarwada from Tarsali, where people looted and completely damaged their house, and also threatened to set it on fire, before her Hindu neighbours intervened saying this would damage their house as well. A Hindu neighbour gave them shelter for two days, during which they requested the police in vain to escort them to a safe place. When their Hindu neighbour requested them, the police took them and left them half way, saying that they would escort them further when they had time and a vehicle. They waited the whole day, and finally came on their own to Nagarwada. She says, "Are we not human beings? Are we not citizens of the same country? How do we deserve this when we have done no wrong, simply because we are Muslims? Is this what you call justice? We are going through a bad time, nobody but God can get us out of this situation. My husband and I worked hard all our life to earn, and we arranged for the marriage of our two daughters. But now even that has gone, there is no hope left for us. My children are dying of hunger and I find myself very helpless."

Husna Y. Pathan (35 years), sent away her husband who was undergoing treatment for paralysis, since she did not want him being a target of police combing. "Now I am alone with my three children. People threaten me that they shall burn my house. The gas pipeline connection also goes through my house as it is right at the corner. If my house is burnt, the entire row, actually the entire area will burn. So for safety I have had to stay awake the whole night for the past month. My son is in SSC but cannot concentrate on his studies due to tensions and fear. Moreover, I also have financial problems because of the curfew. My husband used to take children to the school in his autorickshaw, but now their parents refuse to send them in his rickshaw because he is Muslim."

According to Husna, she has seen many riots but this time it is the worst. People have lost faith in each other. "Our so-called friends belonging to other communities ignore us just because we are Muslims. I am baffled and do not understand how to react to this situation. Are we the culprits? What is our fault? Do we really deserve this?"

6 RAJA MASANI CASE, DANDIA BAZAR

Date of incident: 22 March 2002

The brutal murder of 32 year-old Raja Rasul Masani, owner of Venus Academy, located on the first floor of Apsara Building, near Govind Bhavan, occurred in the fresh outbreak of violence in Vadodara after 15th March. Raja Masani was married to a Hindu Brahmin, and lived at Kunj Plaza, a Hindu-dominated building. The following is based on newspaper coverage of the incident.

Details of incident

On 28th February, a mob had attempted to set fire to Venus Academy, an English coaching class. Raja Masani was apprehensive about further attacks, and had apparently called his friend and former student Bhupesh Joshi on 22nd March to discuss what steps he should take. Joshi arrived within 15 minutes. He advised him to shut down the classes and shift elsewhere for the time being.

Around noon, some 10 masked and armed intruders barged into the office and started abusing Masani. Joshi tried to reason with the mob, telling them that Masani was not a fundamentalist; that he was in fact he was married to a Hindu and should be spared. "But they just did not listen and began attacking him," recalled Joshi.

While one of the men attacked Joshi, accusing him of being a saviour of Muslims, one of the assailants attacked Masani with a sword. Bleeding profusely, Masani jumped from the first floor but could not escape as he fractured his leg. The mob then rushed downstairs and kept stabbing him. Masani was declared brought dead to SSG Hospital.

As soon as the news of his death reached family members, his wife Purvi Trivedi along with her parents rushed to the hospital. Shocked and inconsolable, Purvi wondered why her husband had been killed. "He never harmed anyone. Why did they kill him?" she wailed.

Joshi also jumped from the window to save his life and sustained severe injuries.

People who lived across the road from the academy saw Masani jumping from the first floor. They claim that they had closed their doors immediately and therefore did not see the assailants.

According to a news item (TOI/26.3.02), the Raopura police arrested eight persons accused in the murder of Raja Rasul Masani.

The report of the incident in *Sandesh* the next day was crude and sensational. Splashed on the first page were colour photographs of Raja Masani's bloodied face, and a photograph of his friend Joshi, bloody and injured, sitting on the pavement below. A last page report carried the headline: "Hindi Film Thriller Scene on Apsara Apartments' First Floor".

7 MANJALPUR, MAKARPURA, DANTESHWAR

7.1 Manjalpur

Date of incident: 1 March 2002

The area

Manjalpur was originally a village, which was later engulfed by middle and upper-middle class housing societies. The population is predominantly Hindu, with relatively few Muslims. Violence broke out here on the 28th, with the burning of several shops. The two areas mentioned in this report are Manjalpur Housing Board and Hari Dham Nagar, near Kotar Talavdi. Those affected in Manjalpur Housing Board were fruit and vegetable sellers.

Details of incidents

According to those affected in the Manjalpur Housing Board, the mobs attacked on 1st March. The people hid under their cots, and remained hiding there until 4 a.m. the next day the mobs returned to the houses of Hindus as well. The attackers returned 6-7 times to the area to search for people. Houses were burnt. The people say that they shouted, '*Jai Mata Di*' and wore saris to save their lives and escape. Their *laaris* were burnt, and they now have no means of livelihood.

On 1st March, a 100-150 strong mob attacked Hari Dham Nagar. The residents claim that they were Bajrang Dal people. They burnt the house of Ibrar Ahmed and Mansoob (who are brothers), looted their belongings and then started shouting. The people got scared and fled to the nearby Ishwar Nagar Mosque. There were around 4000-5000 people at the *masjid* on 2nd March. It was all premeditated – that the Bajrang Dal people would come and spread terror by screaming and shouting and when people fled, first loot and then burn the houses. According to them, 'Everything has been completely destroyed – if we had been there, they would have killed us as well.'

Saira Banu, in her late 30s, from Manjalpur Housing Board, fled her home to a camp in Tandalja. There were only 5 Muslim homes out of about 300-400. "Two days before the train incident, a group of young men came and took down the names of the Muslim families. Afterwards, we heard that the Hindus were taking revenge for Godhra. So, on 1st March, my husband, our 6 kids and myself hid in the Hindu neighbour's house. We didn't drink water or eat food for the whole day. I didn't let the kids go out even to urinate. All the time we were there, we were terrified. Then the house owner reluctantly told us to leave, because he was scared they would do something to him and his family. So we left, with nothing but the clothes on our backs. My younger children were barefoot, but we didn't dare go into our house. As we were leaving the colony, we encountered a mob (of about 200 - mostly young men) they caught hold of my husband and said, "If you say *Jai Mata*, we will let you go." So my husband said '*Jai Mata*'. Another gang stopped us a little further, and my husband pleaded with them to let us go, saying we were Hindu. Then we reached the camp."

Role of local people

On one hand, the victims were able to take refuge in their neighbours' homes but on the other, some neighbours looted them. People were saying that nothing would happen, but the victims say that even those people could not save them.

Effects on peoples' lives

Saira's husband used to have a *laari*, but it is now burnt. Her 16-year-old son used to sell vegetables on a cart. But that too is burnt, and they have no money to start up again. They have not made a police complaint because they feel it is of no use - who will listen to them? "The younger kids are not going to school, and they couldn't give the exam in the midst of this madness. Now they have lost a year in school, and we don't know if the school will take them back."

7.2 Makarpura

The area

Makarpura, like Manjalpur, was also originally a village. The Makarpura palace was one of important residences of the Gaekwad royal family. It now houses the Air Force Station in Vadodara. The stretch from Makarpura to the Lakshmi Vilas Palace housed the Sardars of the Gaekwad princely state. With the development of GIDC in the 70s, an industrial area came up around Makarpura village. Slum colonies developed in the area, among which Yashodhara Nagar is the largest. Migrant labourers, mainly from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, live in the slums. The slums have a mixed population of Hindus and Muslims.

On 28th February, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., the Gaekwadi *masjid* in Makarpura was broken and destroyed. From there, a 2500-strong mob entered Indiranagar. A shop, Saheli Ladies Corner, situated in Sona Park Shopping Complex, near LMP Motors, was looted and burnt. The shop-owner states in his FIR that he has incurred losses worth Rs. 3 lakh. He claims that the police were unresponsive to his appeals for help. He has named the VHP and Bajrang Dal as being responsible for the attack.

7.3 Shivshakti Nagar and Indiranagar

Dates of incident: 28 February-2 March 2002

The area

Shivshakti Nagar and Indiranagar are adjoining localities located behind Makarpura Depot (Post GIDC). Behind Indiranagar there is a large open plot, flanked on two sides by Avdhut Nagar and Ramnagar respectively. The following report is based on the testimonies of victims now in Tandalja, and FIRs filed by affected people in Indiranagar, and a deposition made before the Citizens' Tribunal. According to one person from Indiranagar, there

are only 5 Muslim houses in this society; the others belong to Maharashtrians and Biharis. One of the testimonies is of a person originally from Bihar.

Details of incident

On the afternoon of the 28th, at 2.15 p.m., a 100-strong mob, armed with knives, *dharias* and *guptis* gathered at Shivshakti Nagar and burned and looted the houses.

The mob then entered Indiranagar. About 50 people burnt the *masjid*. When the people went to put out the fire, they returned to attack them. The people then started calling the police and even called the local Congress leader. Around 100 phone calls were made, but no action was taken. The police finally came at 3.30 p.m. but were of little help.

According to the affected people, the Bajrang Dal people and local Hindus conducted a meeting, and the rioting started at 10 in the night. About 2000 to 2500 people came and started throwing stones from Tarsali, Ghanshyam Nagar and Indiranagar. One of the persons who testified said that the neighbours saved them, but the neighbour (Farukhbhai Sheikh of D-122) was burnt and killed. Houses were burnt and looted, after which the victims ran away. They set fire to a few houses and also torched vehicles belonging to Muslims, which were parked outside the society. They then fled from the scene. That night, at around 9.30 p.m., a much larger mob (some residents state it was 1000-1500 strong) gathered from both sides of the open plot behind Indiranagar. They attacked the houses and started looting and destroying property. At around 3 a.m., houses were set on fire. Five or six houses were looted and destroyed.

According to Abdulbhai Dawoodbhai Ghanchi (42 years), a resident and social worker from Indiranagar, when the mobs entered Indiranagar, Hindu residents of the society from Maharashtra, U.P. and Bihar joined them. Together they identified the houses of the Muslims, looted the houses and burnt them. From 2.00 p.m. to about 4.00 a.m. the next day the mob was on a rampage. They entered Indiranagar B group and attacked Muslims in Avdhut Nagar, Jhaver Nagar, Narayan Nagar, Shriram Nagar, Shreeji Nagar and Ghanshyam Nagar.

When his appeal for police protection was turned down by PI Sarvaiya on 28th February, Abdulbhai went back to his locality and with a group of other Muslim men began evacuating as many Muslim families as possible to safer places. As the people were going on foot to the villages in the surrounding area, a mob attacked them near Alamgar. Many people were assaulted and looted and women were molested. This mob was led by Bipin Patel of Alamgar. Abdulbhai also heard that some people were burnt alive near Alamgar, among them the Diwan's son from Makarpura Garibnagar.

At about 9.30 p.m. a mob came from the direction of Ramnagar society and attacked Indiranagar D group. People began running helter skelter. He saw Dilipsingh Jethi singh Raj, Hiralal Lotan Patil and Lotan Patal catching hold of his neighbour Farukhbhai as he was trying to escape with his mother. Pradeep alias Raju Vishun More hit him with a crowbar on the chest and he fell down unconscious.

Abdulbhai ran with a group of 60-70 people to Shivshakti Nagar. One of his friends there, Rajubhai Patel, gave them shelter and locked them in a flat. When the mob came to Shivshakti he told them that the Muslims had run away for good and that the Hindu residents were interested in buying off the property cheap so they did not destroy the houses. The next day Rajubhai arranged to shift them safely from the area.

With Rajubhai's help, at about 2 a.m., Abdulbhai returned to Indiranagar to look for his wife and son who were not able to escape. At that time he saw Nattubhai Dayabhai Prajapati and Nareshbhai Sharma throwing burning tyres on Farukhbhai's body and his invalid mother crying near his half-burnt body. He hid in his house with his wife and son. On 1st morning, they left in a tempo for Maretha village, their native place, with some of their retrieved household belongings. For four days thereafter, he went every day to Indiranagar to help families still trapped there.

On 2nd March, Maneja village, which is next to Maretha, was attacked, and Abdulbhai lost everything he had got from his house in Indiranagar. The family then fled to Sasrot village, and then came later to a relief camp in Tandalja since his daughter had to appear for her Std. X Board exams.

A Hindu friend of Abdulbhai's informed him that two of Farukhbhai's cooks returned to his house in Indiranagar on 2nd March from another place. They were unaware of what had transpired. Both these men were attacked and hacked with swords and burnt in the '*bhatti* (kiln).

Rafiqkhan Munirkhan Pathan (30 years), a resident of Shivshakti Nagar 2 (House No.1), was attacked on 2nd March. He decided to leave his wife and 7 year- old child at her mother's place in Tandalja. They packed up their valuables (two expensive watches, gold jewellery, etc.) and were on their way when near Makarpura Depot, a small mob of 6-7 people attacked them with iron pipes and sticks. Rafiqkhan was hit on the head, breaking his skull. His arm was also broken. The scooter on which they were riding was burnt, and their bags were stolen. Rafiqkhan's wife, Naima, sent the son away into the other societies. She was also hit on the back. The mob asked her whether she was Hindu or Muslim. She said Hindu, so they stopped beating her. Leaving Rafiqkhan for dead, the mob left. Naima went in search for help, but there were larger mobs in the area and she could not get out. Finally, her brother-in-law who lived in a nearby society, along with his Hindu neighbours, came to her rescue. They took them to SSG Hospital, filing an FIR at Makarpura police Station en route. A statement was also taken at SSG. Rafiqkhan had had two major operations including extensive plastic surgery by the end of April. He spent a month in SSG and another month at the private Narhari Hospital where they spent Rs 45,000. Their house was also burnt, so they had to shift to Naima's mother's house in Tandalja. Rafiqkhan worked in a small factory at GIDC; it will be a long time before he is physically fit to resume work of any kind. The family had not received any compensation as of 11 May 2002.

7.4 Indiranagar, Railway Colony, Dabhoi Road

Rashida from Indiranagar is a young woman in her early 30s. She recounted how members of six families (around 20 persons) escaped from their homes and hid in the forest for two days without food and water, before they could summon up enough courage to get out from the forest in search of shelter.

Role of the police

According to affected people from Shivshakti Nagar, the police were called at least 10-12 times on the 28th but no help was forthcoming. The policemen were standing near the society "naka" while all the burning and looting was going on. In fact according to reports, the Air Force personnel and the SRP came to help but not the police.

In Indiranagar, the police were called when the attacks started, but there was no action, despite around 100 phone calls being made. When they did come, they said the people should make their own security arrangements. According to other reports, they only incited the mob further and burnt along with them. The policemen are supposed to have said, 'Why are you burning only their belongings, you should put them into the fire one by one.'

Abdulbhai Dawoodbhai went to Makarpura Police Station on 28th February at about 8.00 p.m. to request for protection. PI Sarvaiya, apparently refused, saying that there was no provision to provide protection to Muslims and that they should leave the area at their own risk. At the police station, he saw Bhupendra Lakhawala, the local MLA, and Shabdasharan Brahmabhatt, municipal councillor of Tandalja, both leaders of the BJP, giving orders. On 1st March, when the attack occurred, there was no time to call the police. But it seems they did not come to those who did call them. Even when the police did come later, they just stayed on the main road. And if anything the affected persons were the ones who were harassed – those who were part of the mob remained untouched. The police would first go ahead and then tell the mobs, that now you can go. The patrolling was just a show. According to the people, in Pratapnagar police lines, Muslim police personnel taking refuge were also looted and terrorised.

Relatives of Farukhbhai Sheikh say that it was only on the day after the incident that the police came and registered the *panchnama*.

When Abdulbhai went to the Makarpura Police Station to file an FIR in the Farukhbhai murder case and regarding the attack on his house in Indranagar and Maretha and loss of property, the police refused to register the cases. He then sent written complaints by Registered AD to the concerned police station with copies to the Police Commissioner, Vadodara and Inspector General Police, Ahmedabad on 13th March. After that he went back to the police station to have his complaint recorded. The police told him that they would take his complaint only if he did not mention the names of the accused. After much persuasion the FIR was lodged but so far no investigations have been conducted. Ten days later they also recorded a complaint regarding the attacks on his house in Indiranagar and Maretha and the loss of property. Abdulbhai also contacted other people to come and file their complaints. The police agreed to take them on condition that they would not mention the names of the accused. After recording about 10 complaints the police refused to file any more. They told Abdulbhai not to 'concern himself with the entire area'.

Role of local people

Some houses in Shivshakti Nagar were saved by people from the society. In Indiranagar, people say that it was

neighbours who looted their houses. Abdulbhai says he has several Hindu friends from Indiranagar who keep providing him with news from the area, particularly about stray incidents of attacks on Muslims returning to their locality or about the loot and destruction of property.

Perpetrators of violence

The affected people have named the VHP and Bajrang Dal in their FIRs. Abdulbhai Dawoodbhai has identified some members of the mob that attacked Indiranagar, many of whom were residents of the area. The mob was led by the leaders of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, like Nattubhai Dayabhai Prajapati, Naresh Sharma and A.P. Singh (all residents of Indiranagar, D group; Raju Vishnu More, Lotan Patil, Hiralal Lotan Patil, Sanju Marathe (residents of Narayan Nagar); Dilipsingh Jethisingh Raj (resident of Tulja Nagar), Ramanand R Yadav and Sahebrao Patil (residents of Shreeji Nagar); Shyam Vishnu More, Sanju Marathe (driver) (residents of Ghanshyam Nagar). Others from Maretha involved were: Sanabhai Thakur, Ishwarbhai Thakur, Narayanbhai Thakur, Sureshbhai Chotabhai Thakur, Mansinghbhai Jethabhai Thakur, Nilesh Bhogilal Patel and Chimanbhai Tribhovanbhai Thakur.

The victims recognised the attackers. According to Mohammed Israr, "One Mr. Daji, who lives in Indiranagar, near the Vadsar Phatak, started the riots in our area. Rajesh, Arun, Manoj, Pradeep – they're from Bihar and Maharashtra. Yogesh, Anand, Kamlesh – they all got together; Lala Jadiya, Ajay, Yograj are Gujaratis; Chandra and Saran from Rajasthan. Sanjay Bihari – they all burnt and looted... Pravinbhai from Dharti Hotel, G.I.D.C. gave free alcohol to the Hindus. They gave Rs. 50 - they're Bajrang Dal people. While they were breaking our things, they were shouting, 'Jai Bajrang', 'Jai Shri Ram'. Anand had a *dharis*, Chandra a *gupti*, Saran a sword, Jadiya a *rampuri chappu*...They've looted everything – fridge, television, clothes, utensils – everything. Our *laaris*, Lunas, etc. were also burnt. They've taken all this loot to their own village in Maharashtra."

Loss of life and damage to property

One resident, Farukhbhai, was killed in the attack. Apparently two of his cooks were burned alive.

The following is a preliminary list of losses through burning and looting, based on testimonies of victims of attacks. Mohd. Israr had a business of buying and selling scrap, wholesale cloth and cold drinks, all of which he lost. 4 *laaris*, 1 luna, grinder machine, "*ghar vakhari no samaan*" were also looted. Mehboob: 4 *laaris*, luna, fridge, T.V., cold drinks business, "*ghar vakhari no samaan*". Mohd. Haroon: "*ghar vakhari no samaan*", battery material, had a battery business. Nasir Hussain: 2 *laaris*, 5 rooms, dealer in scrap material; Brass material worth Rs. 75,000 ruined. Hajrabegum: Sold peanuts-*chana* on a *laari* – everything was looted. Used to live in a rented room. She's a widow. Shamshuddin bhai: Kinetic, sewing machine, all household goods all gone. Worked as a driver.

Rehabilitation

Numerous persons are missing- Abbasbhai Sayyed, Pappu, Ansar and Munnu. After hiding the entire night at someone else's house, at six in the morning the victims (about 30-40) left the place and went to Gorwa before reaching Tandalja.

According to Mohammad Israr, they are uncertain about going back. The local people say that they won't let them stay there again. If they talk of returning, they talk of cutting them up. They don't have the courage to go there now and are scared of such incidents occurring again if they do. One woman said that the attackers were given free alcohol, and it could happen again.

7.5 Avdhut Nagar

Date of incident: 17 March 2002

(The following is based on reports in the *Indian Express*, Vadodara edition, and testimonies of Makarpura victims.)

Avdhut Nagar, near Indiranagar, was affected by the first phase of violence, when Muslim houses were burnt on 1st March. People had fled the area after the incident. On 15th March, Munnabhai and others from Avdhut Nagar asked for protection from the Makarpura Police Station to salvage some of their household goods. The police protection was provided but a rumour was also circulated that the Muslims were returning on a retaliatory attack mission to Avdhut Nagar.

On 17th March, a group of about 30 persons went to salvage and retrieve their belongings. They had taken two tempos and were escorted by an armed police van with around six policemen. Riaz Mohammed led the convoy on his motorcycle.

On their way back after loading the tempos, the convoy found the road barricaded near Indiranagar, and a 2000-

strong mob armed with weapons and stones confronting them. One tempo went past the barricade. The other tempo, carrying about 20 people, was attacked near Indiranagar by the mob. Two people were lynched, and 20 others sustained injuries. According to local people, four people died in the incident and not two as the press reported the next day.

The policemen who were accompanying the group did not fire a single shot. According to the people, the policemen in the van yelled to them to run for their lives. The survivors believe that the attack was pre-meditated since the road leading to the highway had been blocked. They believe that residents of adjoining localities had done this.

PSI N G Vanecha of Makarpura Police Station was suspended following the attack for not opening effective fire. He claimed that there was little that the police could do when confronted by such a big mob. The police claim that 30 persons were arrested for the attack.

7.6 Vadsar Road

Date of incident: 1 March 2002

Details of incidents

The incident started at 5 o'clock with mobs shouting, so the Muslims of Shivdas Society took shelter in the Ishwar Nagar Mosque. There were about 150-200 people from the entire neighbourhood seeking refuge there. The people of Ishwar Nagar have not suffered much loss. Those whose houses were scattered were attacked first. First the houses were looted and then set on fire. The houses of the Hindus were not touched. Those Muslims who were tenants of Hindus had their belongings either looted and the house left untouched, or their belongings were brought out and then burnt outside the house. Muslim houses have been burnt.

Salma Begum Mehboob Ali, about 30 years old, from GIDC, Vadsar Road, fled to a camp in Tandalja. Her *mohalla* had 7 Muslim houses, out of which one was burnt down, and the rest looted on 28th February. Said Salma, "A huge mob came, brandishing *talwaars* and shouting '*Jai Bajrang Bali*'. They were people from around our house - one Manoj Kumar and Yogesh were people we definitely know. Most of them were drunk. They threatened us, and the police (from Makarpura police station) didn't do anything. The police said '*Mar jao, tum log sab*' (All of you just go and die). If the police had come and intervened, the mob could never have done what they did. The Patel gave us shelter on 28th night. When on 1st we went home, they threatened us again. This time, the Patel was reluctant to shelter us, so we left and came to this camp. When we went three days later, our house was completely looted. There was nothing left."

Salma used to run a small business of *samosas*, *chai* and *bhajiya*s. The build-up to the event was clear, according to her. On 21st February itself, there was a huge local meeting of Bajrang Dal, after which there were strong rumours that 'something is going to happen'. According to Salma, some of the local Bajrang Dal members had come two days before the Godhra incident and stuck photos of Hanuman on the houses of Hindus, to identify the 'right' and 'wrong' houses.

Role of the police

There was no help from the police. Instead most reports said they were helping the mob. The police were asking why they were burning Muslim property and not the Muslims.

The victims went to Makarpura Police Station on 2nd March itself, to register a FIR, but the police tore up their written complaint. It was only on 21st March that they managed to get their complaint registered.

Role of local people

The victims know who burnt and looted the shops and houses. They named Manoj, Yogesh, and Maradi as being part of the mob. The Bajrang Dal is reported to be behind the mob fury.

There was also some amount of local enmity. Sirajbhai Kalubhai Mohammad Sheikh reported that Vijaybhai Shrimali (of C-19 Amrut Society, Behind New Era High School) had threatened them 2-3 times over the past one year to vacate the house. They could not find another house so they did not vacate. According to Sirajbhai, Mr. Shrimali who works with P.F. incited 3-4 people in their neighbourhood, telling them that this was the right opportunity to get rich quickly. Apparently, this is how he got support from neighbours. According to them the Bajrang Dal people came and looted their house, threw them out and then burnt their belongings.

Losses

Sirajbhai Kalubhai Mohd. Sheikh deals in scrap. There has not been much damage as far as the business is concerned. But cash as well as jewellery were looted.

Rehabilitation

According to Salma Begum Mehboob Ali, they do not want to go back to the area.

7.7 Danteshwar

Anupam Nagar, behind Pratapnagar Railway Colony

Date of incident: 28 February and 1 March 2002

Details of incidents

On 28th February, a mob of around 100 came in 2-3 tempos, armed with swords, *guptis* and pipes. First they looted the shops, and then set them on fire. The neighbours were warned of the imminent danger, and were asked to leave for their own safety.

On 1st March, around noon, the mobs returned, looting shops belonging to the Muslim community, and then destroying and burning the houses. All their household effects – furniture, televisions, refrigerators and utensils - were looted. Only Muslim houses were targeted.

The following report is based on the testimony given to the fact-finding team by Sairabanu who had come from Anupam Nagar in Danteshwar to Tandalja Relief Camp, Vadodara.

There were 16 Muslim households. 3 of them ran grain retail shops. All of the houses and shops were looted on 2nd March. The loss is around Rs 30,000 per shop. "The mob came and began to abuse us, yelling filthy abuses at me and my teenage daughter. "Drag the bitch and her daughter out, etc." We ran with just the clothes on our back. My *mama's* (uncle) daughter was to get married on that day (2nd) - she even had *haldi* on her body. All her dowry was kept in the house. All of it is now gone. My sister-in-law (*jethani*) had just delivered a baby girl that day. She and her new-born baby also had to run for their lives," said Saira.

According to her, their houses were not burnt because they were too close to the Hindu houses that may have got damaged. But all the houses were looted and destroyed. Each *jhuggi* costs Rs 80-90,000 to re-build. They went on 11th March to Makarpura Police Station to register the FIR, but have not got a copy. The *panchnama* had also not yet been done.

Perpetrators of violence

Saira said that she did not know who attacked them, since they were hiding inside before escaping from the back of the house. The faces that they did manage to see were covered with scarves. "The mob was shouting, '*Har Har Mahadev, Jai Shri Ram and Hindustan Hamara Hai*'. Those Hindu neighbours who tried to help were taunted by the mob, '*Yeh tumhare kya lagtey?*' (Who are these people to you?)

Role of the police

When the police came, they were asked not to fire because the mob included boys from the Police Lines. One Abdulbhai, a resident of the Police Lines, requested the attackers to let the Muslims leave the place.

Some people knew Jayaben Thakkar, BJP MP, so they went to the police and used her name to lodge an F.I.R. with the Makarpura Police Station. The police took down certain points but did not go to the area.

Police complaints have been filed and assistance has been asked for to go back and fetch anything that remains, but no help has been forthcoming.

Rehabilitation

About rebuilding their lives, Saira said, "People tell us not to go back. The Hindus say, '*In log ka maal mila, lekin jaan nahi mila*' (We got these peoples' possessions, but not their lives). Now, we don't have the courage to go back. In any case, the Muslims houses there were dispersed - one in 80-90 Hindu houses. We don't feel safe. We must only stay with each other if we want to save our lives. Even if the tension goes down, we know they will kill us this time. Munnabhai Bangariya and two others went to GIDC, Makarpura (Vadodara) to try to salvage some of their belongings. (The Avdhut Nagar incident.) The irony of it is that they went with a police escort. But a mob

surrounded and lynched them, while the police constables ran away. How can we hope for security when this is the situation," she asked.

8 BEST BAKERY, DABHOI ROAD

Date of incident: 1 March 2002

The area

Best Bakery is in Hanuman Tekri, on Dabhoi Road on the outskirts of Vadodara. It is a lower middle class and poor neighbourhood. Most of the residents are Hindus; there were very few Muslim families. The *basti* consists of small houses and very narrow lanes. The houses mostly have tin roofs and very few were more than one-storeyed. The Best Bakery was one of the few structures that had more than one storey.

Habibulla Abdul Rauf, the owner, died of natural causes 10 days before the incident. He had started his bakery a few years ago, but the family was not staying in the same locality. They shifted to this area only 6 months before this incident. All other Muslims staying in the area had already left their houses before the incident. Only this family was staying because they had been assured of safety by Jayantibhai Chaiwala, an influential person of the area. The details in this report have been provided by Zahira Sheikh, 18 years, daughter of Habibulla Abdul Rauf.

Details of the incident (narrated by Zahira Sheikh)

"On the morning of 1st March, Jayantibhai Chaiwala, who runs a *chai* shop, and is also a sanitation contractor, came over when all the tension began, and assured us that nothing would happen to us. He said, '*Fikr mat karna, hum log hai.*' (The plot on which the bakery stands was bought from Jayanti's brother. It was an illegal transaction, since it was not registered land. The family migrated from Bombay about 20 years ago, and Zahira's father first used to work in Iqbalbhai's bakery, after which he branched out on his own. They used to stay at Navapura, and moved into the bakery only about 6 months ago.)

"Nothing untoward happened during the day, but my uncle, fearing something, had told us all not to go out of the house.

"Around 8.30 at night, the mob came from Ganeshnagar side. They were shouting loudly - making sounds like *adivasis*. They had swords (*talwaar*), bottles, stones, tins of petrol and kerosene, and were beating metal plates (*thalis*). There were about 200-300 men and boys. Two well-built persons were leading the mob. One of them was wearing a yellow striped jersey and the other a khaki shirt. They were looking very fierce. I don't know their names but can recognise them if I see them. The mob was talking to us in Hindi, not Gujarati.

"When we saw all this, my uncle ran inside and locked the doors. We ran upstairs. Soon, Lal Mohammed's timber shop in front was burnt down. We had heard rumours earlier in the day that it was going to be burnt. So when it was actually burnt, we started getting really scared.

"At first, they looted the bakery. The mob began pulling out all the things. Then they set fire to the room on the ground floor. The room was full of wood, which we had just got fresh stocks of. The room began to burn easily. We were all on the terrace, but my uncle (whose leg was hurt) went down to the first floor. My sister went with him to help him. But the mob came up, sprinkled petrol and set fire to the room. My uncle and sister got burnt in it. Firoze Pathan (a '*chacha*') and his wife and children, who used to live next door, were also in their house; all of them were burnt.

"The whole night we were on the terrace, and the mob kept pelting stones at us, abusing us and trying to make us come down. They kept trying to put a ladder from behind the house to reach us, but the walls were too hot. The whole night, the mob surrounded the house and kept abusing us (*ma-behen ki gaali*). The Hindu who lived at the back of our house also began to throw stones. Champak Policewala, the Hindu neighbour who had promised to help us when my father died, did nothing to help us.

"Some of the people in the mob whom I could recognise were

1. Mr. Jayanti Chaiwala and his two sons Lala and one other son (name not known);
2. Mr. Mahesh (Jayanti's relative)
3. Mr. Munna (")

4. Mr. Sanjay Thakkar
5. Mr. Santosh Thakkar
6. Mr. Jagadish Rattiwala
7. Mr. Dinesh Bakeriwala
8. Mr. Shanabhai
9. A person known as Painter

Police response

“At 8.30 p.m. itself, when Lal Mohammed's godown was burning, we rang up Panigate police station. They said they would send someone. We rang up 3-4 times, and each time they said someone would come. After about an hour, the police van came to the area, but the mob ran behind Lal Mohammed's godown and hid there. The police vehicle didn't come into the lane, but turned off from the main road itself. The phone wire was cut off some time at night.

“In the morning, we kept pleading and asking for forgiveness (*'hum ne maafi maanga'*). We pleaded for our lives, but the mob, who had been joined by more people in the morning, just laughed. Jayantibhai told us to come down after throwing down our weapons. We told him we had no weapons, and swore on Allah's name. After a while, they put a ladder at the back and helped us come down. They snatched Rs. 2000 from my brother, as well as his watch. They kept beating us and pushing us, and brought us to the house of a Hindu (the family had been sent away or locked up - we didn't see them). The mob kept yelling, *'Maaro saalon kd'*. They beat the boys more, and when the Hindu workers were trying to escape, they killed them with swords right there. They kept saying 'rape these women', and were trying to drag us (the women) into the jungle. By that time around 11 a.m. on 2^d March the police arrived, and fire engines also arrived to put out the fire. Then the fire brigade brought my *naani* down from the terrace where she was still hiding.

“The police took down my statement right there. Then took my *naani* and me to Panigate police station. The injured were taken to hospital. When they saw I was injured too (gash on my head) they took me to the hospital. I had to give a statement there too and once more in the police station. All three times, I was made to sign my statement, but the statement was not read out to me, nor did I read it. I stayed in the police station till noon on 3^d March. After that Iqbal Bhai (whom the police had contacted) came to pick us up.

Details

1. Habibulla Abdul Rauf (died of natural causes 10 days before the incident)
2. Ration Card No. H 109 in the name of Habibulla Abdul Rauf [7 names on the ration card]
3. Address: Hanuman Tekri, Dabhoi Road.
4. Number of persons in the family: 7

The following persons were present at the time of the incident:

Immediate Family

1. Kausar Ali (M) 35 yrs. Maternal Uncle. Burnt to death in incident. Body recovered on 23rd March was possibly his. His widow and 6 children are in the village in U.P.:
 - (i) Shahjahan Kausar Ali(F) 35, Widow, pregnant.
 - (ii) Yasmina (F) 15
 - (iii) Abu Sufian (M) 10 yrs
 - (iv) Idu (M) 8 yrs
 - (v) Salman (M) 3 yrs,
 - (vi) Shabana (F) 5 yrs
 - (vii) Fatima (F) 12 yrs
2. Sheikh Sherunissa (F) 40 yrs, mother, still in hospital.
3. Nafidullah (M) 20 yrs, brother, discharged from hospital. Mentally disturbed due to the incident.
4. Yasmin Nafidullah (F) 18, sister in law. Survived.
5. Sheikh Saira (F), 19 yrs, in hospital with a head injury.
6. Sheikh Sabira (F) 17 yrs, burnt to death in incident.
7. Sheikh Zahira (giving witness), (F) 18 yrs, injured on the head.
8. Sheikh Nasidullah (M) 16 yrs, brother, both legs burnt, still in hospital.
9. Sheikh Hasina (F) 75 yrs, grandmother (*naani*), survived.

Other Extended Family Members

1. Shabnam (F) 35 yrs, (w/o Sheikh Aslam), burnt to death. Aslam had already left for the village when the incident occurred.
2. Babli (F) 4yrs - hacked to death and then burnt.
3. Sipli (F) 4yrs - hacked to death and then burnt.
4. Pathan Firoze (M) 40 yrs, escaped from the balcony, but burnt to death in the jungle nearby.
5. Zainab (F) 35 yrs (w/o Firoze) burnt to death.
6. Baby boy 4 yrs - child of Feroze and Zainab
7. Baby girl 3 yrs - child of Feroze and Zainab

Workers

1. Baliram (M) 20 yrs - Nepali - hacked to death.
2. Prakash (M) 20 yrs, from U.P, hacked to death.
3. Rajesh (M) 19 yrs - local, Vagodia Road, burnt to death.

Also burnt was Nasroo, 18, a Muslim boy from Bahraich district who used to live in the bakery.

Workers Injured but Alive

1. Sheikh Tufail (M) 18 yrs
2. Sheikh Rayees (M) 18 yrs
3. Shezaad Sheikh (M) 18 yrs - has lost his memory and is in hospital
4. Sheloon (Shezaad's brother) - still in hospital.

Loss of Property (Approximately)

1. 6 rooms - 1,000 sq ft (2 storeys)
2. Residence - worth 10 lakh
3. Bakery - worth 10 lakh (including slicer machine, cake making machine and furniture)
4. Rs 3 lakh in cash was burnt.

5. Raw material:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Maida - 50 bags: | Rs 40,000=00 |
| Ghee - 30 tins: | Rs 16,500=00 |
| Oil - 10 tins: | Rs 5,000=00 |
| Margarine- 20 boxes: | Rs 5,500=00 |
| Packing Materials (plain): | Rs 3,500=00 |
| Packing Materials (printed bags): | Rs 20,000=00 |
| Sugar: | Rs 3,000=00 |
| TOTAL: | Rs 9,35,000=00 |

Vehicles

1. Three-wheeler tempos - 2
2. Scooter
3. Scooty
4. Motorbike (new - Rs 40,000)
5. Cycles: 2, Rs 2,000=00
6. T.V.-V.C.R. Rs 22,000=00
7. Refrigerator Rs 8,000=00
8. Other household things, clothes etc. Rs 32,000=00

Rs. 1,250 as 'compensation' for the house and Rs. 80,000 for the death of two family members, Kausar Ali (M) and Shabira (F) have been given to the family.

9 TARSALI

The Tarsali area, in the southeastern part of Vadodara City, has several pockets of Muslim population. The largest Muslim colony is Noor Park, a 13-year-old settlement, with 185 houses. In the Slum Board Housing Colonies surrounding Noor Park there were another 40 Muslim houses. Vishaal Nagar had 27, Govind Nagar 15, Sharad Nagar 8, Moti Nagar and Rajiv Nagar 4, Indiranagar 62 and Danteswar 15. Many of the people from Noor Park are vegetable and fruit sellers at the Tarsali market.

9.1 Noor Park

Dates of incidents: 27 February – 22 March 2002

Background and details of incidents

Since 28th February, almost all the Muslim houses have been destroyed in the area and their inhabitants forced to flee to other areas. 185 houses of Noor Park including the *Masjid* suffered large-scale destruction. The area saw the deaths of three Muslims on 1st March and around 25 persons were injured. Around 150 *laaris* and 15 shops belonging to the Muslims were burnt down.

The following report is based on testimonies filed by residents of Noor Park, who were at Dhaniyari towards the end of March.

This area had no previous history of communal tension. In fact, young Muslim men report celebrating Hindu and Muslim festivals together with Hindu friends. According to local residents, there have been meetings in the area by the Bajrang Dal beginning three months ago, and that had changed the situation quite a lot.

A meeting was held by the VHP around the end of January 2002, at the ITI grounds. Pravin Togadia addressed the meeting and this was telecast on the local channel of the cable operator. Shamshersinh, one of the residents of Dadu Nagar in Tarsali area, reported that in this meeting Togadia spoke very clearly about how the Hindus should have no relations with the Muslim community. It was also said that they should not buy things from Muslim shops and should not even offer them water if they came to their houses.

On 27th February, people heard the news on the TV and radio about trouble at Godhra. In the evening at around 6 p.m., some people - reportedly from the Bajrang Dal - came and told everyone about the Gujarat *Bandh* on 28th February. They all agreed to the *Bandh* and decided not to open their shops. On the 28th at 9 a.m., a meeting was organised by the BJP at the bus stand. After this meeting, mobs of people from the BJP, the Bajrang Dal and others were going around and ensuring that everything was closed. If any *laari* was open they burnt the handcart. They targeted the Muslim handcarts. First they would loot them and then set them on fire. This continued till about 4 p.m.

On 1st March at 2 a.m., a mob of about 1000 people came and surrounded Noor Park. There were some local people in that mob as well as outsiders. In self-defence the residents of Noor Park tried to get onto their roofs to throw stones on the mob. But there were people on the top floors of the three storey Slum Quarters Buildings around who threw back stones. Some people from Noor Park got hurt in the process because they were at a lower height.

From 9 a.m. onwards, the residents of Noor Park started to leave the locality. They were unable to carry any of their belongings.

From 1 p.m. in the afternoon, the mobs systematically looted and burnt all the houses in Noor Park. They also followed and assaulted people who were trying to run away. The nature of the attack emerges from the evidence given by some residents. A mob of about 3000 people watched the Noor Park residents leave. The lane had been cordoned off. When the residents of Noor Park turned around to run, they were followed by a mob carrying swords, *guptis*, acid bulbs, pipes, chains and other such weapons. While they were trying to hide from the crowd, two of the residents, Saleem Memon and his brother-in-law's father, were caught by the crowd and attacked. According to one report, Saleem had acid put on him and he was then dragged inside a hut. Saleem died and it appears that the older man was attacked by swords and left for dead, but he survived. According to Shamshersinh's testimony, Saleem's body was found, at around 5.30 p.m., in the hut where they saw him being attacked with his face down and covered with a piece of cloth. Though called, the police finally arrived at around 8.30 p.m. It was thought that they would take the corpse away, but they didn't do so. In the morning of 2nd March, according to reports, the body was lying by the pond and pigs were eating it. At 9.30 a.m, the police were called and by 10 a.m. they came and by 11 a.m. took away the corpse to SSG Hospital, where a post mortem report was done.

About 14 others ran and hid in a house. The mob threw acid, fire torches and gas cylinders inside. Before the fire could catch on, two children who were with them started screaming and the police who was passing by happened to open the door and let them out

From 1st March onwards, Hindus of the area looted and destroyed all property that remained. Any houses that were left were burnt. Some houses in Noor Park were destroyed as late as 18th March. No one is in a position to return

to that area as of now. They have all shifted to Dhaniyari, a place 2-3 km away. Till 22nd March, the mobs were still collecting. On 22nd March around 6 p.m., a *laari* was burnt opposite the *jakat naka*

Role of the police

Right from 28th February, when the mobs came, the police were moving with them for their protection. While the mobs went on the rampage, residents such as Shamsersinh who stays some distance away at Dadu Nagar, made almost 100 phone calls to the police but they did not turn up. Yusufbhai of Noor Park tried to call the Fire Brigade but they too did not come. Even later, when Saleem Memon was killed, the police refused to come and take the body for post mortem, and only did so when the pigs had got to the body.

Role of the local people

There were local people in the attacking mobs. On the other hand, on 1st March, when Saleem Memon's brother-in-law's father recovered consciousness, some Hindus took him to their home and hid him there till the other residents arrived with the police.

Accused in Salim Memon's murder

Raju Bangri (of Adarsh Nagar, a Bajrang Dal leader); Alpesh (also of Bajrang Dal), Jagdish Patel (Ex-Sarpanch of Tarsali and BJP member), Amar Ghanti, Raman Ishwar Dishwala, Raju Thakore, Anil Tailor (both of Vijay Nagar). An eyewitness account of Saleem Memon's murder by Nazeer Sikandarbai Rathod was filed on 22nd March. A copy of FIR was lodged by Ismailbhai Musabhai Memon on 2nd March, at 8.30 p.m.

Accused for rioting and arson

Raju Thakore, Jasbhai Patel.

9.2 Vishal Nagar, Tarsali

The sequence of events here too followed generally the same pattern as Noor Park. In addition, at 3:30 p.m. on 1st March, Nasir Hussain Liaquat Hussain and his son were stoned, trapped in tyres and then burnt alive.

Accused in Iqbal Hussain and Nasir Hussain's murders

Narendrasinh Solanki (BJP, Taluka Panchayat member), Sunil Bhoieto, Ajit Kalia (of Vishal Nagar), Sunil Patel (of BJP), Sudhir Meldi, Pradip aka Padiyo, Kallo Jaiswal (he was injured also and has been arrested under PASA earlier), Bhupendra, Ravi, Dharmendra, Kanchia, Manish Gurkha (all of Vishal Nagar)

A complaint letter was sent by Registered AD to Commissioner of Police for Iqbal Nasir Husain and Nasir Hussain Liaquat Husain's murder cases.

9.3 Raghovpura Village, near Tarsali

Date of incident: 1 March 2002

Raghovpura is a village of about 100 families (both Hindu and Muslim) about 12 km from Tarsali, off the Vadodara-Bombay Highway (NH 8). There are almost equal numbers of Muslim and Hindu families living here. The families whose houses have been destroyed are well-off agriculturists growing jowar and cotton, and are mostly related to each. They are mostly Patels, originally from Bharuch, but have been here for the last three generations. Out of a total of 41 houses belonging to Muslims, 25 houses and the *Masjid* along with two buildings belonging to the *Masjid* were burnt. Jowar and cotton stored in the houses ready for the market were lost. The total loss has been estimated at least around Rs. 80 lakh.

The following report has been filed on a joint testimony of Mubarak Bhai, Rafiq Patel and Javed Patel.

Tension started only on the day after the incident at Tarsali. There was no problem either on 27th or on 28th February.

On 1st March, Subhash Bhai Mafatbhai Chota, the local Bajrang Dal leader, came in the afternoon to the neighbouring village, Patarveni. He is from the same village. A meeting was held near the well that is between Patarveni and Salaad villages, in which a large number of people from that village participated. From Raghovpura too, a few people had gone. Two of them were Hindu friends of local Muslims who used to play cricket together in the evenings. They came to play cricket and told one of the residents, Mubarak Bhai, that plans were being made to burn Muslim houses. They have not been named so as to protect them.

The residents began to shift the women and children to Dhaniyari from Raghovpura. About 15-20 men remained in the village. Only PSI Vadalia from Varnama Police Station and two constables from Kelanpur were present in the village. They had been there since the morning. When they were told of the news of impending trouble and that therefore, they should ask for more police support, Vadalia is reported to have said, "Don't worry, we are here".

Rafiq Patel, one of the residents, was at the house of his neighbour Ismail Ibrahim (ex-Sarpanch), when the PSI along with two constables came there and asked them to put on the TV and VCR. All the three policemen were drunk at the time. They were not letting Patel Bhai get up. It appeared they wanted Rafiq Patel and Ismail Ibrahim to get killed. Sounds of a mob approaching the village were heard at about 9.30–10 p.m. When the PSI was informed of the noise, he said that it must be the jackals in the jungle. The residents ran and hid in the last house in the lane. Mubarak Bhai was on the 1st floor and was an eyewitness to the incident.

A mob of about 400-500 people entered the lane of the *Masjid* around 10-10.15 p.m. Mubarakbhai recognised Shantilal Bhai, the Sarpanch of the village, who is from the BJP, Nattu Bhai, Subhash Bhai Mafatchota, his father, brother and brother-in-law, Bipin Bhai, Natwar Narang, Mahendra Patel. They were carrying weapons, swords (*jariya*), *lathis* and tin cans of kerosene and some were also carrying bottles. Subhash Bhai Mafatchota was carrying a *jariya*.

The mob first went to the *Masjid*. They ransacked the *Masjid* and pulled out all the utensils and the *Quran Sharif* and started to burn it. People had climbed onto the *Masjid* and were destroying the railings. They threw down the amplifiers that were on top of the towers. Then they threw kerosene from the tin cans and set fire to all the utensils and the *Quran Sharif*. Some sort of inflammable chemical was also used. The smell was reportedly like that of petrol and kerosene. They also burnt the *Masjid* and the two buildings opposite the *Masjid* that belonged to it; the fire caught on and started to burn all the adjoining houses. The PSI and the two constables were with the mob. There were shouting slogans like "*Miya ne kato*", "*Miya ne jalao*" and "*Unki aurato ni ijjat luto*".

When the fire started spreading, the men tried to call the Fire Brigade, who said they could not come as they had too many fires to attend to. The mobs started to enter the houses. There were also people surrounding the village. They did not burn Rafiq Bhai's house because adjoining it were Hindu houses. A three-wheeler Tempo Trax, belonging to Ashwin Bhagubhai Patel of the village, was used to cart all the things they looted from the houses. The Fiat car of Rafiq Patel parked in front of his house was also burnt and two tractors belonging to Javed Bhai were also burnt. After about two hours, someone shouted that the police was coming and the mob dispersed.

Meanwhile, the rest of the people who had been hiding escaped and went near the lake and from there to Dhaniyari. Near Dhaniyari, a police van saw them. They were also carrying some weapons for self-defence. The police saw this and probably thought they were Bajrang Dal members and went away. They reached Dhaniyari around 4.30 a.m.

Eventually, a room belonging to the temple, which is near the Masjid (the temple is close to the Masjid) caught fire and someone called the Fire Brigade from Dandia Bazar. They came and put the fire out. When they were told to put out the fire in the *Masjid* and the houses, they said they wouldn't do it. The fire engine people were told by wireless that they were supposed to extinguish all fires, but they said they had no water. The PSI told Mubarakbhai to run or else he would book him under Section 186. The PSI told him, "If you hadn't burnt the train, this would not have happened." Mubarakbhai says 'Did we burn the train?' Using the water in the *Masjid's* tank, he put out the fire. The houses were still burning, as all the water was over and so he couldn't put the fire out completely. The houses were smouldering for two whole days.

Mubarakbhai personally saw the following people as he was watching from his hiding place the whole night while the houses were burning: Subhashbhai of Bajrang Dal, Rabhipura Village Sarpanch Deepabhai Patel, Raghovpura Sarpanch Shantilal Patel, Natwarbhai Naranbhai Patel, Mahendrabhai Patel, Bipinbhai Bhailalbhahi Patel, Amitbhai Jashbhai Patel, Motibhai Gordhanbhai Patel, Sarpanch of Megakui village Satishbhai Thakor, his brother Chandresh Thakor, and many others.

Role of the police

From 1st March onwards, PSI Vadalia seems to have been involved in the incident. He was present along with two constables at the village after most residents, particularly women and children had shifted out to Dhaniyari. Rather than protect the remaining residents, he appears to have tried to cover up the approach of the mob and once the mob arrived, he along with his constables joined them. The police also refused to entertain FIRs or complaints. On the contrary, PSI Vadalia is supposed to have said, "If you hadn't burned the train, this would not have happened."

In fact, PSI Vadalia was willing to register complaints only if no names were mentioned. No complaints were registered, as the residents did not want to give vague general statements. It appears that afterwards PSI Vadalia came with MLA Chudasama of the BJP to the Dhaniyari campsite for “compromise”. They were told to go away.

Role of the local people

Local people were involved in the looting and burning including the village Sarpanch Shantilalbai Patel.

10 TANDALJA

This report is written by the residents of Tandalja

An area that has been in the news throughout the post-Godhra violence in the city, Tandalja has, through the efforts of the local people, maintained peace and harmony despite grave provocations by the VHP-Bajrang Dal combine. Even in places as far as 10 km away, like Gorwa, Manjalpur, Nizampura and Sama, rumours were floating around since 1st March about impending attacks by organised mobs of Muslims from Tandalja. The local press, particularly *Sandesh* in the initial period, and others later, were party to such vicious rumour mongering. A picture was created of Tandalja as a haven of thousands of criminals with murderous weapons.

A term widely used by outsiders for this area is ‘Mini Pakistan’, simply because it is a Muslim majority area. To ‘prove’ the stereotyped image of Muslims as bloodthirsty marauders, the Hindutva forces carried out a systematic campaign. It was because of the tireless work of the team of people from both communities that at the end of two months of violence in Gujarat and Vadodara these rumours and stereotypes were proved to be false. We are presenting our experiences in the hope that they may help others to formulate strategies for keeping peace in their own areas.

The area

Tandalja is an area with about 40,000 people in some 50 housing colonies including slums. It is situated on the western border of Vadodara City, with Bhayli village to the west, Atladra to the east and Vasna to the north. The area was included in the Vadodara Municipal Corporation in 1984. The Muslim population is about 80% and Hindus constitute about 20%. Besides Gujaratis, the Hindu population includes people from Sikar district of Rajasthan and Agarwals from U.P. Tandalja also has a small Christian population of approximately 800 people and a well-known school, Basil, which is run by missionaries. It houses a Protestant church.

Slums and some of the housing colonies in the area have a mixed population. After the 1969 riots, the area provided shelter to Muslim as well as Hindu refugees from Vadodara as well as from villages like Jambusar. Talavadi, a large slum with a current population of 850 families (about 30% Hindus and 70% Muslims) was set up in 1969.

In the early 1980s middle-class and upper middle-class housing societies came up in the area. Many of these societies were developed by partnerships of Hindu and Muslim builders – partnerships that continue even today.

Economic profile

Only 20% of the Muslims are salaried employees. The rest of the people are self-employed. They are auto-rickshaw drivers, painters, tailors, vegetable sellers, or run small enterprises like garages, cycle repair shops, make seat covers, deliver milk and newspapers, buy scrap, etc. The women do work such as domestic labour in people’s homes, tailoring, etc. Some women also work as agricultural labourers in nearby villages. There are a handful of bigger businessmen in the area, such as an optical exporter and a spectacle-frame manufacturer.

About 25% of the shops belong to Hindus; a resident of Subhanpura has a big provision store in the middle of Tandalja village. A gold jewelry shop belonging to Hindus is also located here. Muslim- and Hindu-owned shops are intermingled, and none of these have been damaged in any way during these riots.

Educational institutions

There are two high schools in the area: MES (Muslim Education Society) and Basil School, a government primary school, and a school run by the Faiz trust for primary education.

After the 1982 riots on the occasion of *Tulsi Vivah*, the *Dar-ul-Ulm* was shifted from Mandvi (in the walled city) to Tandalja because Tandalja was not prone to riots. The *Dar-ul-Ulm* has 300 odd students; the primary section has

government recognition. There is also a seven-year training in Islamic studies, in which Gujarati and Urdu are taught.

Religious places and institutions in the area

There are a number of temples and mosques in the area. A Muslim, Ibrahimbhai built one of the temples -Shankar ka Mandir -; it shares a wall with a *masjid*. Another *mandir*, the Raneshwar *Mandir*, has been there for much longer. New temples have come up near Muktinagar, Gautam Sarabhai housing colony and Mahabalipuram, predominantly Hindu residential colonies. There are ten mosques in the area.

Social relationships

While Tandalja village has substantial mixed areas of Hindu and Muslim houses, in some of the newly developed parts, Hindu and Muslim areas are clearly demarcated. However, there is plenty of social interaction between Hindus and Muslims – they visit each other, are invited to each other's weddings, and also eat together. Hindus and Muslims give gifts and sometimes perform *kanyadaan'* at each other's weddings. There were no formal associations of Hindus and Muslims for maintenance of peace or for Hindu-Muslim co-operation before the post-Godhra violence.

Political scenario

Until 1994-5, the corporators were always from the Congress. The presence of the BJP in local politics is a post-Advani *rath yatra* (1989-90) phenomenon. It was only after the *rath yatra* that the BJP was able to win three out of four seats (the electoral ward includes many surrounding Hindu societies as well). The BJP has also won a few supporters amongst the Muslims.

Ibrahimbhai and Ilyasbhai are two residents who have been actively involved in peacekeeping efforts in Tandalja. For them the Babri *Masjid* became an issue only after the *rath yatra* and the demolition in 1992. Before that they didn't even know of its existence. Ibrahimbhai says that for a Muslim the *masjid* that really matters is the one near his house where he goes to read his daily *namaaz*. "What is the use of a *masjid*? It is to pray. We can't go to Ayodhya five times in a day to pray, so what does that *masjid* mean to us?" Besides, they also say that according to Islam, only a place where *namaaz* is read five times in a day is to be considered a *masjid*. Since this was not happening at the Babri *Masjid*, it is not really a *masjid*. "If building a *mandir* at Ayodhya means that we will have peace here, let them build it. The trouble happens in Ayodhya, but it is the poor Hindus and Muslims of Gujarat who have to suffer each time this issue is raked up."

Peace efforts

Vadodara is a communally sensitive city and has seen riots in 1982, 1985, 1990, and some tension in 1992. Tandalja was totally peaceful during all these riots. Not a single significant incident took place in the area in all these years. The area has never been under curfew before the current communal violence.

Within the first few days of the present riots, residents of the area got together and formed peace committees. Muslims as well as Hindus from the area have tried to reach out to as many adjacent societies as possible, to meet with them and build an atmosphere of trust. No significant incidents of communal violence, burning or looting occurred in the area in the two months following the Godhra incident, despite the violence raging in other parts of Vadodara and the influx of refugees. At the height of the crisis, refugee camps in Tandalja sheltered more than 5,000 people.

24-hour vigilance

It has not been easy to keep peace in such a large area in the communally charged atmosphere, particularly in the first weeks after the Godhra incident, when communal forces were continuously trying to destabilise the area through rumours and provocative actions. We observed the strategy of the Hindutva forces to decide our counter-strategy. Their strategy has been to create insecurity in the minds of Hindus and tell them that the other side is preparing to attack, that Hindus will be attacked if they are not vigilant. They also inspire them to keep night vigils by creating insecurity in the minds of people. Then they induce them to keep arms, which they themselves sometimes provide. People in all the societies keep night vigils in their areas; sometimes their insecurity may be real, but most of the time it is merely perceived fear because they do not know what is happening in the neighbouring area. Sometimes these gatherings become sites for generating rumours about the possibility of attacks from one or the other Muslim area.

In areas immediately adjoining a neighbourhood of a different community, the strategy works in a more dangerous way. Youth from both communities are prepared for attacks. Sometimes they are made to believe that the

opposing side is preparing for an attack and if they are unprepared and do not attack first then they will be attacked and 'finished' by the 'opposite side'. Once the people have crude weapons like swords or *trishuls*, the temptation to use them is powerful, given the environment of hate propaganda. A sense of power over others easily generates violence. People from the Hindu community are openly told that if they are arrested or face any problem, the VHP-Bajrang Dal will provide free legal services and will take care of their family. The risk factor in carrying out a violent attack is thus minimised for Hindu youth. In such a tense atmosphere, many times a small noise or any innocent incident can trigger a conflict that escalates to violence.

We observed these trends during the first two days of violence in the state, and then approached people of both sides. We convinced them that, although both the sides were prepared to retaliate if the opposing side were to attack, nobody really wanted to start a confrontation. So if common people could be identified whom both sides would trust, they could become a bridge of communication. As a first step, Hindus staying in Tandalja contacted one key person from a neighbouring housing society and convinced him that Muslims in Tandalja wanted to maintain peace in the area. They assured the contact person that they would personally take the responsibility for seeing that no aggressive steps were taken from their (Tandalja) side.

Once we could convince the key person, a meeting was held with a small group of people from one society. Muslim leaders from the area also came and assured them that they were interested in maintaining peace in the area at any cost. During the first two days of violence two *laaris* of Muslim were burnt in the adjoining Hindu area, allegedly by 'outsiders'. But the Muslim leaders told them that you can burn two more *laaris*, we will not complain but support us in keeping this area peaceful. This, coupled with the assurance of Hindus from within the area, helped in building trust.

Once one Hindu housing society was convinced that Tandalja residents really meant what they were saying, they themselves organised meetings with representatives of other societies in the surrounding area. Muslim leaders from Tandalja visited their area and then invited them to Tandalja. Representatives from surrounding Hindu societies visited Tandalja. Some of them were moved by the condition of refugees that they decided to contribute foodgrain to the relief camp. With this gesture, mutual trust became stronger. We exchanged phone numbers of some acceptable local leaders from each neighbouring society. If anybody had any suspicion about movements of the other side or any rumours were spread, they could immediately contact the responsible person from that society and verify the facts. In this way, an active system of communication was developed so that correct facts about any rumours were communicated to the whole area (about 50 housing societies) within a few minutes.

On 16th March an event took place. At 1.35 a.m. around Navi Nagri and Vraj Vihar, two people dressed in police uniforms and two others, Friends of Police (F.O.P.), entered the area through an unusual route - this created suspicion among the residents. They spoke to these people to obtain a clarification, but in the meantime there was some shouting among the residents here. As a result, there was shouting from some other areas as well and for some time there was confusion in some of the societies of the area. People came to Patrakar Society (which was functioning as a centre of peacekeeping activities) to get true information about what was going on. We made some phone calls and spoke to the members of the peace committees of the societies, and spread the correct information to all the housing societies in Hindu as well as Muslim neighbourhoods. As a result, within 15-20 minutes the situation was clarified and became peaceful again. The next morning, the Gujarati newspaper *Sandesh* carried a report under the headline 'Late night firing in Tandalja creates tension: Police resorts to tear-gas shells'. Peace committee members immediately wrote the true account of the event to *Sandesh* and the paper was pressurised to publish the true version the next day.

On another occasion, two brothers quarrelled over some personal differences; when they started shouting at each other, a crowd gathered around their house. People from neighbouring areas felt that something was wrong, and the youth started to prepare to face an attack. On both sides mobs took their positions, but before any untoward event could take place, a peace committee member from one side made a phone call to the other society and immediately the volunteer from that society came over. He assessed the situation, and told everyone to go home as this was entirely an internal quarrel. The youth of both sides were assured that there was no impending attack and the matter was settled within 20-30 minutes.

Once a Bajrang Dal-VHP mob of about 500-600 people from outside came near Ashwamegh society (a Hindu residential area adjacent to Tandalja). The mob had come to attack Tandalja. Ashwamegh was part of the peace committee. The local leaders from Ashwamegh stood between the mob and Tandalja. They did not allow the mob to cross the road. The mob sent a bundle of bangles to the Ashwamegh residents indicating that they were cowards for not supporting the attack on Muslims for the cause of 'Hindutva'. But the people of Ashwamegh said

that their understanding of Hinduism is different, and that they wanted peace in their area.

On 19th March at 1.30 a.m. the team got disturbing news. A slum of about 25 huts had come up over the past two or three years near the Tandalja police *chowki*. Some of us heard that many of the hutment dwellers had left the area in the morning. We were wondering why they had done so. Apparently they had been told, by people who did not want peace in the area, to leave the place, as there was a plan to burn the huts at night with the support of the police. The idea was clearly that once the huts were burnt, the police could blame the local people and create a reason for police action in the area. We immediately organised a spotlight focussed on the area between the huts and other residents, so that we could observe any dubious movements, and at midnight we prepared a complaint and faxed the details to the police commissioner. We said it was his responsibility to verify the facts behind such hearsay and made it clear that it was the responsibility of the police and not the local residents to safeguard the huts. For three days and nights the entire neighbourhood protected the empty huts so that no outside persons could come and burn them. After a few days the people of the slum returned to their huts.

Two unfortunate incidents of violence occurred in the area in April 2002. On 8th April, at about 2 a.m., some movement was noticed by people from Ashiyana Nagar (in Tandalja) in the sugarcane field between Ashiyana Nagar and Vasna Road. When people from Ashiyana Nagar raised an alarm, some persons ran away towards Vasna Road. At about 3 a.m., two Hindu youths on a motorcycle (GJ-6 AG3393) entered the area in a suspicious manner. They were drunk. When people caught and questioned them, they said that they were called by a nearby colony in connection with a theft. By this time a small crowd had gathered and was listening to their unconvincing answers. Some angry men and women beat them up. Immediately a police mobile van came there. The two youths were handed over to the police and were taken to the police station. In the early morning, a bag of weapons was spotted by a leader of a Hindu-housing colony near the field from where the two young men had entered the area. Police confiscated the motorcycle and the bag of weapons without making a *panchnama*. The medical examination showed that the two youths were drunk. A case was filed against the people of Tandalja for beating the youths. Five Muslim youths were handed over to the police by the leaders of the area.

Early in the morning of 19th April, one Chandrakant Patel was murdered by two unknown persons. He was managing a milk distribution centre of Vadodara Dairy near Rajvi Towers on the main road outside Tandalja. According to police reports, two motorcyclists came from the direction of Atladra and shot him from point-blank range, killing him on the spot. Patel was politically connected with the BJP. Tension developed in Tandalja following the incident. Both Hindu and Muslim community leaders expressed their grief over the death. They condemned the attack and observed a spontaneous *bandh*. According to preliminary police investigations, the assault may have been a case of personal rivalry.

These two events had the potential for creating trouble in the area in the communally charged environment; some elements tried to capitalise on them to foment trouble. However, the peacekeeping teams from both sides were vigilant and could restrain such elements within as well as outside the area. The role of the police, particularly in the second incident, was positive and contributed to the peacekeeping efforts.

It is tempting to say that a clear lesson from the Tandalja experience is that people staying in mixed residential areas understand and therefore trust each other much better. However even here peace had to be fought for and nothing could be taken for granted.

The role of the local press

Such a peace-loving area populated by Hindus, Muslims and some Christians is termed 'Mini Pakistan' by the Hindutva forces and a consistent campaign to malign the area has been carried out by them. Systematic rumours about Tandalja were spread all over Vadodara. In areas as far as Sama, Nizampura and Manjalpur, Hindus were told that the number of Muslims was steadily increasing in Tandalja, that they had collected large quantities of arms and that a mob of thousands of Muslims from Tandalja could attack any time. The fact that refugees from all over Vadodara and some surrounding villages could get shelter in the area was used to propagate the rumour that since the affected people were angry and were gathered together in one place, they were definitely planning an attack. The Hindus staying in and around the area were aware of the fact that no such moves were taking place in Tandalja. But the rumour was so powerful that it was very difficult for any Hindu or Muslim resident of Tandalja to convince others that the area was peaceful, particularly because the rumours were consistently supported by the vernacular press. A false news item about private firing in the area was published in *Sandesh* on 17th March (p.5, 3-column heading "Private firing created tension at late night at Tandalja, police fire tear-gas shells"). When the residents from the area and P.U.C.L. sent a rejoinder to this false news to *Sandesh*, it printed the rejoinder, but by that time the damage had been done. It has been difficult, given the continuous adverse reporting in *Sandesh*, to

react and send rejoinders to each false report. Indeed, after seeing these consistently false reports, particularly by *Sandesh*, many of the residents feel so depressed and helpless that they have stopped reading *Sandesh*.

The rumours intentionally spread by the Hindutva forces in Vadodara that Muslims were getting together in Tandalja to attack Hindus were supported by such misleading press reports. A demand from some societies outside Tandalja to declare this area a 'Disturbed Area' and drive out the affected people from the relief camps there was generated through this campaign. This was interpreted and reported by a section of the press as if the Collector had declared the area a disturbed area. (*Gujarat Mitra* dated 3rd April; *Sandesh*, 4th April; and *Bapor Samachar*, 3rd April.) The following were the headlines (translated from Gujarati), that appeared in these papers:

1. ***Gujarat Mitra*** (3rd April): Two-column width, three lines, last page:

"Does Tandalja situated on the western outskirts of Vadodara town belong to India or Pakistan? Must be decided."

Sub-headings:

- (1) Because of influx of minority community from surrounding areas, terror (*dehshat*) is spreading among Hindus.
- (2) Collector's proposal to declare the area as disturbed area on the fears that Mini Pakistan will be created.
- (3) When riots take place and minority people come to stay in one area why should Hindus migrate from that area?

2. ***Sandesh***, 4th April, three column heading, last page:

"Dehshat (terror) of creation of Mini Pakistan in Tandalja because mobs of minority community are coming to Tandalja area from all over the state."

Sub-headings:

- (1) Hindus are selling their property at throwaway rates.
- (2) Collector has proposed to declare the area as disturbed area to the state government.

This vicious campaign on the part of the local press has deeply affected the lives of people of all communities in this area.

As per our information hardly any representative from the Gujarati Press has visited Tandalja or the Tandalja relief camps to see the plight of the affected people, but they have consistently published wrong information about the area. In doing so, they have created an atmosphere wherein common Hindu people staying outside the area are afraid to enter the area, though around 7000 Hindus are staying peacefully within the area (a fact not reported at all in the press). *Rickshawalas* refuse to take passengers to Tandalja. For some days during the riots, a van from Vadodara Dairy refused to deliver milk and other dairy products to the shops in the area, although there was no curfew or any incidents of violence.

25th March was Moharrum. In the afternoon some shopkeepers approached us with a complaint that since the past two days, the Vadodara dairy van had not been delivering milk and other products in our area. When we talked with the dairy authority they told us that no van driver is willing to come to Tandalja. We told them that there was no curfew here and not a single incident of violence had taken place. The person said that he could not do anything if the driver refused to go to Tandalja. We offered to accompany the driver from the main road to the approach road in our area but they flatly refused. Ultimately we had to ask for the Collector's intervention to get Vadodara Dairy products delivered in the area.

Tandalja residents say that their Hindu relatives and friends are afraid and do not visit them even if they try to convince them that there is no problem in the area.

Basil School was one of the centres for the S.S.C. and H.S.C. examination. The so-called representatives of the majority community demanded that it should be dropped as a centre because students from the community would not feel secure to come to this sensitive area. The demand was accepted by the Board of Examination and Administration. They conveniently forgot the fact that the school was working and examinations were also conducted when most other parts of the city were under curfew. Most of the students in this school are from the Hindu community.

An important reason why such a wrong impression of the area was propagated is that the state has not played a responsible role in countering rumours. Even when there was a campaign to declare Tandalja a disturbed area and drive out affected people from the relief camps, and the Collector was misrepresented on the issue, there was no

rejoinder or clarification by the authorities. Both Hindu and Muslim residents signed a memorandum to the Collector opposing such a move and offered to hold discussions with the people who wanted Tandalja declared a disturbed area, on the basis of misinformation. However, such a meeting, which would have helped to dispel apprehensions, was not facilitated or organised by the administration.

Relief camps

The area has provided shelter to about 5000 victims of communal violence who have lost everything since 28th February. On the afternoon of 28th February the first incident of violence, looting and burning took place in Gotri. The people somehow saved their lives and reached Tandalja. Local people gave them solace, emotional support and food. Those who provided support at that time were not aware of what they were getting into. By evening more people came with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. Thereafter, a continuous stream of refugees poured into the area. Some of them came on their own because they had relatives here, others because they were aware that they could get support from their community members and many others were sent by police under police protection. Actual relief camps began to function from the next day onwards at four places in the area. The builder of Amir Complex provided a huge building under construction for the affected people. Many buildings under construction or vacant in Madhuram Society, Ashiyana Nagar, Saudagar Park and many other places were provided to shelter to the refugees. For many days, the community also provided food with some support from outsiders. After some weeks, government aid for foodgrain started coming in for the camp in Amir Complex. But organisers of the other camps decided that they did not want any help from the government, in protest against its failure to protect the lives, houses and livelihoods of the people, as well as their connivance with the rioters.

It is important to note that the government support to the camps was only in terms of foodgrain; no other facilities were provided adequately by the government. They did not adequately address health, sanitation and the needs of children and women. The community and some NGOs occasionally provided some of these requirements. There was constant pressure from the government to reduce the number of people in the camps, in order to prove that the situation was normal.

Many of these refugees left Tandalja for their areas once they felt it was possible to do so; some went back to their native places if they were migrants from other states. When the builder of Amir Complex requested that his building be vacated after one and a half months, people were asked by the administration to shift to another camp in the city area, instead of being provided alternate space on government land in Tandalja. Several people shifted to other camps in the city. But many did not move out of the area since their previous residences and places of work were close to Tandalja. Rather than moving to camps in the city and another uncertain life they have preferred to stay in the open fields or with relatives in the area.

11 GOTRI

Dates of incidents: 27 February –1 March 2002

Gotri village and Gotri Road were among the first areas to be affected in the post-Godhra violence in Vadodara. On 27th February at 2 a.m., the Taj hardware and paints shop was set alight by a 700-800 strong mob. The shop was completely burnt. The shop-owner came to know about it when the owner of a hotel opposite his shop phoned him and told him about it. A *panchnama* and FIR has been lodged with the police. Another shop belonging to him at Vasna road had also been burnt.

11.1 Gandhi Ashram, Gotri

According to Jagdishbhai Shah, well-known Gandhian and resident of the Ashram, on 28th February at about 10 a.m., a mob of about 200-300 entered the Gotri area. The mob began to burn tyres and throw burning rags into the *masjid* near Gotri Talav. There were only 2-3 policemen, who were totally outnumbered by the mob. A man was trapped inside the *masjid*. The mob was going to burn the man alive inside the *masjid*. Somebody rushed into the Ashram and told Jagdishbhai, who called the police. Fortunately a large contingent of police arrived. They burst teargas shells and also fired in the air. The mob dispersed and the man inside was saved.

At 12 noon a mob came into the Ashram. Some Muslims had left their vehicles in the compound of the Ashram for safety. The mob targeted the vehicles. There were 4 tempos and one car in the Ashram premises. The mob burnt three tempos inside the compound itself. Then somebody told them that there was one three-wheeler behind the house. They dragged that out. Jagdishbhai rushed down and confronted them, saying they could not do such a

thing here. The mob told him, “ If you protest any more we will burn the vehicles down in your premises itself”. They then did this. The mob took the car outside and burnt it down. They prevented Jagdishbhai and his sons from dousing the fire. Only after the police arrived was the fire doused.

Jagdishbhai has been in this Ashram for 24 years. There have been riots before in Gotri. In 1993 they burnt down Muslim shops on the road belonging to Karimbhai Vora, Ibrahim bhai and others. At that time, he had sat on a fast to protest against the violence.

11.2 Ramdev Nagar, Ghanchi Falia, Gotri Road

There are around 70 houses in this locality, around ten of which belong to Muslim families. The following report is based on testimonies of affected people who moved to Tandalja camp on 28th February.

The trouble started on 28th February at 10 a.m. The people hid in the houses of Hindu neighbours. They wore saris and fled to save their lives. A mob came and looted money and other things from their houses and intimidated the people. The mob then went to the village and looted Karim Rehman’s house. His grocery shop was also set on fire. Everything in the house was looted. They then went to the *madrassa* and destroyed property, burning tyres lying around. Their vehicles were burnt. A tempo was parked inside the Vinoba Ashram for safety. The mob brought it out and burnt it. A car was burnt. People from the neighbouring Patanwadia Faliya looted the remaining stuff.

On the evening of 1st March, the remaining 9 houses were looted. Fittings and furniture, cash and ornaments were looted. Suleman, a man resting at home with a fractured leg, was asked to leave. The houses were then burnt. Tempos, cars and cycles belonging to Muslims were set on fire.

11.3 Gayatrinagar

Ulfatben, who fled her home in Gayatrinagar to Tandalja, has a family of 9 members, with a daughter-in-law and grandchildren. She ran a laundry in Gayatrinagar. She fled for her life from the mob that came looking for them on 1st March. The laundry was ransacked and burnt. Goods worth lakhs were destroyed. The mob also killed 6 of the 10 goats she reared to sell milk.

11.4 Gotri village

Mehmudaben Sikandarbhai and Faridaben Yakubbhai stayed in Khodiyar Nagar behind Ambika Nagar. The mob looted their houses before setting them on fire. The mob also pelted stones. A Hindu woman had saved one of them. Faridaben came to the Tandalja camp with nothing but the sari she had worn. They said the mob asked us to leave everything and go away from the place.

A Hindu autorickshaw driver, Dilawarbhai Chandbhai Barot (40 years) lived in a rented house in Patel faliya. According to him, on 28th February, at around 11 a.m., a mob armed with swords, sticks and *dharias* arrived in the locality in a tempo from Gayatri road, and began looting and burning the shops. They were shouting ‘*Maro, maro*’. They attacked Muslim houses and started burning them. The *masjid*, 35 houses and 25 cabins, were burnt; standing crops in the fields were also burnt. The Muslims started running away in the field behind the locality, while the mob threw stones at the Hindus, injuring some of them. He along with his family (a wife and three young sons) fled the area and went to his mother’s place in Umetha village. They later heard that all the houses had been looted. They have not dared to return.

On 28th March, villagers of Gotri apparently attacked Muslim houses in Umetha and began burning them. They burnt 35 houses and 25 cabins, and the standing crops on many fields. They also burnt the *masjid*. One of the local leaders telephoned the Tandalja camp. At about 5.00 p.m., a truck came to Umetha with a police escort and Dilawarbhai and his family shifted to the camp in Amir Complex, Tandalja. Many other went to Anklav under police protection.

A Muslim leader in Umetha, Alarakhbhai Beediwalla, made arrangements for private security to protect the deserted Muslim houses.

11.5 ESI Hospital Naka, Gotri Road

A *paan*-shop owner near ESI Hospital Naka said that the mob came because there were two Muslim houses in his

society. He pleaded with the mob not to touch them, as they were very good people who worked at Jyoti Industries. People in the mob replied that those who were killed at Godhra were also innocent. They asked the residents to leave after which they burnt both the houses. There was a shoe godown in the area that was also burnt. The flat above the shop, whose owners live in Bombay, was also damaged.

Role of the police

The police were present in Ramdev Nagar. People from Ramdev Nagar were brought to Tandalja by police van. When Ibrahim of Ramdev Nagar went to Gorwa Police station he was told that a complaint had already been lodged. The police refused to give him a copy of FIR.

Perpetrators of violence

According to the affected people, there were people from Gotri village and surrounding villages like Sevasi and Astodia and others who were part of the mob. The culprits named are: Ghanshyam Brahmabhatt (BJP worker), Kanchanben Barot (BJP councillor), Bhailal Parag Patel and Dilip Bhagat Patel. These people moved around with voters' lists to identify Muslim homes. Kanchanben moved around with a sword.

According to one resident, Ibrahim Jamaal (who said he is willing to testify in court), the BJP people have made it clear that Muslims should not return to Gotri.

Damage/loss

9 houses were looted and burnt in Ramdev Nagar. Tempos and cycles were burnt. A motorcycle belonging to Ulfatben was stolen along with Rs.10,000 cash and 10 *tolas* of gold. The mob also killed 6 of the 10 goats she reared to sell milk. The estimated loss to the property of the Taj hardware and paints shop is around Rs. 9,00,000.

Effect on people's lives

The people are not being allowed to return. When people from Ramdev Nagar tried to go back they were told that because of them the others will be harassed, so it would be better if they returned to the camp. Go to Kashmir, they were told, if you come here we will break your legs.

Ulfatben of Gayatrinagar said, "Allah will avenge us. After all how can the people whose clothes I have washed all my life do this to us? There will be justice." What has hurt most is the involvement of neighbours. When she went back once to see the burnt house she was told who has taken what from the house. She spent the first few days in her married daughter's house but had to come to the camp. Similarly, her daughter-in-law went to her mother's house but came back to the camp because they could not keep her with all the tension and violence in their area. She is clear that she wants her house back and will fight for it. One of the small children keeps recalling goats that were killed. Ulfat Behn said that it is like a war. "It seems so unreal. Even children in the camp tell each about what they have seen burning and all that was lost."

Mehmudabehn of Gotri village talked about the constant whipping up of emotions against the Muslims. She said: "The CM himself used to taunt the Hindus, and say - what are you all doing? The Muslims are getting too strong. There is resentment if we are doing well in our work, or our businesses are running smoothly. After this attack, what hope do we have of a normal life? None of us sleep at night, we are too tense, wondering what will happen next. The kids wail and cry all night, and ask, '*Ammi, woh ham ko maar dalengey kya?*' (Ammi, will they kill us?)"

The children are all traumatised. The older ones (above 10 years or so) gather stones in a pile to hit back in case of an attack. "Is this what children should be doing?," the women ask. Then they say: "But who are we to stop them? They have seen so many people being killed". They also say that they do not intend to go back to the place. In the camp they feel safe but even there they keep awake at night.

12 ALKAPURI

Date of incident: 1 March 2002

The area

Alkapuri lies between the main Vadodara railway station and Race Course Circle. It is a residential area, with many shopping plazas on its main road, R C Dutt Road. There are many old residential houses as well as newer apartments.

According to one of the partners of Optic Palace which was set ablaze on 1st March, the local police had stated that there had been 11 incidents of arson towards the east of Old Padra Road (towards the railway station side) and 20-25 *laaris*/cabins had also been burnt.

Details of incidents

On 1st March at around 10 a.m. a 400-500 strong mob torched the Saibaba Auto Garage. In the fire 6 cars, 1 scooter, and all the garage equipment including the wooden structure on the wall were completely burnt. The owner came to know about it at around 11 a.m. The other residents in the residential colony said they had informed the police and called the fire brigade. The watchman had gone to sleep. The people from the society woke him up. He was very frightened. The garage owner was furious with the police. A *panchnama* has been done and an F.I.R. has been lodged with the Sayajigunj police.

On the night of 1st March, at around 9.30-10.00 p.m., Optic Palace in Ivory Terrace Complex, R.C. Dutt Road, was set on fire. The complex is right opposite the Collector and Police Commissioner's residences. The miscreants entered from the side entrance, breaking through the metal plate behind the glass-enclosed display.

According to the owners, who live in Nagarwada, they could come to inspect the damage only on 4th March during curfew relaxation time there. An FIR was filed in Jethalpur Police Station, and *panchnama* was also taken.

Damage/losses

The estimate losses to Saibaba Auto garage amount to Rs. 8,00, 000. The garage has no insurance.

The damage to Optic Palace was extensive. The owners have incurred losses of around Rs. 25 lakh (and have insurance cover only up to Rs 10 lakh). One partner told the team that they did minor repairs and re-opened the shop in a few days since he had several families of workers dependent on him. Their even larger showroom on Raopura main road, also called Optic Palace, was gutted on the morning of 4th March. The losses there were higher, around Rs. 40 lakh.

13 GORWA and SUBHANPURA

The area

Gorwa lies to the northwest of Vadodara city. Gorwa was originally a village outside the Municipal Corporation limits. Over the last 20 years the entire area has mushroomed to an extension of the city. It is connected by the main arterial road that leads to the heart of the city. To the north of Gorwa are public sector companies like the Indian Oil Corporation, Indian Petrochemicals Ltd. and the Gujarat State Fertilisers Corporation Ltd. To its east is the industrial estate called the Vadodara Industrial Development Corporation that houses several small-scale units. There are many waste recycling units here as well.

Gorwa is also a residential area. The original inhabitants of Gorwa village continue to live there with neighbours from middle and lower middle-class residential colonies recently set up mainly by the employees of the public sector units. It is a mixed locality with a slum and middle-class colonies located cheek by jowl. It has a mix of blue and white-collar workers as well as casual workers and factory workers.

Gorwa has a mixed population comprising both Hindus and Muslims. The Muslim community is largely lower middle class and lives in the slums. Many of the waste recycling merchants were also Muslims. Muslims also run petty businesses like teashops, garages and vegetable vending.

13.1 Gorwa village

The areas surveyed by the fact-finding team included Gorwa village, Opposite Bapuni *Dargah*, Panchwati Road and

High Tension Road.

Date of incidents: 28 February 2002, 1-3 March 2002

Details of incidents

The Dharamnagar *jhoadpatti* in Gorwa, which has about 24-25 Muslim households with a total of about 125 children, men and women, was the worst affected in Gorwa. They were vegetable vendors who sold vegetables in the market as well as went from door- to- door. They have been living here for the last 20-25 years. Before this no such incident had occurred. The other people in the vicinity had no problem with them. This is the only slum area here. It is surrounded by large society buildings.

On 28th February at 9.30 p.m. an armed mob of 250 people directly attacked the huts. Petrol bombs, *kakda* (a long staff with cloth doused in petrol used to set fires), stones and such things were thrown into the houses. The mob was shouting "*Jai Bajrang Bali.*" As soon the houses caught fire, people started running to save their lives. One family comprising of 2 children, the mother and father, ran and hid in a pond for 2 hours. The people in the mob had covered their faces hence none of them could be recognised. 5 houses belonging to non-Muslims were also burnt in this attack. One person sustained sword injuries on the face.

The people say that a local VHP worker was responsible for the problems there.

An FIR was filed on the night of 28th February 2002.

On the afternoon of 28th February a cabin of mattresses was burnt. The owner had stocked cotton and cloth inside the cabin that was set alight and destroyed. The owner, who does not live in the same area, learnt about the incident from a man living next to the shop. He was told that the mob was about 200-strong. He believes that only outsiders could have done such a thing. As he found out about the incident only on the following day he did not think of calling the police. Anyway, he said, everything was destroyed so there was not much point in doing so.

On 1st March a mob of around 300 people came and started pelting stones in Gorwa village at about 9.30 p.m. The people in the area were inside their houses. The mob then started burning houses with kerosene and acid. They destroyed the houses and burnt the goats. The mob comprised of people from the locality. They did not allow the fire brigade to come inside and asked them to wait till everything was completely burnt.

In another part of Gorwa a mob of around 40 to 50 people came on the same day and burnt several handcarts and small shops. A cycle repair handcart was burned down. The shop had tyre tubes, tyres, and seat covers that were all burnt to ashes. Although the owner lived close by he was unable to reach the place immediately as there was curfew. Nobody came to help.

On the same day a mob of around 25 to 30 people also burnt a *paan laari*. The *laari* owner was an eyewitness to the burning as it was located right in front of his house. The mob had covered their faces and were unrecognisable. The *paan laari* and material in it were completely destroyed in the fire.

On 2nd March in the afternoon the Ajmeri auto garage was set on fire. The scooter repair equipment in the shop was first looted, after which the shop was burnt, along with the remaining equipment. The owner came to know about the incident the following day from his neighbours. The owner also informed us about several shops and handcarts that were torched in and around Ashirwadnagar Society, a residential colony in Gorwa. This included a *paan* shop, a cycle shop and a tailor shop.

On the afternoon of 2nd March an omelette shop called the Maji Sainik Omelete Center was first looted and later set on fire. The shop had around 20,000 eggs, some chairs and tables, a fridge, a stove and plastic. The owner of the shop came to know about it the following day from a localite whose name he refused to divulge. He had no idea about who could have done such a thing. The shops on both the sides of the omlette centre were also affected by the fire. The police had come from the Gorwa police *chowki* and had done a *panchnama*. The shop-owner also informed the team that his house near the *dargah* in Hussain Tekra was set alight by a mob.

Role of the police

There was police complicity. The police was right there and yet did not help the victims. Police vans were passing by the road but they hardly paid any attention to the arson and looting. To begin with the police were not even prepared to take FIRs. Finally, they accepted just one. The next day they came and wrote down the names of all

the people. While some people have lodged FIRs, most people do not have any faith in the police. They think that it will not help to complain to the police.

Damage/losses

In Dharamnagar 12 handcarts and all the saleable commodities were gutted. 7 goats were burned. 25 houses were burnt. The estimated amount of loss of other cabins and shops including the handcarts mentioned above is more than Rs. 4,00, 000.

Effects of riots on people's lives

Most of the victims left the area after the incidents. The local people however keep giving them some information about the area. In Gorwa village the people were feeling so let down that they finally told their neighbours that they would not 'stay in your country, we are going to leave this place'.

In Dharamnagar people would like to return to the area. They would like to work in their homes and look after their children. Their livelihood is deeply connected to the area.

13.2 Subhanpura

Date of incidents: 1-2 March 2002

The area

Subhanpura is another village south of Gorwa that has been converted into an extension of Vadodara City. This is a residential area. Subhanpura village is much larger than Gorwa. Like Gorwa, the residents of Subhanpura village are also largely casual workers, vegetable or milk vendors. Unlike Gorwa, Subhanpura is a Hindu-dominated area. While the village remains a lower middle-class residential area, the surrounding Ellora Park area is one of the posher localities of the city. This area therefore has been influenced by trendy, upmarket shopping plazas and residential complexes.

Details of the incidents

On 1st March at 7.30 p.m, Guru Hair Art cabin located on the Samata-Subhanpura road right in front of Samata Flats was torched. The cabin including the chairs, mirrors, and all other equipment were completely burnt down. The owner learnt about the incident immediately as he lived nearby. But he did not have the courage to move out of the house during the riots. The other incidents in the area include the burning of 6 handcarts with gas welding equipment and a *dhobhi's* handcart.

On 2nd March at about 2.30 a.m., a tea stall was set alight in the Subhanpura area. All equipment including the utensils and stove were burnt. An autorickshaw that was parked near the tea stall was also burnt. The owner came to know about it the next day. The mob had burnt down a house opposite the tea stall as well. The house was empty and the owners had fled from the place.

Gujarat Cotton Works and a mattress shop on Subhanpura Road were also burnt.

Damage/loss

In the tea stall as well as Guru Hair Art. the estimated loss to property is around Rs.20, 000.

14 KARELIBAUG

14.1 Kasamala Kabrastan

Dates of incidents: 1-8 March 2002

The area

Kasamala *Kabrastan*, in the area called Kasamala, is near Shrinath Petrol Pump, Karelibaug, not far from Bhutdi Zhampa, and close to Karelibaug Police Station. Indiranagar and Fagvel Nagar are other areas in the vicinity which were badly affected in the post-Godhra violence in the city. As the name suggests, the area has a graveyard. The population of Kasamala *Kabrastan* is approximately 3000-3500. About 80% of the population here is Muslim. The two communities have been living together in the area for the past 20 years. The majority are daily wage earners, working in garages, barber shops, tea stall and so forth. A few women work outside the house, collecting and selling scrap, running tea stalls, etc. After the incidents here, they have resolved not to let any communal violence take place or let people from outside come there to cause trouble.

Many houses in the surrounding areas were burnt and looted. Immediately after the violence started, for about 10-15 days, many people from other areas sought shelter in Kasamala *Kabrastan*. Ghaghretia, a small village near Dabhoi Chowkdi, had many Muslim houses of which several were burnt. The remaining were looted. Some of the affected families from Ghaghretia, who had acquaintances in Kasamala, were sheltered by local people in their own homes. Some people fled to other parts of the country after the incidents.

Details of incidents

On 1st March, at about 2 p.m. in the afternoon, a mob of about 1000-1500 people barged into Kasamala *Kabrastan*, shouting '*Maro, maro*'. They began pelting stones. People fled to save their lives, leaving their houses unlocked. The mob ransacked and destroyed things in the houses. They then looted and burnt the houses. This went on for about an hour. The people were so terrified that they could not stop the looting and burning.

On 1st March, a corpse (*maiya*t) was brought from Nagarwada to the *kabrastan* at 2.30 p.m. for burial. At that time 5 policemen were present. The people from Kasamala wanted to make preparations to bury the body but they were not allowed to do so by the police. At that same time, about 1000 people from Golwada and Tulsiwadi attacked them with stones. This incident went on for an hour and the police were unable to manage the situation. The corpse was sent to another graveyard. At that time, all the women came and protested against the police, saying that if the men did so they would be jailed.

After this incident, combing operations were done in Kasamala and not in Golwada and Tulsiwadi. Boys were picked up from their home. Srimatiben's (one of the Hindu households in the area) house door was broken and the police asked her son to hold iron sticks. When he refused, he was beaten up badly and then put in jail. The police used abusive language against the women during the combing operations.

On the same night, the police took a piece of cloth from the grave (*kabar*) that was kept for dead bodies and burnt it on the main road. Some of the Muslim families protested to no avail.

On 3rd March, Akhtarbanu's house was attacked by a mob and looted of all the things that she had collected for her daughter's wedding (she had taken a loan of Rs 26,000/- from various people to buy the gifts).

On 8th March, 3 dead bodies were brought from GIDC, Por. These were of men from Uttar Pradesh (village Gejpur, Bhargan). They had been burnt alive in a plastic godown and were brought from the Government Hospital. When the people from Kasamala took them for burial, they were attacked by the people from Golwad but were able to finish the work hurriedly. But the police came to the place and asked why they had not been called. When women said that the police never helped and rather harassed them, the policemen opened the freshly dug grave to check if it was a body and not weapons.

In both incidents, women came out strongly to protect the male members of their families.

Damage/losses

The incidents have led to the displacement of 10 households. Around 10 garages belonging to Ahmedbhai and his relatives on Bahucharaji road were looted. A man living here had a plastic godown behind Indiranagar, an adjoining locality, which was set on fire. Goods worth Rs. 65,000 and property worth Rs.1 lakh were destroyed. Families that were to celebrate weddings have suffered considerable material and emotional loss. Sidiqbhai Valimahmoud Sheikh has lost his house, foodgrain as well as clothes and ornaments collected for his daughter's wedding. Akhtarbanu lost whatever had been collected for her daughter's wedding. Not only this, foodgrain in the house, worth Rs 1610/-, were all looted.

Role of the police

It appears that the police were largely inactive or ineffective. In fact, there are reports of harassment of the victims rather than the perpetrators. When the mobs gathered from Golwada and Tulsiwadi, it was Kasamala that was combed rather than the former two areas.

The police conducted combing operations on 1st March and seized implements like knives, *dharias* and *lathis*. (The people told the team that these were large kitchen knives, used for cutting meat.) 36 boys were arrested after the combing operation and were released the next day. On 3rd March, 40 boys were arrested. Later, another boy, Shaukatbhai, was arrested and charged under Section 307. (He had not been released up to 8th April.) All the others have been released.

On 1st March, one elderly woman (Rukiaben) moved out of her home to get her son back home and the police hit her on the head. She repeatedly told the team that she does not want to say anything to the police about this incident. The police told Shrimatiben's son to hold a weapon. When he refused the police took him away. Ahmedbhai, a resident of the *basti*, got him released.

On 17th March, 20 boys were arrested. These arrests were made over repeated visits to the area by the police on the same day. They were roughed up by the police, and released a few days later.

The people have lost faith in the police. At the peak of the disturbances they demanded that they did not want the help of the police, but wanted the army deployed. The police picked up innocent men even during combing operations. The local people say that the police are very dangerous. Ayeshaben's husband works in a garage in Por. When violence broke out in the city, he came to Vadodara in a police jeep. The police took Rs.200 from him. The people also say that when the dead body was being taken out for the funeral the police lifted the cloth on top of it and burnt it. Instead of protecting them, the police was consuming liquor. The police did not directly participate in the riots.

Incidents of inter-community solidarity

There are about 8-10 Hindu households in Kasamala. According to residents, both communities and those who came from the surrounding areas decided to live in harmony in the *basti*. They resolved not to let anything happen in the *basti* and that the leaders of both communities would take the responsibility for this. They also decided that no outsider belonging to either community should enter the *basti*. People of both communities kept vigils at night. If a Muslim was to enter the Hindu lane or vice versa they would inform each other before that, or they would call out in the night and inform each other. Both communities decided that they would live in peace and harmony so that there would be no insecurity and that mutual trust was preserved. Because of this arrangement Kasamala and areas surrounding it remained relatively peaceful.

One of the Hindu families in Kasamala was dependent on daily wages. The Muslim households gave them food, as they could not go out to work during curfew. They would also tell them that they would protect them at night; because of these assurances, the Hindu families say they could sleep without anxiety. They gave them courage and talked of brotherhood. Because of their assurance of safety, the Hindu family did not migrate from the area.

A house belonging to a Hindu boy named Raju was burnt down in the disturbances. Muslim families in Kasamala *Kabrastan* gave him shelter and food.

Effects on people's lives

However, repeated disturbances, the arrest of many Muslim youth and prolonged night vigils have led to irritation and fear among residents of this area. This, coupled with the loss of livelihoods, has led to tremendous stress among people. The fact-finding team felt there was need for sustained dialogue because of the anxiety and fatigue among the people.

One of the women felt that there should be a residential school for girls, as their education has suffered badly in these riots. Due to the situation, they had to give the exams by moving to safer areas and their results have not yet been collected. One of the girls, in fact, moved to Nadiad to a relative's place as her mother felt the situation was not safe for girls.

14.2 Fagvel Nagar

Date of incident: 28 February - 1 March 2002

The area

Fagvel Nagar lies behind Indiranagar, in the Karelibaug area. It is a Muslim-dominated area, with around 50 houses belonging to Muslims, and 10-15 houses of Hindus.

Details of incident

On 28th February, at 1.30 p.m., a youth, Sahjaatbhai, was slashed by a *talwaar*. He had come to Vadodara about two years ago from UP, and had moved into Fagvel Nagar two months back. He earned his living by selling salt on a *laari*. On the day of the incident, he was fleeing from his home, when he was attacked from behind by a man with a *talwaar*, causing a deep gash on his arm. He did not see the man who assaulted him.

The people asked the police standing around nearby to take Sahjaat to the hospital and get his wound attended to. The police said they could not do so without a court order. Although there were three police vehicles present, the people took Sahjaat by auto-rickshaw to the hospital.

Three people received burn injuries in the attack. They were ultimately taken to SSG Hospital by their neighbours and Sahjaat's father in auto-rickshaws at around 4 p.m. In the hospital first aid was provided immediately. Around 10 p.m. Sahjaat was taken into the OT. He had to be given 25-30 stitches. He was completely dazed and only half conscious by this time. He was discharged the next afternoon. He had to spend around Rs. 350 on medicines which had to be brought from outside.

On 1st March, at about 2.00 p.m., a crowd of around 1000-2000 persons came near the *basti*. They had swords, *dharis*, petrol and acid bombs. They began by throwing stones. When people came out of their houses, they set fire to the houses. The police came 15 minutes after the crowd arrived. The burning started in the presence of the police. The residents pleaded with the police to do something to protect them, but the police did nothing.

Damage/losses

32 houses were burnt and two were looted. 5-6 Hindu houses were also burnt. Three tempos were set on fire. Five goats were stolen.

2 salt *laaris* were burnt in this area. Corporator Mr. PC Patel was telephoned but did not come. The PUCL team saw Mehrunissa's and Bhagwanbhai Chaturbhai Marwari's burnt *laaris* on the bridge. Chaturbhai's *laari* was for Luna repairing. His loss has been Rs 3,000/- for the cost of the *laari* and Rs. 3,500/- for the items. They live at Shreenath Petrol Pump Char Rasta next to Hanuman *Mandir*.

While the team was waiting to videotape Mehrunissa's interview, they saw around 20-25 children rummaging around in piles of burnt rubble and refuse. The place where they were rummaging was apparently a dump for the waste of arson. The children were searching for money that had got burnt in the houses. The previous day they had found more than Rs. 100.

People left the area to go and stay with relatives and friends for about a week. 25-30 families fled to Indiranagar. Some of them shifted to their native places.

Role of the police

The houses were burnt in front of the police. The people asked the police to fire. But the police only shouted at them. Since the incident occurred in front of the police and they did nothing to stop it, people have lost faith in the police.

Mehrunissa told the team that the police used extremely abusive language with the people (*Jo hamare mard ne bhi kabhi nahin kahin*).

In the combing operation, the police found small kitchen knives and sticks that they took away.

Inter-community solidarity

The majority of the people here are Muslims. After the incident they all came to stay at Indiranagar. They told Indiranagar residents that even houses of Hindus were burnt. They say that residents of their area do not harbour communal feelings.

14.3 Indiranagar

Dates of incidents: 1 March 2002; 25 March 2002

The area

Indiranagar is opposite Hathikhana Gate, near the Shrinath Petrol Pump in Karelibaug. The population of this *basti* is approximately 1300. 80% of the people are Muslims, the rest are Hindus. There are around 85 Muslim houses. Most of the people are daily wage earners. Ever since the first attack on 1st March, these families have been eating only once a day. There has been curfew in this area for over a month and the people are being constantly harassed by the police. From the Hindu colony behind the area there have been incidents of stone throwing and attempts to incite communal tensions. The people living in this colony, however, say that although they are being blamed by Indiranagar residents, outsiders are responsible for these incidents.

Details of incidents

1 March 2002

On Friday, 1st March, at about 2.00 p.m., as people were returning after their namaaz, they saw a huge crowd of 1500-2000 persons near Fagvel Nagar. The mob had swords, *dharia*, petrol and acid bombs, stones, etc. The residents of Fagvel Nagar fled their homes and took shelter in nearby Indiranagar. The crowd stoned and then burnt the houses in Fagvel Nagar. When 7-8 policemen arrived on the scene 15 minutes later, the residents of Indiranagar asked them to do something to restrain the mob, but they did nothing. On the contrary the police tried to use force on them so that they ran away. One policeman reportedly told one woman, "Leave this place or I will shoot." There was stone throwing in Indiranagar. Latif Ahmed Shaikh got his tooth broken in the stone throwing and Muhammed Ali Shaikh was injured on his nose.

Fagvel nagar is very close to Indiranagar. When the crowd attacked Fagvel Nagar, the residents of some 25-30 houses came to Indiranagar, who kept them properly. The small houses and the poor economic situation made the people uncomfortable. Their source of livelihood had stopped. Those who were working with Hindu people asked them to come after some days and those who had *laaris* of their own were scared to move out as they were worried about what would happen on 15th March. Hindus and Muslims of that *basti* were staying peacefully. But they were afraid of outsiders.

Role of the police

The police did nothing to prevent the stoning of houses in Indiranagar. The people of the area say that in Fagvel Nagar, the houses were burnt in full view of the police. The residents of the area told the team, "We asked, begged the police to do something to stop all this, but instead the police forced us to run away."

On 4th March, between 3.30 p.m. and 4.00 p.m., the police did combing in the area. During the combing operation, the police forcefully entered every house, breaking the doors to get in if the residents refused to open them. They searched for weapons in the houses, but found only knives, sticks, *hathodi* (hammers), *kos* (spades). They took away all these, and even the bank passbooks from two houses. People told them that they need to keep big knives to kill the goats. In the tense atmosphere following the violence, all families had kept sticks for their self-defence. These were also taken by the police during combing.

A total of 32 persons were arrested on 5th March. They were released on bail at 7.00 pm the next day. The people of the area report that among those arrested were 7 boys between 16-20 years who were charged under Section 307. At the police station they were beaten up and their photographs were also taken. One Hindu person was wearing a *lungi*. He was taken to the police station in the same dress and was beaten up by the police on account of wearing a *lungi* to the police station.

During combing operations, the police sexually harassed and brutally assaulted Muslim women.

Damages/losses

One shop was looted and then burnt in the attack. There were minor injuries sustained in the stone throwing.

Incidents of inter-community solidarity

Hindus and Muslims live together in Indiranagar. More Muslims stay in Kasamala than Hindus do and in Ramdev Pir more Hindus stay than Muslims. All these areas have had a history of peace and harmony. After the attacks, they resolved to be united and defend themselves together from an outside attack, whichever religion or caste the attackers belong to. Because of this understanding between the two communities, the people could move freely during the curfew and give assurance of safety.

25 March 2002

The fact-finding team visited the area again on 26th March. Since curfew was relaxed only for women from 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m., all the men were at home. The people said that police combing had taken place around the 20th. The police arrested young boys; it had been 4-5 days and the boys had not been released.

The residents told the team that on the previous night (25th March), at about 11.15 p.m., a mob once again attacked Fagvel Nagar-Indiranagar. According to the residents, who were awake at the time, the attackers were wearing caps and uniforms like the police. There is a *kagalno delo* (paper store/godown for recycling paper) in Fagvel Nagar Maidan, which the attackers set fire to. The *delo* was almost burnt to ashes.

The residents said that attackers hide in the Fagvel Nagar Maidan and attack from there. Indiranagar residents showed the place from where the attack takes place. They believe that residents from Meghdoot Society and Tulsiwadi are attacking them. Although it is believed that the residents of 5-6 houses opposite Indiranagar are also with the attackers, Indiranagar residents doubt this. In fact, they know the names of all the attackers (Shankar and Pinto were two names they gave the team). They said that the police do not take any action against them.

Police inaction

Their experience of police inaction in both attacks has made the residents of Indiranagar doubtful of police protection. Even the president of the *basti* Shri Kantibhai called the police for help but it was of no use. The police do not reply properly when they are phoned. The residents decided on applying for a police point nearby. But they are doubtful whether it will provide security. The people told the team that people of the neighbouring Kalyannagar refused to have police protection and are making their own arrangement for protection. Reconsidering their decision, Indiranagar residents decided against having a police point nearby.

In Indiranagar, the violence on 7th March was not severe, but residents were victims of the police combing operation. The residents were very scared after the Fagvel Nagar incident. The people, however, had no option but to go out to work, while some stayed at home. Repeated attacks and threats of attack have made the people very fearful. Because of no work and fear of the police they feel very helpless. The situation in the *basti* is pitiable, with people unable to go to work and with no sources of income. The PUCL team was told that there were some families that do not have anything to eat in the night. The people expressed the desire to have the same communal harmony as before.

15 KISANWADI

The area

Kisanwadi is in the eastern part of Vadodara. It falls in Ward No. 9, which starts from the water tank outside the Panigate area and encompasses several slums and middle-class housing societies on Ajwa road as well as Sardar Industrial Estate. Several houses were built by the Slum Clearance Board when the area was on the outskirts of the city. Several 'unauthorised' slums have also settled around the houses built by the Slum Clearance Board. Today, Kisanwadi has the highest number of slum pockets and 52% of the population of the ward stay in the slums. There are 94 slum pockets resided by approximately 10,000 families. Most of the people are from *dalit*, *adivasi*, Muslim and other socially and educationally backward sections. The majority of the people in this area live in poor working and living conditions.

Kisanwadi is adjacent to the '*Purva Vistaar*' (eastern part of the city) which is considered to be a riot-affected area. Before the Harni-Warasia Ring Road was constructed, riots in this area led to it becoming cut off from the city. Now it is connected to Karelibaug by two ring roads, one passing from Kisanwadi and other from Sardar Estate. Both these roads go up to Waghodia road.

The slum pockets in this area have mixed population but middle-class-housing societies in the area are clearly demarcated on communal lines. There are also flats constructed by Gujarat Housing Board for lower income groups and State Transport Corporation employees. The Gujarat Housing Board society has a mixed population.

This report is based on fact-finding in Hussaini Chowk, Jhanda Chowk and Jay Ambe Nagar, Kisanwadi. Approximately 125 Muslim families live in Kisanwadi. All, except five or six families, living next to Hindu families, were affected by the violence and fled the area. They have been described as very decent - "No *collar charahna, ma-bahen ki baatein karna* or *sharaab ka dhandha karna*." They are all poor working class people, *kadia kaam wallahs*, vegetable-vendors, etc. The following report has been filed on the basis of testimonies of victims, an interview with a local social worker, Ramdas Pillai, and visits to and video shooting of the affected area.

Date of incident: 28 February 2002

Details of incident

Since 27th February, there was unease in the neighbourhood. There were rumours going around the area. On 28th February, Ramdas Pillai and his wife decided that in the evening they would walk around the *basti* and assess the situation.

On 28th February at 5.30 p.m., one person from the neighbourhood, Nizambhai, came to Ramdas Pillai's house and asked him to urgently come to his place. Ramdas Pillai went to Nizambhai's place at around 6 p.m. A lot of people had gathered around. They all decided to walk to the *Masjid* together at 6.30 pm. They sat at the *Masjid* and then proceeded to a wedding of another Muslim family. They were all having dinner there when at around 7 pm, there were shouts of 'Aayaa, aayaa, aayaa!' ('They've come!') A big mob of around 250 to 300 persons came towards the Jhanda Chowk and started climbing on the *Masjid*. Ramdas Pillai stood in front of the *Masjid* and tried to reason with the mob. He kept telling them that whatever happened at Godhra was done by other Muslims; do not punish these people for something wrong done by others. He managed to prevent people from damaging the *Masjid* at that time.

The mob then dispersed and started moving into the *gallis* of the *bastis*. The mobs kept increasing. They had *dharias* and *talwaars*. About 500 Muslims were sheltered at Ramdas Pillai's home and the home of his brother. Kanubhai, a friend of Ramdas Pillai's, also sheltered his Muslim neighbours in his house. Among the affected persons was a woman who out of fear and panic had rushed out of her house leaving her three-month old daughter inside. Kanubhai went to the house and brought the baby safely to her mother. There were people downstairs and upstairs on the terrace of Pillai's house. They stayed the night, were given tea straight away and then dinner.

The mobs went repeatedly to the Muslim houses and destroyed everything. Vessels, clothes, tape recorders, TVs, refrigerators, whatever they could lay their hands on. One wealthy Muslim, Siddiqbhai of Jhanda Chowk incurred a loss of around Rs. 2 lakh. Another Muslim who had returned from Dubai had 15-20 *tolas* gold and cash taken away. One provision shop was looted and six tempos and eight rickshaws were burnt.

On 14th March, when a team visited the area, Kisanwadi looked like a haunted neighbourhood, with broken down homes and shops, and burnt *laaris* and auto-rickshaws. There was complete destruction in the Muslim areas. At Hussaini Chowk, Jhanda Chowk and Indiranagar, all that was left of their homes were smashed TVs, glass and crockery, sewing machines, cycles and fans twisted out of shape.

The *masjid/madrassa* was completely razed to the ground. The people living around told the PUCL team that visited Kishanwadi on 14th March that the mob spent 2-3 days to break down the *masjid*. The previous day they had set fire to it, but Ramdas Pillai was successful in extinguishing it. The mobs went back and attacked it the second time. The Maulana at the *madrassa* is from Bihar. He goes home once a year and was to leave on 4th April. His ticket and luggage was burnt. The *Quran Sharif* from the mosque was thrown in the gutter and burnt. The team saw remnants of gas cylinders that had been used as bombs to break down the *masjid*. The local people/neighbours would remove the gas cylinders, and the members of the mob would put them back.

Role of the police

Ramdas has a good reputation with the police and good contacts with some of them. Earlier, he had filed a case against PI Kanani who had beaten up people in the past. According to Ramdas, the police were helpful. PI Baria, MG Damor from Panigate police station gave good '*saath sahakar*'. Damor came 3 or 4 times when Ramdas called him. Ramdas told the PSI at the police station: "You have picked up the phone and answered my call. You better take charge. It will be your responsibility now." According to Ramdas, the police did not loot any of the homes or take anything away. According to the local people, the police were contacted when the incident began, but the phone was constantly engaged. On the 1st, around 10-15 phone calls were made to the police. By 2.30 p.m., on 1st March, Ramdas Pillai was able to arrange for two tractors from his friend, Harishbhai, and a Tata Sumo from another friend. With police escort, he was able to safely reach the people to Qureshi Mohalla Jamaat Khana at Mughalwada. Some wanted to go to nearby villages and were left on the highway. Apart from helping the people shift out of the area, there was otherwise no help from the police.

Role of local people

All reports spoke highly of Ramdas Pillai. Ramdas Pillai is well known in the area. He is a young man of around 35 years, well-built and muscular. He is originally from Kochi, now three generations in Vadodara. His wife Lakshmiben is a Gujarati. They have four children. His four other brothers also live in the same colony. The family has done a lot of social work, and also helped people during the 1993 floods.

There were reports of people saved by Ramdas Pillai. Suleman, one of the residents, was about to be killed by a person from the mob who was wielding a knife. Ramdas picked up the person and threw him away. Suleman was in a state of utter shock, frozen in his chair. An old woman was left behind when her family fled to safety. The next evening Ramdas found her alone at home and took her to the Jamaat Khana.

Ramdas Pillai and his family have been hearing rumours of threats from various quarters. His daughter's tuition teacher told her to convey to her family that he heard a group of 10-12 men at the *paan*-shop saying 'Ramdas ko *pita do- Miyan ko bachaya.*' (Kill Ramdas - he has saved Muslims). Similarly in the vegetable market people heard some such rumours.

Women interviewed in Qureshi Jamaat Khana revealed names of all the people whom they had identified from the area. Vishnu Prajapati, Kishore Marathi, Santosh Hajam, Jogi, Chandrakant, Uma, Dhamma, Rahul, Karia, Jayanti, Pappu, Subhash, Natu.. Banobibi said 'Chandu Plumber made a list of our Muslim houses a few months ago. Ramesh Stickerwala also looted our houses.' 'Vishnu Prajapati called up his friends from all over and told them Godhra had 30 Hindu deaths, we have to do 60 deaths.' The women said that these were boys who grew up in front of them.

People were saved only due to the efforts of Ramdas Pillai, his wife Lakshmben, his brother, and other residents such as Kanubhai, an auto-rickshaw driver and Mohanbhai Savalia, in whose tractor people were taken to safety.

Rehabilitation

The women in the Quereshi Jammata Khana camp were concerned about their future. They could not see beyond the camp. They stated in no uncertain terms that they can never think of going back to live in their homes at Kisanwadi. They think they will be subjected to sexual violence if they go back. One young woman stated how she wakes up at night with nightmares of how she escaped. Two young girls at the camp were brides/brides-to-be. Their entire dowry (vessels, clothes, and jewellery) had been destroyed and looted. One of the girls was to get married from the camp at the end of March. The bridegroom's family lives in Panigate.

The men said what they needed most was land in a separate place where they can feel safe, where they would build their houses themselves. They did not want any material things as their community was looking after them well.

Ramdas rued the loss of *insaaniyat* (humanity) and feels that the government should rehabilitate the victims, and give them 2-3 police points for protection.

Recent Events

According to Ramdas Pillai, in his testimony before the Citizens' Tribunal on May 8, more than two months after the Muslim residents of Kisanwadi were forced to flee their homes, the situation continues to be grim. The local lumpen elements are stealing whatever little is left of the Muslim homes, the doors, the iron roofs and so on. There is no safety for the few people who may want to come back. The *goonda* elements are heard to be saying 'call them back, we'll beat them up.' No Congress, no BJP person has visited not even the local Muslim councillor. The police refuse to place a police point in the area. Their excuse is that they have less staff. They assure that one of their 13 mobiles can reach the area in five minutes. However, Pillai fears 'in five minutes five persons can die.'

Pillai states that although some of the accused were arrested, these arrests were tokenistic. The accused have been seen hobnobbing as '*netas*' with the police in recent peace meetings. These accused along with the police have been pressurising the Muslims to withdraw their complaints.

On April 4, according to Pillai's testimony, PI Kanani took away his brother, Krishnamurthy Swaminathan on a false pretext and subsequently arrested him on charges of attempt to murder (Section 307). Police Officer JD Rana was heard pressurising Muslim complainants to identify Swaminathan as a perpetrator. The Muslim complainants kept insisting that Swaminathan in fact was one of those who saved them!

16 AJWA ROAD

The area

Ajwa Road runs from Panigate to the Sardar Estate Char Rasta. It is contiguous with Kisanwadi. There are several middle-class and upper middle-class residential colonies on the main Ajwa road. There are also lower middle class societies and slum settlements as well as commercial enterprises in the Ajwa area. Dudheswar colony, Navjeevan society, Jadhav Amishraddha society and Tilaknagar are some of the major Hindu residential areas. Bahar Colony, Aalishan and Borsali apartments, located near Sardar Estate, are Muslim residential areas.

Sabina Park is a middle-class locality near Super Bakery, close to Sardar Estate.

The area was severely affected in the post-Godhra violence in Vadodara. According to reports, Amin Stationery Store in Jadhav Amishraddha Society was looted and burnt on 27th February. The Islamic Study Centre, which included a students' hostel was attacked on the 28th. A man was burnt alive in Khodiyar Nagar, Harni Road (where Ajwa Road turns off to) on 1st March. Violent attacks, looting and arson were seen in Ajwa Road from 28th February up to 17th March. Police action against residents of some localities were reported on 17th March (Alishan, Borsali and Bahar Colony), 30th April (Suleimani Chaal) and 2nd May (Sabina Park).

16.1 Shivam Apartments, Opp. Navjeevan Bus Stand

Date of incident: 28 February 2002, after 7 p.m.

Details of incident

Shivam Apartments is on the main Ajwa Road. According to the affected people, a mob of 400-500 came from the nearby Navjeevan Colony. First, they burnt CARSAFE, a garage on the ground floor of Shivam Apartments. One TVS Scooty belonging to one of the residents was also burnt by the mob. They then looted and set on fire the new Super Spare Parts shop next to Shivam Apartments. A gas cylinder was used to set it on fire.

The fire brigade was informed but came only after 2 ½ hours. The fire engine did not put out the fire completely. Even on the second day, the fire was still burning because of the oil in the shop.

Role of the police

The people said that they did not get any help from the police, who arrived well after the incident occurred.

16.2 Khatija Park, opposite Taj Complex

Date of incident: 1 March 2002, after 4 p.m.

Details of the incident

There were a total of 52 houses in this locality. 7 houses were looted and burnt. When the houses were being burnt, a gas cylinder burst inside one of them. The people thought they would not be able to rescue anything, and they should run away.

29 people belonging to the 7 families were affected in the violence. Three of the affected families left the area after the incident.

Role of the police

The police and fire brigade were informed immediately after the incident. According to the affected people, they told them, "The fight is yours and you fight yourselves." When people said their houses were burnt, what could they be expected to do, the fire brigade people said, "Where can we go? Everywhere houses have been burnt like this."

Police vans were patrolling on the main road at the time of the incident. They were called, but did not pay any attention. Later the police did come, but did not help the Khatija Park residents; instead they sided with the attackers. The local administration did nothing to help.

Incident of support

The affected people hid in the house of one Maharastrian family – Prafullbhai, a provision store owner.

The people said that they did not want to continue to stay here, but had to do so till their houses were sold. They said they had lost their houses as well as their ornaments.

16.3 Aalishan Apartments, Borsali Apartments and Bahar Colony

Date of incident: 17 March 2002

The area

Aalishan Apartments and Borsali Apartments are middle-class societies near Sardar Estate Char Rasta, on the main Ajwa Road. On the opposite side of the road is Bahar Colony, a middle-class Muslim colony of traders-businessmen, professionals, bankers and government employees. Both areas are at walking distance from the Sardar Industrial Estate. There has been no previous history of communal disturbances in these localities, even in

1992.

Since the evening of 27th February, there was tension and provocation by small mobs attempting to set fire to the *jhopadis* and industrial units at the Sardar Estate as well as business establishments belonging to the Muslim community. 18-20 units belonging to Muslims were set ablaze, including a factory with Swiss collaboration, which incurred losses of about Rs. 1.75 crore. Tension in the area increased on 15th March with the burning of a *jhoadpatti* in the area. The following report is based on eyewitness accounts of the residents of these areas.

Details of incidents

According to residents, since the morning of 17th March, some anti-social elements had gathered in the nearby open fields, waiting for a chance to set fire to cabins and *laaris* at Sardar Estate Char Rasta. Two factories in Sardar Estate, owned by Muslims but employing Hindu employees, were set on fire. The *jhopadis* at the corner of the Char Rasta were reportedly vacated by paying off the occupants, and set on fire by the mob. The burning continued through the morning of the 17th. Small groups of young men on motorbikes repeatedly came from Waghodia Road and set fire to the *jhopadis*. All this happened although there was curfew in the area at that time.

According to eyewitnesses to the incidents, who were on the terraces of these apartments, a 100-strong mob had gathered at the Sardar Estate Char Rasta. At about 2:15 p.m. the mob succeeded in breaking open a godown belonging to a Muslim. They threw inflammable chemicals in the godown. A huge blast was heard from the godown (perhaps from a cylinder exploding) and it was in flames. Alarmed by the blast, and the sight of flames coming out of the godown, women residing near the GEB sub-station in the area gathered on the road to see what was happening. A gray police Matador (No. GJ6U 922) passed the area exactly at that time but moved on towards Sayaji Park without taking cognizance of the miscreants present at the site. After some time a blue police mobile van arrived at the Char Rasta. The policemen got out of the van and stood watching the scene like mute spectators.

Role of the police

The people in the area say that they had been trying to call the police from 10 a.m. onwards. The police dismissed their appeals as rumours. Finally the police arrived at 1 p.m. just as a group of men were returning after *namaaz*.

When the police mobile van arrived in the area, the women who had gathered near the GEB sub-station approached the policemen to express their insecurity over the past three days and ask for a police point in the area. The policemen ignored their requests, and the van started driving away. Turning back suddenly, the police started firing into the gathering in the GEB sub-station gully. This incident occurred at around 3.15 pm., in the curfew relaxation period.

Two young men were injured in the police firing. One of them, who later succumbed to his injuries, was standing in one of the internal lanes of the society, while the other young man was trying to get the women back during the firing. According to those who were present in the gathering, the firing was done at point-blank range, and no warning was given by the police, in complete violation of the rules. Two rounds of firing were done by Hemraj R Parmar of Panigate Mobile No. 2, using a .303 rifle. DCB (Detection of Crime Branch) Police Sub-Inspector Patel was also present.

The police also threw two teargas shells into the Bahar colony. After firing, the police rushed into the colony area and beat the women with *lathis*, all the while hurling filthy abuses at them. Maimuna Daudbhai Shaikh's son, Imtiaz, was sitting in his Tata Sumo in his own compound and listening to music. The police pulled him out of his vehicle, beat him up badly, forcibly placed a sword brought by them into his hands and took a photograph of him. When 7 women protested, they were *lathi*-charged. The police took Imtiaz away and arrested him under Sections 143, 147, 148, 149, 188, 152, 156, 337, BP Act 135. He was kept in the Panigate Police Station and released four days later. He was badly beaten while in police custody. Maimuna requested a police officer (she could not name him) to save her son from being beaten in the jail. That night he was beaten more severely. Among the women beaten during the *lathi*-charge was a pregnant woman named Zahra, and an elderly woman Ameena Memon who was badly injured.

According to residents, the police FIR consciously misrepresents the facts. It claims that 1500-2000 strong mobs, armed with swords, *bhala* and pipes emerged from Bahar Colony, whereas only around 50 unarmed women came out to ask about the arson in Sardar Estate Char Rasta. The FIR also states that teargas was used to disperse the mob and firing was done at the Char Rasta in self-defence. In fact, the police fired at point-blank range without any warning in the internal roads of Bahar Colony.

Effect on people's lives

Seven women were injured in the brutal police *lathi*-charge: Maimuna Sheikh, Zehra Vohra (who was pregnant), Rukayyaben Khirwala, Rizwana Sankhedawala, Raisa Momin, Hamida Shiriwala and Shabana Sarfraz Shaikh. The women attempted to seek justice through filing complaints to the police. They also faxed a complaint to the Commissioner of Police on 18th March regarding police atrocities and requested the Commissioner to help them get medical check-up. A meeting was arranged with Mr Piyush Patel, ACP, on 18th evening to discuss the police action. A representation was made to the National Commission for Women on 12th April. However, no action was taken by the police.

The residents of these societies justifiably feel that the brutal attack by the police on women and youth of the area shows a clear bias against the minority community. Instead of taking firm action against the mob which was gathered at the Sardar Estate Char Rasta, in full view of the police when they finally arrived in the area, police action was directed towards innocent residents of the minority community.

Maimuna and other women described how their sons and husbands have been confined to their homes from 27th February. Although shops on Waghodia Road were open, and Hindu men were present, they said that no Muslim man felt safe enough to step out. No one has been able to go out to work, they said. Their *laaris* (selling Chinese food) are lying idle in their front yard.

16.4 Suleimani Chaal

Date of incident: 30 April 2002

The area

Suleimani Chaal is a slum settlement at Ajwa Road. There are Hindus and Muslims living here. Adjacent to the slums are newly constructed apartments, Pushti Smruti Apartment Blocks. The builder is the Deputy Mayor of Vadodara, Shailesh Mehta. A court case is pending in the High Court to get this piece of land vacated. The building plans of this society allegedly show the area of Suleimani Chaal to be part of the society. According to local people, Mehta has wanted to evict them for some time so as to expand construction of the apartments.

Since 28th February, Suleimani Chaal has been under threat from Ramanlal ni Chaal and Shiv Shakti *mohalla*. There were several attempts by mobs to attack the chawl. Petrol bombs, burning tyres and stones were lobbed into the chawl. However, damage was kept minimal, with both Hindus and Muslims fending off attacks, putting out fires, and jointly and effectively protected the area. Residents allege that Shailesh Mehta hoped to take advantage of the communal situation and paid '*supari*' to Hindu mobs to destroy the chawl. Residents allege that the builder's men forced the Hindu residents of nearby societies who are otherwise peace loving, to vacate their homes so that they were not affected in case things go out of hand. In fact it was reported that even residents of Shiv Shakti colony from where there are frequent incidents of stone throwing are not to blame. Actual stone-throwing was done by nearby slum-dwellers who were paid by the builder to do this.

Another kind of offensive was launched in the area from 30th April, this time by the police in the name of combing operations. The following is based on the report by a fact-finding team that visited the area on 3rd May 2002.

Details of incident

On the night of 30th April, at about 10 p.m., an acid bomb was thrown from Ramanlal ni Chaali and Shivshakti *mohalla*, on Ajwa road. Idris Miyan Ahmad Miyan, a 17 year-old boy, attempted to throw it away from the houses, when it exploded in his hands – one hand was blown off. The people informed the police, who accused them of throwing bombs. Soon thereafter, police commenced combing operations. About 15-20 policemen from DCB of Panigate Police Station came in and entered from the both sides of the colony. Among the policemen were Mr. Harish and Mr. Raju Kalia. They were there for about 2 ½ hours and took away 21 boys. They beat them brutally as they arrested them, and continued their assaults in the police jeep. Out of these, 4 boys between 12 and 14 years were soon released. Others were released by 6-7 p.m. on 1st May. On 1st May, at about 4 p.m., eleven other persons were also taken away. They were released by 8.30 p.m.

The police forcibly entered homes, vandalising property and abusing and assaulting women, particularly in houses where they could not find the men. They also beat children and the Pesh Imam. They broke down doors, windows, and electric meter boxes, and damaged vehicles. From the house-cum-workshop of Mr. Abdul Majid Sidiqqi, who makes bakery equipment, Rs. 21,000/- along with other valuables was also taken away. Some of the others who suffered loss of property were Mr. Rafiq Mohammed Abdul Kadir Qureshi, Akbar Bhai (GJ 6 9306PP) and Mansoor

Bhai (GJ6KK7863). The electric meter of Munavar Hussain Gauri was broken and at the time of the investigation, current was passing through its loose wires. Three auto-rickshaws were also damaged (GJ6W186, GJ6W321 and GJ6V9921). There are more than 50 Hindu families in the locality. In the police violence some Hindu men were also arrested as well as assaulted. Amongst them were Mr. Kiran and Mr. Badal Rajasthani. It was reported that small children were ill and ran fever for days because of terror that they experienced.

Mr. Piyush Patel, Dy. Commissioner and PI Kanani of DCB came to investigate and found that the police had acted in an irresponsible manner. Following the investigation, Piyush Patel was immediately transferred.

Details of police violence against women

Shahnaz Banoo, 25 years

- Came to her mother's house, along with her three small children, for her delivery. She was at home with three other women. The police abused them, hit them and asked for their husbands. They threatened them with rape. They kicked her 4 year-old son Aftab and pointed a gun towards him. When they tried to protect him, they were beaten mercilessly with *lathis* and rifle butts. She delivered prematurely as a result. They could not get medical assistance for fear of being assaulted by the police again, and have managed with home remedies. The police kept saying that they would kill them and then the men would be forced to come out. She identified one PI from Panigate police station and one Harish, who was not in uniform. The police were all drunk. According to her, one of their superiors told them to stop beating the women, but they said "you go ahead, we are doing our job".

Husna Banoo, age 35 years

- She was assaulted by the police with *lathis*, kicked and abused, when she was returning from the hospital where she had taken the injured boy Idris. She says the police were drunk.

Salma Banoo Fakhruddin Sayed, age 30 years.

- She is the wife of the *maulana* of the local *masjid*. Six policemen, allegedly all drunk, forcibly entered the *madrassa*. One was not in uniform. They said they were searching for arms. They searched the premises, opening cupboards and drawers, breaking things, including the back door. They took away Rs. 2000 cash. They asked the *maulana* to go under the bed and remove the mattresses and other things there. As he crawled under the bed they began beating him with *lathis*. When she protested, the others turned on her with rifle butts.

Rehanna Banoo Junetbhai, age 20 years

- She came to her mother's house for her first delivery. The police forcibly entered the house. They used extremely abusive language and beat her with *lathis* on her thighs and legs.

Inter-community solidarity

Relations between Hindu and Muslim residents are extremely cordial. The team talked separately to a number of Hindu residents. The house of Babubhai Garbarbhai Patel directly faces the apartment society in which Shailesh Mehta has a stake. He had been on constant vigil to prevent attacks on the *basti* as well as the apartment society, which could be blamed on residents of this colony. But he had sent his sons away as young men were more likely to face police harassment.

People reported that the SRP post in front of the mosque was quite helpful. They told the team that while the situation within the locality was fine, there were some boys who were not so peace loving. As per their version, Idris Miyan Ahmad Miyan was injured while he was about to throw an acid bomb

16.5 Sabina Park

Date of incident: 2 May 2002

Details of incident

On 2nd May, at around 11.00 p.m., incidents of stone pelting were reported from a Hindu-dominated area of Kisanwadi which adjoins Sabina Park. The police, led by PSI Parmar of Panigate Police Station, forcibly entered houses in Sabina Park, and started hitting residents who were getting ready to go to bed. They hit women, children and even elderly people with *lathis*, and broke furniture, telephones and other household items. A pregnant woman, Taslimaben, was hit with a *lathi* on her stomach and back. When her husband and in-laws attempted to intervene,

they were also beaten up. PSI Parmar allegedly abused the women in filthy language. Some 10-12 youth were rounded up by Parmar, who beat them mercilessly with *lathis*. Parmar did not give any explanations for the beatings.

17 NAVAYARD

17.1 Roshannagar-Ashapuri, Navayard Cabin D Area

The area

This fact-finding was limited to the Roshannagar-Ashapuri as well as Navayard Cabin D areas and is based on detailed interviews with residents of these areas. In addition to the PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan team that visited the area, information from a report prepared by a fact-finding team from women's organisations from Mumbai and Delhi is also presented here.

The area stretches from Vadodara railway station to Chhani and is predominantly working class. Roshannagar is mostly a settlement of UP migrant labourers, most of who hail from one single village of Etah district in U.P. Some of them also ply petty businesses. Many people, particularly young girls and those arrested earlier, fled to U.P. after 15th March, because of police threats of re-arrest. By mid-May, only 20% of those who fled had returned.

Ashapuri is a Dalit *basti*, around a quarter of them being Christian. Navayard Cabin D area has a majority of Muslims, most of them employed by the Western Railways. The entire area is lower /lower-middle class, with low levels of education.

The terror and intimidation that the people continue to feel is a direct result of the mob fury and police violence wreaked upon them on 28th February and 1st March. The anxiety began building up right on the 27th evening, when a meeting was held in the adjoining, predominantly Hindu, colony called Amarnagar. This meeting was of the '86 *Village Samiti*, a local organisation of migrants in the area, mainly from Saurashtra. The meeting, according to residents, was organised at the behest of outsiders.

Details of incidents (27 February – 1 March)

27 FEBRUARY 2002

- First evening meeting of *86 Village Samiti* at Amarnagar;
- Anxiety among residents of Roshannagar.

28 FEBRUARY 2002

- Second evening meeting of *86 Village Samiti* was held at Amarnagar
- There was general consternation and apprehension among residents of Roshannagar, especially since little groups of 10-20 trickled back from Amarnagar;
- A small mob, mostly locals, gathered and pelted stones;
- Loudspeakers were used by the madrasa to warn of impending attack, urging women and children to secure themselves and men to group on terraces; *Islam khatre mein hain...*;
- Police complaint was lodged against the use of loudspeakers;
- Police arrived in 4 jeeps with around 4-5 policemen in each, apart from a police van, and were led to the Maulana Mohammed Yusuf by Leelaben;
- The *Madrassa* was searched, books, including the *Quran Sharif*, torn and thrown in the gutter and loudspeakers confiscated;
- 21 arrests, including the Maulana, were made;
- The arrested men were loaded into the empty police van and taken to Fatehgunj police station;
- There was police torture in lock-up.

1 MARCH 2002

- Thursday's arrestees were taken to Circuit House, and then to Central Jail without disembarking from the police

van;

-They were lodged in Central Jail till 12:00 p.m., 5th March 2002; subsequently released on bail.

17.2 Roshannagar-Ashapuri

-Around 9:30 in the morning two armed mobs (total strength of about 1000), accompanied by police, surrounded the right flank of Roshannagar;

-Houses, shops, *laaris*, tempo vans, auto-rickshaws and motorcycles were burnt or damaged, and chemicals were spilled;

-Women and children fled to Ramwadi and Kalyannagar.

-The mob attempted to burn a parked truck;

-Shops and houses were looted.

17.3 Navayard Cabin D Area

-About 1.30 p.m. (during the Friday *namaaz*) a mob arrived in 3 luxury buses;

-People from local neighbourhood also joined in and a mob of 2000 gathered in the open space next to Police Constable Abdul Majid Malik's house (unarmed, of Wadi police station);

-The well-armed mob tried to move towards Roshannagar through the open fields;

-Hearing the noise, about 25 men rushed out from the mosque;

-4 police jeeps were present at the scene, with PSI Rabari of Fatehgunj Police station in charge;

-Police fired at the Muslim group;

-Zahir Khan Bismillah Khan Pathan (about 18 years old) was killed on the spot;

-The mob continued to pelt stones; a mattress was burnt and thrown into a house; 10 goats were stolen;

-PSI Rabari was injured;

-The police then directed their firing on the mob;

-1 person was killed (Manish, aged 19, who was not part of the mob, but was watching);

-Police arrested 48 Muslims of Roshannagar (the left flank), most dragged from their houses;

-Many were injured and beaten during arrest;

-The arrested people were taken to Fatehgunj police station, released on bail the following day;

-Local Hindus were arrested for 'rioting', released on bail the following day.

Details of incidents

The first attack on Roshannagar was at 9.30 a.m. on 1st March. Primarily women and children were present in the area (the right flank of Roshannagar inhabited by labourers), since most of the men had already been arrested the previous night. Two mobs attacked simultaneously. The first mob came from the general direction of Amarnagar, the second through the large ditch in front of Roshannagar. The first mob was around 500 strong; the second one numbered around 400. Both the mobs were constituted mostly of outsiders, though some locals were also part of them. A few women as well as policemen were also involved. They were all armed with swords (*talwaar*), knives (*dharia*), spears (*bhale*), iron rods (pipe) and sticks (*lathi*).

The second attack on Roshannagar was attempted at 1.30 p.m. on the same day when a mob of at least 2000, including outsiders, gathered in the open fields at Navayard D Cabin area. In the resultant police firing, two youths died.

The mobs involved were well organised and led, going by the well-planned nature of the attacks. VHP and Bajrang Dal cadres, wearing saffron bands, seem to have directed the attacks that were accompanied by provocative slogans. A few women as well as the police were involved in all this destruction and looting.

Loss to life and damage to property

Two youths lost their lives. The amount of damage to property, even from a cursory survey, is huge. Five houses were burnt; other houses looted; one tempo van and one motorcycle were burnt; nearly 30 *laaris* were burnt/looted; one auto-rickshaw was burnt and two were damaged; 1 *chappal* shop was burnt and looted; one cut-piece cloth shop-cum vegetable godown was looted; chemicals for making detergents, bleach and blue spilled and the storage room completely destroyed. One factory adjoining GIDC Roshannagar (near Divya Gas) was gutted. The factory, owned by Raju Tinwalla, a resident of Fatehganj, employed mainly Hindus.

Role of the police

There had been tension in the area from 27th February onwards. The situation worsened by 28th February with mobs, returning from a special *86 Village Samiti* meeting, pelted stones at Muslim households. When the alarmed

Muslims used loudspeakers to warn the community, a complaint was lodged. Police responded to this complaint with alacrity and 21 Muslims were arrested from their homes on 28th February 2002. They were taken to Fatehgunj police station and mercilessly beaten up in the lockup. Welts and other marks were visible even on 7th March, after more than a week. Two men (Ali Nabi Bholey Khan, aged 40, and Mohhamed Umar Abdul Latif, aged 35), were beaten so badly that they needed to be taken to Jail Hospital. When they cried out loud in pain, they were warned not to scream. When they refused to chant *Sabse Bada Hanuman*, they were beaten up more and made to sit cross-legged with policemen jumping on their thighs. They were told to go to Pakistan, to go back to UP and their Mulayam or to their Sonia-ammi. For 24 hours they were not given either food or adequate water. They were not allowed to urinate, and when they asked for water, they were told to drink urine. Bearded men, including Maulana Mohammed Yusuf and Abdul Sattar, had their beards pulled and the police threatened to cut them off. The arrested men were not produced at the Circuit House, but were shut up in the police van outside the Circuit House before being remanded to Central Jail. They were charged under Sections 137, 143, 144, 153, and 188, in contrast to Hindus arrested the next day, who were charged under Section 188. The latter were released on bail the very next day, while the former were released on bail only on 5th March.

The police, who successfully thwarted the mob from moving towards Roshannagar at around 1.30 p.m. on 1st March, proceeded to systematically arrest 48 Muslims of Roshannagar. They were dragged out of their homes and arrested. From interviews it appears that this process of arrest was violent: the police broke doors and furniture, beat people indiscriminately, and used abusive language loaded with sexual and religious overtones. In fact, a 65-year-old man was beaten senseless and his hand was fractured. The lockup story of these 48 arrestees also is highly similar to the above account. Revolvers were pointed at them with the threat that they would become a part of the statistics of "encounters."

In contrast to such alacrity on the part of the police personnel, during the mob attacks on Muslim houses, their response was one of studied inaction that only aided and abetted the mob violence. As of 20th March, no FIRs had been filed against any of the parties concerned in this area.

Those released on bail had fled to UP. Many families had sent off their girls and children too for fear of escalated violence.

Names and evidence

Needless to say, cross-referencing and verification of details would need active co-operation from many governmental sources. We have tried to ensure accuracy by interviewing, individually and jointly and over several days, several people from both communities. The following are names that came up repeatedly:

Municipal Councillors: Pradip Joshi (Ward no. 12) and Bharat Shah reportedly incited and sanctioned the mob violence; they are supposed to have been in constant touch with the "rioters" as well as the police.

Local residents: Rajubhai, Dilipbhai and a person known as Painter played an active role in leading and inciting the mob.

Police personnel: PSI Vaghela of Fatehgunj Police station was reportedly very violent in his behaviour. He is supposed to have beaten the arrestees with an iron rod; Haveldar Ghanshyam of Fatehgunj Police station was also singled out for his abusive behaviour.

Subsequently, some of the local residents were arrested. Rajubhai was in jail for 15 days, was represented by Niraj Jain. Painter was not arrested, since he is a Police Mitra (Friend of the Police). Around 16th March, stones were pelted at the Muslim area. Muslims ascertained the house from which the stones were being pelted, and went in a delegation to the Hindu side. On a search being made, a drunken outsider was found in the house in question, with pockets full of stones. He was handed over to the police.

17.4 Amarnagar

Amarnagar is a locality of Hindu Wankars and Muslims. Kanu Acharya, Kamlesh Gandhi and Corporators Pradip Joshi and Raju Vaghela are alleged to have provoked Hindus to indulge in stone-throwing and looting Muslim houses.

17.5 Das Patel ni Chaal, Sardarnagar

Dates of incidents: 28 February - 4 March 2002

The area

Das Patel ni Chaal is adjacent to St. Joseph's School in Navayard. It has forty-odd houses, of which five belonged to Muslims. Next to it are twenty Muslim houses located in a depression. Hindus living in this chawl hail from U.P. Many of the residents earned their living as casual wage labourers in transport or petty trade.

Details of incidents

On 28th February, at around 8.30 p.m., a crowd of twenty people came and broke the first Muslim house of Hussein Pathan, and stoned others. According to one report, a mob of 1000-1500 started throwing stones. One man was attacked with a sword. He was taken to hospital. The others got scared and ran away. Later that night, at 11 p.m., rioters returned and took away as much as they could from their homes in their own auto-rickshaws. Whatever remained was looted that night. Several houses were also burnt.

There are 25 or so Hindu families of staff living in the compound of the Graphite Company adjoining Das Patel ni Chaal. The attacking mobs broke the compound walls, and entered the chawl through the compound. In fear, many of these Hindu families took shelter in the Dada Bhagwan *Mandir* for two days and nights, surviving only on snacks.

On the nights of 1st, 2nd and 3rd March stoning continued, as also loot and arson. Gas cylinders were ignited leading to destruction of whatever was left after the looting. Auto-rickshaws and fabrication workshops of Muslims were destroyed. On the 8th, a *laari* belonging to a Muslim was burnt. Many Hindus gave shelter to Muslims of Das Patel on the nights of looting and arson.

Perpetrators of violence

According to residents, those who attacked the Muslim houses were Hindus (Baraiya caste and Marathi speaking), some of whom are said to belong to the Bajrang Dal. Many attackers were reportedly from the neighbouring area of Lalpura. Muslims from Gujarat as well as U.P. live in Lalpura, the number of Gujarati Muslims being less than those from U.P. There is a divide between these two communities. According to the affected people, looting was also done by Gujarati Muslims, and all those houses which were attacked and looted belonged to U.P Muslims.

The victims identified Dilip Keria as the leader of the mob. His father is known in the area as an anti-social element responsible for initiating trouble. He was instrumental in burning Hussein Pathan's house and converting it into a Hindu temple, painting it saffron. He forced Hindu women to go and worship in that temple.

Role of the police

During the looting and arson the police of Fatehgunj police station were patrolling on the main road, indifferently watching the happenings. Citing curfew regulations, they did not permit the residents to enter the area to take their belongings, while the arsonists would manage to run in and set fire to the houses. Up to 4th March, the police did not prevent looting and burning of houses. On 9th March they came and took notes but did not ask for names or signatures of witnesses.

The police were stationed at this place and would not allow entry in to the chawl. The chawl has no exit either as bricks placed there have blocked it. The victims cannot even enter their houses because of this. The victims have gone to their relations and acquaintances in the nearby Navayard area.

17.6 Ektanagar

Date of incident: 28 February 2002

The area

This area, near Chhani Jakatnaka, houses Hindus, Muslims and Christians. 95% of the Hindus belong to (Chamar and Wankar Caste).

Details of incident

On 28th February at around 10.30 a.m., a luxury bus was first set on fire next the Ektanagar. It was alleged that a local leader provoked some Hindu youth by calling them *hijra* (eunuchs) and asked them to wear bangles if they could not finish the Muslims off. The mob then set fire to a Muslim hut. After that there was exchange of brickbats between Hindus and Muslims from the respective rooftops of their houses.

Both communities maintained night vigils for over a month. The police are keeping a vigil too. There is great mistrust between the two communities. Today Ektanagar, which means a place of unity, has been divided not only between Muslims and Hindus. The Hindus too are divided into two groups, one supporting the Congress and the

other BJP. They hold their meetings separately.

Muslims were largely vegetable vendors. There was a vegetable selling place for the entire area. This area is no more available to them as it is cordoned off. The illegal electrical connections lighting the place have been terminated. Corporator Pradip Joshi is said to have had a hand in this termination.

Damage and losses

A tea and refreshment *laari* was completely burnt, and also the chairs. The estimated loss to property is Rs. 20,000. The incident took place on 4th March at 2 p.m. The *laari* owner came to know of it only the next day since he was unable to move out of his house on account of curfew. He said that there was no police help, and that the police were complicit. The day before all this happened, two people came and they looked at him suspiciously. Gradually a group of 8 to 10 people gathered and they started asking him many questions. When all this was happening, a police van came and a policeman with a gun came out and made inquiries. The *laari* owner informed the team about two other cabins and two shops (a mattress shop and a garage) which were burnt in the area.

18 FATEHGUNJ

Date of incident: 15 March 2002

The area

Fatehgunj falls in Ward No. 11 of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation. Apart from the areas on both sides of the Fatehgunj main road that runs through the area and the residential section in the north, this Ward includes areas beyond EME, extending to Shuklanagar and all the localities on the right side of the (Kalyan Hall) Sama Road. Towards the north-west, Pensionpura, Gandhi Chowk, Ambedkar Chowk, Adarsh Chowk and Patel Chowk also come under Ward No. 11.¹

The PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan fact-finding team met local residents and also spoke to the three Fatehgunj corporators: Ashok Pardesi, Vandana Khode (both BJP) and Mustafa Sheikh (Cong-I). Several people in Fatehgunj spoke to the team on condition of anonymity. This is indicative of the depth and extent to which fear of reprisal, suspicion and mistrust has spread in the area. A team from women's organisations from Mumbai and Delhi had also visited the area and spoken to affected people. This report is based on the findings of these two teams.

The violence that engulfed many parts of Vadodara in the aftermath of 27th February in Godhra seemed to have bypassed Fatehgunj even as the neighbouring area of Sama and Karelibaug were badly affected.

Fatehgunj had always been considered 'the most cosmopolitan' part of the city and a model of communal peace and harmony where temples, mosques, churches and agiyaris stood side by side. It was held up as an example where people belonging to all faiths, different ethnicities and sub-continental backgrounds lived together in complete harmony. It is known to be a very safe area as well as a favourite spot for M S University students who spend a great deal of time there.

The image of Fatehgunj was shattered on 15th March 2002 when it experienced its many firsts; its first incident of communal violence, its first incident of police firing, its first death due to this, the first time curfew had been imposed due to communal violence.

Background to growing communal tension in the area

An elderly couple living in Sadar Bazaar since 1969 told the team that they were quite disturbed by the way things had deteriorated over the last 3-4 years. Hooliganism and rowdy behaviour by youth of the area, especially members of the Shiv Sena led by one Jagdish Chauhan, was on the rise. Festivals such as those during *Shravan mahina* were celebrated with noisy *yagnas* right on the road, blocking entry to their own houses. The festivities would often extend over 15 days, starting at 7 in the morning and continuing till midnight. *Bhajans* were sung over the loudspeaker in the afternoons and *garbas* started in the evening and carried on late into the night. Besides the noise, obstruction to traffic caused great inconvenience to the residents.

Public celebrations of such festivals, which were once private family affairs, is a phenomenon that seems to

¹ This Report confines itself to Fatehgunj proper, Sadar Bazar and its vicinity.

coincide with the aggressive ideology and agenda of Hindutva in the post-Babri *Masjid* demolition phase. The couple felt that the root cause of the trouble was the presence of religious zealots in the area. They said that earlier these very Hindu boys used to participate in the Moharrum processions. Perhaps this encouraged a climate of competing religious fervour, eliciting a response from the Muslims. The couple observed that they had grown in numbers in their attendance in the mosque. Prayers at the mosque played over the loudspeaker which earlier lasted only a minute or two and were pleasant reminders of older times of peaceful coexistence, had evolved into long fiery lectures, especially on Fridays.

Many residents complained that after 27th February, the local media, especially *Sandesh*, was constantly inciting Hindu youth, which added to the tension. Meanwhile, several of the societies (comprising members from both communities) to the north of Sadar Bazaar had organised themselves into what they called a Federation of Societies for civic matters. When trouble broke out in the city on 28th February, they decided that they would not allow any trouble in their area and that they would also monitor events in Sadar Bazaar and Kamatipura to stifle rumours. Night vigils were kept by them in turns.

Mohalla-wise peace committees and night vigils had become a routine up to the 15th. Their efforts to maintain peace consolidated from 2nd March onwards, as *basti* women would alert the peace committees when they heard sudden eruptions of noise or encountered small trouble around. People, especially the young, were told to remain calm and not to react, in the face of intensifying Hindu provocation. Kasimbhai, the uncle of Imran, a boy killed in police firing on the 15th, narrated that PI Patel had been consulted and they were reassured that the police were on their side.

It was on one of these night vigils, on 4th March, at 1.30 a.m., that they noticed two riders, on one a motorbike and the other on a scooter, coming from the direction of the Convent School and proceeding towards Kamdar Society. Two of the night vigil members followed them to investigate. They reached Kamdar Society to find them involved in an argument with some drunken youth on the road. The riders had been trying to incite them to attack the Muslims. The drunks were threatening to beat them up and hand them over to the police. One of the members of the Federation who belonged to the minority community, cautioned against this saying that an action like that might be exploited by them and misrepresented as an attack by the minorities. One of the riders was apparently a resident of Karelbaug. It was only later that it occurred to them that the possible targets that night might have been the 3 Muslim families living in semi-pucca houses between Kamdar Society and Richmond Apartment.

Calm appeared to prevail in Fatehganj even as communal violence encompassed neighbouring areas up to 15th March, but tension had been mounting with accounts of what was happening in the rest of the city drifting in. Rumours of plots being hatched by both communities to attack each other, groups of people gathering in the street corners to keep an eye on each other all added to the air of fear and suspicion.

On 1st March, 40-odd Muslim families (about 300 people) from Shuklanagar (about 2 km away, in Sama) moved to the *kabrastan* (burial place) in Kamatipura to escape attacks on them by mobs in that area (they had fought a 3-hour-pitched-battle for their lives on the previous night; see Sama report). Rumours flew thick and fast that a 1000-strong mob had been mobilised to attack the Hindus of Fatehganj. Some people from Fatehganj, who had helped evacuate the Shuklanagar families, insisted on their Hindu friends coming along with them to see this mob. They were shocked to see the battered, bruised crowd, with women and children looking scared and miserable. They were convinced that these were the victims, not the likely perpetrators, of communal carnage. The residents of Kamatipura reassured them that they had nothing to fear and that there was no need for Hindus to flee their homes for fear of attacks by them.

Another rumour that caused great trepidation amongst the Muslims was that Pradip Joshi, the BJP corporator of Sama had called Ashok Pardesi (the local BJP corporator) imputing lack of *mardangi* (manliness) in Fatehganj and asking if he needed any help in 'setting things right'.

On 8th March, a general peace meeting open to all was called at the Ranchhodji temple behind Fatehsagar building. Pardesi claims it was called by Mustuffa Sheikh that seems unlikely considering the venue. Mustuffa when asked if he had convened the meeting, promptly denied it and said that he was just informed about the meeting and could not even remember who had told him. Word just seemed to spread. He felt that the meeting had probably been called by Pardesi whose men had created a scene there. Pardesi's opinion on peace meetings was rather curious and suspect as he observed that trouble always broke out wherever peace meetings had been held. (His view acquires sinister overtones in the light of attempts to stall peace efforts, such as the chilling attack on the meeting exactly one month later at the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad.)

A Muslim resident who attended the meeting told the team that in retrospect the meeting was all wrong. It was attended by almost 200 people though Section 144 was in force. The venue, according to him, should have been neutral and things seemed to deteriorate more rapidly after it.

People arrived at the temple and a big crowd had gathered when this person and some of his friends noticed that Pardesi was not there. They went in search of him and found him standing alone across the main road not far from the corner where wood is sold. They told him that everyone was waiting for him to start the meeting and to hurry up and come. He went along with them.

Corporators Mustaffa Sheikh, Ashok Pardesi, P. I. M. S. Patel, Kiran Mehta, an ex-policeman, several elders from Sadar Bazaar and other residents from both communities attended the meeting. (Vandana Khode, the third corporator, said she had not been informed about the meeting),

Midway through the meeting Ramesh (who sells wood) and Jagdish (from the Shiv Sena) confirmed drunks, came and joined the meeting. Suddenly Jagdish started shouting '*Badhaa Musalamano na mandir maathi nikali jaau*'. ('Get all the Muslims out of the temple.') Someone from inside said '*Badhaa chup thai jaau*'. '*Shanti jalvo*'. ('Keep silence and keep peace.') Jagdish carried on shouting '*Musalmano amnay masjid ni under malwa de?*' ('Will the Muslims let us meet in the *masjid*?') As the situation got tense, P. I. Patel led Jagdish aside and he was kept locked up in a van till the meeting ended.

Feelings of distrust and suspicion gained momentum. The intensity of rumours increased. Several times people armed with *dharias* and sticks came out on the streets and they were placated each time and peace was maintained.

Between 10th and 15th March, three attempts were made to burn Furniture Systems, a shop in the Fatehsagar building. Alert residents of the building on the night vigil managed to foil these attempts. On all occasions they found kerosene poured around this shop and another in the basement belonging to a Muslim. They felt these forays were made by the people from outside, probably Sama.

Details of the incident on 15th March 2002

A team from women's organisations from Mumbai and Delhi met Kasimbhai (uncle of Imran, who was killed in police firing). He narrated the incidents of 15th March. Others near him kept adding details.

On Friday, 15th March, the day of the *shiladaan* in Ayodhya, Muslims in Fatehganj decided that *namaaz* at the two *masjids* would be held half an hour earlier than normal so that there would be some gap between the end of the *namaaz* and the beginning of the *puja*. Before the *namaaz* started, everyone was advised not to loiter around but to disperse fast and go home. It was also suggested that the roads be kept free of vehicular obstruction to facilitate movement of the police. When they came out after *namaaz* Fatehganj looked uncharacteristically deserted and quiet, a lull before the storm, as it were.

Minutes later the *puja* started at the *mandir*. Mikes were used and drums played extremely loudly. Firecrackers were burst and some were thrown provocatively at the doors of Muslim houses. By 5 p.m. it was peaceful again and everyone heaved sighs of relief.

Kasimbhai told the team, 'We had repeatedly told our people, especially the young, not to react, to remain calm. That we should not make a single mistake by losing our calm. We had to ensure that we keep quiet even as the provocations from the Hindus kept intensifying. We had pleaded to our community that tolerance and maintaining peace is the need of the hour even as our people were both scared as well as angry. Frenzy was building up around us as it was the day of the *shiladaan* in Ayodhya and we knew that we would get targeted.'

At 7 p.m. the green nylon *kapda* from over the *mazhar* (the big mosque) was burnt. According to the Surtis, who live opposite the mosque, people of both communities (3-4 elderly men) doused the fire and settled it peacefully without wanting to escalate the tension. Abdulbhai said that they asked people not to worry and tried to hush up the matter. Muslims in the area feel however that this was a deliberate attempt to incite them into some kind of retaliatory action. They argue that if the fire was an accident and an *agrabatti* had fallen on the *chaddar* (one of the versions) the blaze would have started small and then grown. From what they had heard the fire started suddenly and the flames were large.

People living around Fatehsagar building say that they heard rumours that Pradip Joshi and Ajay Dave (BJP corporators) had been seen in that area on different occasions during the fateful evening.

According to eyewitnesses not wanting to be identified, who were sitting across the road in the Blue Diamond complex next to the Fatehganj Char Rasta petrol pump, at around 10 p.m., six scooters drove into the Bumiya sweet shop lane in Sadar Bazar. They were later told that these people had distributed swords and other arms to people from their vehicles. Trouble started soon after. Stoning started at the *masjid*. Kasimbhai says that they shouted out to stop it there and then and settle the matter but tension was running high and boys from both communities started fighting. Nobody is clear about who exactly started it. Stoning across the streets at each others' houses and those on the road began. Someone on a scooter rode around shouting, '*Miyalogo chalu kari didhu*' ('The Muslims have started [violence]').

The Hindus say there was firing from the mosque. The Muslims deny this saying that the tenants who live there are too poor to own firearms and that the police had found nothing in their combing operation.

Ashok Pardesi and PI Patel were standing on the main road opposite the VUDA office (not far from Blue Diamond) when they heard shouting that stone throwing had started at the mosque. There was no mention of firing. PI Patel was therefore aware it was a case of stone throwing.

Role of the police

The *puja* on 15th afternoon was performed in the presence of the police who did nothing to control its vociferousness let alone prevent it at all, which, given the tense situation, they should have done.

When the police arrived at 10.30 p.m., they opened fire in the *galli* called Dhobi *Mohalla* where Kasimbhai lives. Kasimbhai says that they were too stunned to realise what was happening because he had never seen firing in all his life. It took them all by surprise. They didn't understand why the firing was taking place.

Pardesi told the team that four shots had been fired. One person was killed and two injured in the firing. The body of the deceased, Imran Ismailbhai Sheikh (under 20 years of age) bore both slash marks as well as the head injury caused by the bullet. According to his uncle, he was shot in the mouth. He was rushed to SSG Hospital but died. The injured included Abdul Rehman Abdul Sattar Sheikh (also under 20 years) shot in the cheek. The third casualty was Arvind Rana who was hit in the shoulder.

Several questions arise with regard to the police firing. Did they have no option but to resort to firing in a case of stone throwing? Why did they not *lathi-charge*? Why were all the victims shot above the torso? The police later told Mustuffa Sheikh that they had used rubber bullets!

One of the people at Blue Diamond who had seen the six scooters ride into Sadar bazaar says that his sources claim that one of the outsiders had been slain. He was first slashed with a sword and then hit by a police bullet. According to local people, his body was taken away to avoid identification.

The firing was followed by a combing operation in which 21 Muslims and 5 Hindus were arrested. The combing operation was conducted with great brutality. People, mostly Muslims, were dragged out of their houses and beaten up mercilessly. Amongst those arrested was Hussainmia Kalumia Sheikh who had slash wounds. He was booked under Sections 307 and 151. Gulam Nabi Maulvi and Sharif Sheikh and Kasimbhai were also among those arrested. A Sudanese student living in a rented room above the *masjid* was arrested and booked under Section 307. They thought he had instigated violence. The embassy bailed him out. Local people say he has gone through hell in this time.

Loss of life and damage to property

There was one death in police firing. As Kasimbhai, the victim's uncle says, 'Imran's family got Rs 1 lakh as compensation but I wonder how it can compensate for the loss of their son. It does not help us to even forget him for one minute. His father used to run an autorickshaw. How many lakhs can you give to the numbers being killed? '

Kasimbhai's laundry was ransacked and broken down. Sattarbhai's shop was emptied out and everything broken. The shop was spared because it belonged to a Hindu. A little further down the street, 3 bikes were irreparably damaged at bike repair shop. Attempts were made to burn two shops, Gulmohur and Gulab, with kerosene. The iron shutters saved them. A fruit *laari* on the main road opposite the VUDA office was overturned and looted. On

the same street an antique car belonging to Kazi was burnt right outside his house.

Deeper in the bazaar in Ashok Pardesi's lane, 2 pan gallas belonging to Sattar Abdul Ghani Sheikh and Casimbhai Fakirbhai Sheikh and an electrical shop, I. K. Electricals were burnt and looted. Iqbalbhai's (owner of I. K. Electricals) house in the same locality was attacked. The telephone line had been cut and he his family just about managed to escape.

Amongst others who sustained heavy losses was Noor Banu (36 years) who runs a grocery shop and lives with her brother's family. She witnessed her shop getting burnt from an adjoining roof that fateful night. She confirms that it began with stone-throwing. She said she was confident of getting on to the street and taking them on. '*Main unse nipat leti aasaani se.... magar mera bhai ke parivaar ka soch kar apne ko thaam diya*' ('I would have dealt with them, but thinking of my brother's family I stopped myself.'). The shop was broken along with the fridge and goods worth Rs. 50,000 were damaged in front of their eyes. The mob used dirty sexually abusive language. Since the shop belonged to a Hindu, the mob pulled out all the stuff and burnt it. It is the same small shop owned by Sattarbhai alluded to above.

Their family has been living in the area since the 1820s. They are the sixth generation of 'campwallahs'. The family filed an FIR immediately but did not mention any names for fear of retaliation. They feel they have to live here and though they saw each one of the attackers and saw everything happen in front of their eyes, they cannot name them. They were armed with *talwaars* and other weapons. They were people they have known for years.

Among the Muslim houses attacked was that of Nasir Vohra in the M. M. Vohra Building, Parsee lane. At about 10.30 p.m. a mob of about 10 to 15 people armed with swords, *dharias* and sticks attacked his house. He had come out into the grilled gallery of his ground floor flat when he had heard the commotion. The mob advanced towards his house shouting anti-Muslim slogans, cursing and demanding that they come out. They damaged his 2 motorcycles and tried to force the door open. Nasir locked himself in with his wife and children who were screaming and crying in terror. Unable to get in from the front the mob threw a petrol bomb through the back door. It was put out by Nasir and his wife. He called his friends in the neighbourhood to ask for help. The police arrived in half an hour. Later that night, a Hindu friend, a member of the Congress Party, came and picked them up and dropped them to a relative's place.

On the 18th he spent three hours at the Sayajigunj police station waiting for them to take his complaint. On the 21st he sent the complaint by registered mail. He was called to the station a few days later to give his statement.

Role of Local People

Those affected have identified local people as being part of the instigators and attackers. Nasirbhai says he had recognised four familiar faces in the mob. They were Gopal N. Rabadi, Mahendra N Rabadi, both rickshaw-drivers, Ashoo Dubey and Guddu Dubey students in the 1st year of college and 12th standard respectively. Their father was a close friend of Nasir's. Mahendra was picked up in the combing operation but released soon after. Even today Nasir sees these people strolling around freely. Once when he saw Guddu he called the police who came and made pretence of looking for him.

At the same time, despite the tension in the area, people are struggling to retain ties of inter-community solidarity. Noor Banu says they still have a few helpful neighbours - Birju, from Faizabad who runs a repair shop and had lost his wife 2 years ago. They are bringing up his 3 daughters; he is at the shop all day. As she says, 'We are one family, how can we separate now because others in the street are going mad?' They also have two Bengali students as tenants who have promised not to desert them.

Effects of the incident on people's lives

Noor Banu picks up vegetables from the *sabzi mandi* every morning and has a *laari* outside the grocery shop run by her brother. She continues to work but has to put up with all kinds of humiliating taunts. She says that it is scary but there is little they can do.

The people grieve the death of Imran and told the team how gentle he was. Noor Banu saw the dead body and confirmed it to his mother who was looking for him. She added that had it been one of their boys who was violent and into all this she would not have regretted it even if he was a Muslim. But why Imran? If today they were told there is to be another country they would be ready to go. They had worked all day and kept vigil all night. The children were terrified. They were not being allowed to put on the TV or radio in case someone thinks they are unnecessarily making noise. How long could they carry on like this? They wanted to send the children to the best

of schools. Today they feel it is enough if they simply manage to live. They cannot hope to dream or plan anymore.

A sense of betrayal haunts the Muslims of Fatehganj. Kasimbhai questions how 21 of them could be arrested under Section 307 when they had spent the first 15 days, setting their work and earnings aside, to maintain peace in the area, and sitting on vigil every night. He felt that although they were doing for their community what the police ought to have been doing, it was then that were taken to the Central Jail.

In a similar outburst Mustuffa Sheikh said that they were the ones whose houses were combed, they were the ones whose shops were looted and then they were the ones who were charged under Sections 151 and 307. What were they to do? Who could they turn to for help with even the police conspiring against them? Their people were living in inhuman conditions with nothing to eat. They had left their homes with only the clothes they were wearing on their backs. They were being intimidated constantly.

Curfew was clamped in Fatehgunj on 16th March and lasted almost a week, being relaxed for an hour or so in the mornings, and then being slowly extended. On 17th or 18th a rumour spread that a handicapped boy (Hindu) who was normally to be seen sitting and begging on the road opposite the VUDA office, was stabbed. Newspapers such as the *Times of India* and *Sandesh* carried the story along with photographs of boy. It was later discovered that he had sustained a self-inflicted scratch in a minor accident.

Stray incidents of a bottle being thrown into the mosque or rumours that trouble has broken out in some part of the bazaar persist. But as a shop owner who works hard to quell rumours and not allow panic take the better of them told the team, "We keep hearing 'shut down the shops, there is trouble somewhere else'. Everybody panics. I tell them to maintain peace and continue their daily business. I tell them they can only kill us. Let them do it. But we will not succumb to the fear and terror they are driving into us. We will not let them cripple our business. We are also responsible to make the place normal for others around us. If shops function, people too feel confident."

It seems that though outsiders could and very likely were the ones who had planned, incited and even been party to the violence in Fatehgunj on 15th March, what has left a deeper, more painful impression on the minds of the minorities here is the hatred and hostility of their Hindu neighbours and friends.

19 SAMA

Dates of incidents: 27 February - 2 March

The area

Sama area of Vadodara falls under Ward No. 12. It is a relatively newer part of the city, having mostly come up since the mid-1970s, and has a predominantly Hindu population. This area has never experienced disturbances in earlier communal riots in the city. During the present violence, however, a number of serious incidents took place here, as detailed below. This report is based on the findings of a fact-finding team of PUCL and Vadodara Shanti Abhiyan.

Details of incidents

On the night of 27th February, the day of the Godhra attack, a Muslim-owned mutton shop was burnt in Sanjaynagar and three neighbouring mutton/chicken shops, also Muslim-owned, were destroyed. The same night a sugarcane *laari* was destroyed at the intersection of the Ahmedabad highway and the road leading to Mehsananagar. According to the owner of a neighbouring cigarette stall, the Muslim owner of the *laari* had fled to his home state of U.P. after the incident. The stall owner felt that the post-Godhra violence was inevitable: "They started it, then won't people get angry?" he demanded. He explained that "terrorists have spread too much...if the government does nothing...look at Israel, one bomb explosion and they sent Patton tanks and finished the Palestinians."

The next morning (28th February), a Muslim-owned (Jirawala) bus chartered by IPCL was burnt on New Sama Road "for defying the *bandh* call".

At about 10 a.m. that morning, a small mob of around 20 people attacked the residence of Prof. J.S. Bandukwala, a well-known and respected figure in Vadodara and an active member of the PUCL, who has over years consistently opposed both Hindu and Muslim religious extremism. Prof. Bandukwala and his daughter managed to shelter in the house of their Hindu neighbours. One car in his compound was completely burned and the other was damaged by the mob. The attackers fled within 10 minutes, when people from the neighbourhood came out on the

road. Police arrived about 20 minutes after the attack.

At about the same time as the attack at Prof. Bandukwala's house, the Councillor for Sama area, Pradip Joshi – who also happens to be the VHP boss for the area - was present at Gajanand Store near Shuklanagar along with a crowd of about fifty people. Four people had large hammers, four or five had petrol bottles tied around their waists, while others had swords, *trishuls* and iron pipes. There was one State Reserve Police personnel and one policeman posted at Gajanand Stores, but both of them moved away temporarily, clearing the way for the mob. The four who had hammers tried to break the locks of the Shabnam Furniture shop. Some people nearby informed the owners, who then telephoned Fatehganj Police Station. The police arrived in a short time. Initially attempts to break open the furniture store's lock continued even after the police arrived. However, the police then dispersed the mob, but no attempt was made to arrest anyone. The Councillor, Pradip Joshi, began arguing with PI Chaudhary. After that, the Inspector turned on the people there and told them to leave.

In the course of that day and the following day, a number of Muslim-owned *laari-gallas* were burnt: two sugarcane juice *laaris* at Deluxe, four fruit-sellers' *laaris* and a cotton mattress *laari* at Swati market, another *laari* at Abhilasha, and a *laari* at Nutan Vidyalay corner. By evening, there were burning tyres and other material at many places on roads in the Sama area. At one place, opposite Centurion building on Sama Road, a marriage reception complete with a band, took place while tyres were being burnt beside the road.

On the evening of the 28th, a few persons living in Sama (who later joined PUCL- Shanti Abhiyan) went to meet the Councillor for Ward No. 12, Pradip Joshi, to appeal to him for peace in the area. The Councillor said that he would not be able to control the mob fury, especially since these were “uneducated people”. He ranted at length about the unpatriotic and criminal nature of the Muslim community (such as for instance their habit of abducting Hindu girls), and dwelt on the desirability of Muslims going and living in “their own areas (*ilakas*)”. He also produced a list that, he explained, showed the voting patterns (with Automatic Voting Machine booth-wise break-ups) in the recent assembly bye-election, and how Muslim localities had voted against the BJP. On being repeatedly asked whether he could assure that there would be no further violence in the area, he replied that he could not do so. One of his associates explained that what had happened that day (28th February) was “only a sample”, and that it was best to be prepared for what would follow the next day. Joshi spent some time describing how he had dealt with Muslim ‘anti-socials’ in Navayard. It is relevant to note that Navayard saw severe attacks on Muslims in the days to follow.

Around 9.00 p.m. that night members of the Abhiyan staying close to Prof. Bandukwala's house discovered that he had not been provided with police protection after the attack on his house, despite his request. After prolonged efforts and numerous phone calls, two armed policemen finally arrived at Prof. Bandukwala's residence at 11.00 p.m. At 2.00 a.m. in the night they declared that they were leaving as their duty was over, but were persuaded to stay on till 5.00 a.m. They returned at 10.30 a.m. later that morning.

1st March saw more intense rioting activity, with larger, well-prepared mobs roaming the streets. Near Abhilasha Chowki, a tailor's shop (near Maruti Super Store) was burnt, and the Muslim-owned Robe Laundry was looted and burnt. In Shantinagar near Sama bus stand, the provision store and house of Dawoodbhai Nathabhai were looted and burnt by people from the nearby society. Dawoodbhai escaped and hid on the canal bank that night. At Sarad complex, 3 ground floor shops and a motorcycle were burnt and at Sama bus stand a flourmill was burnt.

In Madhavnagar II, near Abhilasha Chowki, the residence of the Safree family was attacked. The family had heard rumours of an impending attack. Afsha Safree as well as her boss Harish Sheth, made frantic phone calls to the police for help. The Commissioner of Police, a close friend of Harish Sheth and a family friend of the Safrees, told them that he was very busy and that they should get in touch with the police control room. When they did so, they were promised help, but none arrived. Finally a friend who had a curfew pass drove over and helped them escape. Only Abdulrehman Safree stayed behind to lock up, and from a little distance away was witness to what happened thereafter. A little later the mob arrived and set about looting from the house everything they could carry, including cash, jewellery, clothes and electrical gadgets, before setting the house on fire. The terrified neighbours who were locked up in their houses called the fire brigade. Even as the fire was raging, several attempts were made to get in touch with the Commissioner of Police, who had by then made himself unavailable. The mob and the police, however, did not allow anyone to douse the fire. The house was left to smoulder for three days. The mob even returned to re-ignite it on the third day. The family filed a FIR naming one of the attackers who had participated in the destruction of their home. Later, when the family visited their house in Madhavnagar, they found their neighbours and friends of many years distant, unresponsive, and inclined to disassociate from them and all that had transpired. The Safrees are now considering selling the place and relocating to a neighbourhood with a higher concentration of Muslims.

At about the same time as the attack on the Safree house, Pradip Joshi went round the Ashabibi Ni Chawl. Half an hour later Joshi, Jeetubhai (Sanjay Nagarwala), Karsan Bharvad (a notorious character of the area), Manilal Kataria (*sand/kapchi* dealer), had collected along with a crowd reportedly 1000-strong. A mob, comprising about one-third of the crowd gathered there, attacked the house of the Hakim family opposite Jeevan Chetna School in Bhadrang Nagar. Fahim Hakim and his wife (a Parsi) were fortunate to escape from the house because their neighbour opened the back door of the house to let them out. The house was then looted and burnt. The fire/blast was so intense that apparently some of the mob had to be treated in Sadbhavna Hospital.

Later in the day, Amin's Transport, the business of Abdulrehman Safree located on the second floor of Maruti Complex, towards Chhani Jakatnaka, was also broken into and burnt. The owner of one of the shops in the building described Mr. Safree as a very decent man, '*Hinduon se bhi accha*'.

While one part of the mob was attacking the Safree residence, the rest of the mob launched an attack on the Ashabibi Ni Chawl. This is a mixed locality of Hindus and Muslims. The settlement is somewhat unusual in that the overwhelming majority of residents, both Hindu and Muslim, are "from outside (*pardesh*)", i.e. from Uttar Pradesh. They have settled in Vadodara over the course of the past 25-30 years, but retain links with the "*desh*" (U.P.). A few of the residents work in industries as casual labourers, some have handcarts, and many work in small tailoring and furniture enterprises which are Muslim-owned, but employ Hindus as well as Muslims. When the mob assembled, residents of the *chawl* tried to ring up Fatehganj police station but got no response. When they rang up the police control room, they received the reply that "you have to reap the rewards of Godhra". At around 11.30 a.m., the mob attacked, with shouts like "*Maaro Mian ko*" (kill the Mians), and "*Bharat Mata ki jai.*" The residents held off the attackers, who were armed with sticks, swords and petrol bombs, for several hours. Muslims and Hindus both participated in resisting the attack. While the mob lobbed petrol bombs, they were unable to set fire to the houses or the mosque, though they managed to burn a moped and the laundry *laari* of a Hindu *dhobi*. At about 1.00 p.m. a police jeep arrived near Ashabibi Ni Chawl. The police met people sitting in 2 white cars, and then went into the *basti*. A policeman from Fatehganj, Ranjit, used abusive language against Muslims. A resident, Tawliyar Khan, was beaten up and arrested. When his wife tried to intervene, she was also beaten. The police then left, to return more than an hour later. SP Upadhyay fired 2 shots at 6-7 of the men who had been defending the *chawl* against the attacking mob, but nobody was hit. Then he went and had a talk with Pradip Joshi, who was standing along with the mob. After this the mob dispersed. The Kalika godown of Coca Cola situated in the area was looted and the Coca Cola bottles were then used as missiles.

Around 25 men from Ashabibi Ni Chawl had suffered injuries; two men with head injuries were admitted to Narhari Hospital in Fatehganj. They were treated and discharged, with a bill of Rs. 3000. The 300 or so Muslim residents (40-odd families) fled the area, and took shelter in Kamatipura area of Fatehganj. Hindus remained in the locality, many of them sleeping for several days on the terrace of a "local" (Gujarati) Hindu living at one end of the colony. This person said that he had an army officer for a tenant, through whom it was arranged that two armed army personnel were stationed outside the house for several days. On the night of 2nd March, a small mob of around 25 made another attempt to set fire to houses in Ashabibi Ni Chawl, but was repulsed. In nearby Shuklanagar, Shagiri Bhai's house was attacked with petrol bombs and burnt down completely.

Around the same time that the mob retreated from Ashabibi Ni Chawl, the residence, near Amar Complex, of Iqbal Pirzada, a retired government official, was attacked – probably by the same mob - and completely burnt. Anticipating trouble, the family had left the house two days earlier. When they were finished with the Pirzada residence, the mob moved on towards the nearby residence of Prof. Bandukwala. While Prof. Bandukwala had been evacuated about an hour earlier, his daughter and five PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan members from the neighbourhood remained in the house. An auto-rickshaw arrived with two LPG cylinders, which were stored in a nearby Hanuman temple. The mob, numbering between 250 and 300, tried to advance on the house, but were kept at bay for over half an hour by the two armed policemen stationed outside the house. Repeated calls to the police control room and various police stations all elicited the response that no police personnel or vehicles were available to help. Two calls to the Collector on his mobile phone yielded an assurance that police help would be sent, but this arrived only some 45 minutes after the second call. (Thereafter the Collector's mobile was shut off, as was that of the Commissioner of Police, throughout.) Meanwhile part of the mob attacked the house from behind, where there was no police protection. The people inside the house managed to escape over the wall to the (Hindu) neighbours when heavy stoning began. The mob then took to stoning the neighbours' house as well, and set fire to the Bandukwala residence. At this point – about an hour after the mob had gathered outside the house, a police jeep and van arrived. The mob dispersed in the neighbourhood, while the police escorted Prof. Bandukwala and his daughter to safety. No arrests were made. When the fire brigade arrived to put out the fire, they were prevented

from doing so by the mob, which had regrouped there. The Hindu neighbours of Prof. Bandukwala who had sheltered the people trapped in his house, went into hiding for three or four days, fearing an attack for having sheltered their Muslim neighbour. After their return to their house, they were reportedly “interrogated” about why they had been so helpful to their Muslim neighbours.

One shop, Dua Optical, was also threatened by the mob because there was a Muslim employee working there; shop-owners from the Amar Shopping complex pleaded with the mob that the shop was owned by non-Muslims, and it was spared.

Later in the day (1st March) there were attacks on Muslim-owned establishments on the Anand highway. A house was attacked near Chhani (Shivam Society), where furniture was carried out and burnt. The Edward and Robe laundries at Deluxe were looted and burnt. Across the road, Sarvottam Restaurant, a popular eating place, was burnt late in the night. The inside of the restaurant was completely gutted. Neighbours claim that, fearing that the fire would spread to other parts of the building in which Sarvottam restaurant was located, the mob rang up the fire brigade, who came and put out the fire.

On 1st and 2nd March, the remains of the mutton shops in Sanjaynagar were completely demolished. One of the shops was completely razed, and tin sheets and other materials were taken away. The area which had been occupied by three of the shops in the lane leading to the Sanjaynagar slum was converted into a temple. On the evening and night of 2nd March, *prasad* was distributed here and *bhajans* were played over a loudspeaker.

Sama area has remained free from major incidents during the later phase of violence. However, a certain level of tension was maintained for several weeks through the continuous circulation of rumours that armed Muslims were about to attack.

Role of the police

In none of the incidents did the police intervene in time to prevent attacks. Calls to the police stations went unanswered, or callers were told that the police was unable to attend to them or in one case even that they must “reap the rewards of Godhra”. Where help was promised, it arrived late. The police were also seen interacting with mob leaders such as Pradip Joshi; the result of such interactions was not that attacks were averted. At Ashabibi Ni Chawl, police fired two shots at the residents who were under attack, rather than at the attackers. Mobs were allowed to disperse without any serious attempts to arrest any of the attackers.

Effects on people’s lives

Sama area experienced communal violence for the first time ever. Better-off residents whose houses were looted and burnt seem unlikely to return to live in the area. Prof. Bandukwala, who has been a well-known as a principled opponent of both Hindu and Muslim extremism, and who had been the target of attacks by fundamentalists twice before the present violence, had to flee the city after the latest attack; it is uncertain whether he will return to Vadodara.

Residents of Ashabibi Ni Chawl were without any income for several weeks after 1st March, since all economic activity came to a complete standstill after the attack. They estimated the daily collective loss in earnings as Rs. 20-25,000. The Muslims explained how they had been living at the mercy of others (*doosron ka kha rahe hain*) in Kamatipura, where the Muslim community arranged for food for them. Hindu residents have been equally affected, since most of them work in the local small enterprises. The Muslim residents did not return till 17th/18th March, and most of the families left after that for their villages in U.P. “for 2 or 3 months, till things calm down”.

20 VILLAGES AROUND VADODARA AND NEARBY SUBURBS

The following reports are based on the findings of teams that visited villages around Vadodara. Also included is the account of a doctor who treated victims of post- Godhra communal violence in a government hospital in a rural area.

20.1 Atladra

Date of incident: 1 March 2002

About 60-65 people from Atladara are in Saudagar Park (Tandalja). The following report is based on the information

provided by refugees.

Details of incidents

The information is slightly conflicting as to numbers of people who came as well as whether shops only or houses too were targeted. According to some informants, on the 1st of March a group of anything from 50-1500 came around 11.30 in the morning and first looted and then set fire to shops near the bus stand. They then began looting utensils, grain and provision stores of the Muslims. They even looted their windows and doors and set houses on fire. According to Sulemanbhai of Patel Faliya, shops were looted but not houses, as there are Hindus' houses as well. Rehmanbhai says that the plan was to hit them economically. Sulemanbhai's *paan* shop was removed to save a neighbour's shop and then burnt using kerosene torches. Four to five shops and one house were burnt at around 11.30 a.m. The mob then went towards the P.O., then burnt Moosabhai Mohammad's flour mill, two wheeler and cycles (reported in Gujarat Today, 6th March). The mob that had been on a rampage then went to Kalali Crossing on the night of 1st March. According to Ibrahimmiya of Kalali Crossing, the mob was 1000-1500 strong. He had fled the place and his house was looted by the mob in his absence.

Perpetrators of violence

Arunaben Pandya, former BJP corporator is supposed to have helped the mob identify Muslim houses and get them burnt. Allegedly, the Brahmins wanted to take over houses belonging to Muslims and other non-Brahmins. Yogesh Patel of the village, Hari Krishan Patel and Nikeshbhai G. Patel were involved in inciting the mobs. Apparently the Brahmins and Patels hired slum dwellers from around the area.

Role of the police

The refugees reported that when the police came to investigate they were fed by those who were active in abetting the riots. They also said that when they went to register a FIR, the police refused to do so. The people allege that they are given money and are not allowed to note down their complaints. Whenever any official comes, they give them a false account – they feed them and do not let the officials come and talk to us.

Role of local people

It was the people of their own village who looted them. If they were able to escape or if someone helped them escape, they were told that it would be their turn next.

20.2 Bajwa

Date of incident: 1-3 March 2002

Background to the area

Bajwa or Bajuwa is an old village being enveloped by Vadodara's petrochemical complex. It has also a few small industries. Rajasthan colony, Karachiya Road is a colony of 150 to 200 housing units with 12-15 houses belonging to the Muslims. These were not all clustered together. Payal Society had a few Muslim houses. The report is based on interviews with refugees in Tandalja camp.

Details of incidents

According to an informant from Karachiya Road, "On Friday 1st March, 2002 we went in to read *namaaz* – when we were coming out, they started throwing stones at us. To save our lives, we ran away using different routes. At that time, in Bajwa, they started breaking the locks of the shops of various Muslims and started looting their shops." Shops and houses were set on fire in Bajwa village, on 1st March around noon. These mobs then reached Karachiya village around 2.30 p.m. The mobs were more or less the same and perhaps more joined them as they went along. They reached Dhankuva around 4 p.m. A lot of them belonged apparently to Bajrang Dal (the BD volunteers belonged to Chhani village). They had started from Chhani and then reached Bajwa.

The mobs were led, among others, by Jagdish Armanbhai Patel and Arun Patel of Karachiya village and Sampat Vadhri of Rajasthan colony. Mukesh Patel was also a part of the mob. The affected people claim that Jayaben Thakkar, BJP MP, incited the mob. Women were also a part of the looting mob. Some of those involved in the loot belonged to Karachiya village on Karachiya Road.

At Bajwa, PSI Sarvaiya apparently said to the Bajrang Dal volunteers and Jayaben Thakkar that they should go to other places and could do what they like there.

After Dhankuva, the mobs went to Rajasthan colony at around 7 p.m. Sajjak Ali's house was first set on fire. Ornaments for their daughters' wedding were looted and burnt using petrol. Then Saiyyad Sikandars' house was burnt.

A scrap dealer's house was razed to the ground and a Hanuman temple was built in its place. When they contacted the neighbours, they say that those involved in the violence are still going around saying that no Muslims should be allowed back into the village.

Mohammadbhai of Bajwa said that on 1st March, a mob of around 100 to 150 people arrived at 9.30 in the night and looted the houses of Dawoodbhai Bohra, Samsadkhan, and Mohmmad Ansar Sheikh before they set fire to the houses. He also said that "on Friday (28th) they had come, had pelted stones and had warned that they would come back the next day. They all belonged to the Bajrang Dal and were all carrying cans of petrol, and weapons of all sorts. The majority of people in the mob were from Karolia village. They had a list with them and were targeting houses on the basis of that list."

The mob goaded Hindu neighbours to join in the attack if they were Hindus or else they would be considered Muslims.

On 1st March, at around 8 p.m., the people from Karachiya village finally approached the army unit set up near Gujarat Refinery. The army men asked where they had come from and gave them shelter. There were 35 men and women. By the afternoon of the 2nd, the numbers swelled to 200 with others having joined from Dhankuva. All of them were fed and sheltered by the army for 2-3 days. The army gave them blankets, tarpaulin, utensils, etc. While they were given refuge by the army, Jagdish Patel, Dhirubhai Patel and about 10 others came on 2nd and 3rd March asking the army men to throw the refugees out of the camps. Even the police officials, including PSI Sarvaiya asked the army to hand the refugees over to them. The army men who helped included a commander called Jasvinder Singh, V.S. Reddy and Cdr. Javed.

After three days, transport was arranged for the refugees to go to Chistiya *Masjid*, Tandalja, under military escort. The police offered to arrange the transport themselves, but the army refused and arranged the transport themselves. They (the army) also took down names and videographed the refugees. These refugees do not want to go back to Karachiya village.

Dawoodbhai Asmalbhai Vohra (aged 50), lived in Payal Society, Karudia, near Bajwa. There were five Muslim families in the society. On 1st March, a mob of about 150 persons entered the society. They began breaking the windows and doors. His wife and five children were in the house and he was on the terrace. The armed mob came to the area shouting '*Maro, miya ne kapi nakho*' (Kill, cut the Muslims). Dawoodbhai jumped over three terraces and ran away towards some other Muslims who were on other terraces. In the meantime, a police vehicle, which was patrolling the area, came towards the society and the mob dispersed. The Muslim families spent the night on one of the terraces. In the morning they returned to their homes and began cleaning up the glass pieces and debris. On 2nd March, at about 10.30 a.m., they locked their flat and went to Maheshwari society. That day they got news that the mobs had looted their belongings and set fire to the homes. The people contacted the police commissioner several times through some prominent people in Maheshwari Society but received no help. At 4.00 p.m. they received news that there would be an attack on Maheshwari Society. Those who had cars went to safer places and Dawoodbhai went to Gayatri society. On the nights of 2nd and 3rd March, they hid on the terraces and in corners between houses in Gayatri society. They kept asking the police for protection but the police bluntly told them, "If you are brave, leave, since we do not have the manpower to provide you protection." On the 4th, they left Bajwa for Vadodara.

Dawoodbhai shifted to a relative's house in Aashiyana Nagar. They have not received any compensation for his house or the garage where his son worked, which was burnt. He himself has had no income for several months since the company where he worked closed down.

Role of the police

In Rajasthan colony, the people have lost faith in the police, since the incidents occurred in their presence and they took no action. When the people finally got help from the army, the police went to the extent of trying to get hold of the refugees that the army men did not allow. PSI Sarvaiya has been named as playing a partisan role in the incident. In Patel Society and Maheshwari Society, the people received no help from the police although they were regularly appraising them of the situation and requesting help.

Role of local people

The role of local people is indicated by the names of people mentioned by informants. According to reports, many Hindu neighbours were also goaded to help the mobs.

Effect on peoples' lives

Apart from the obvious losses, Mohammadbhai also mentioned how all this has affected the education of their children. When they went to meet the schoolteachers and asked about their children's examinations the teachers said that the children would have to write the examinations. Mohammadbhai asked, "When the houses are burnt to ashes, and nothing is left how are these children expected to read from their books and write examinations? And yet, if they don't, it means that they are bound to lose an academic year".

20.3 Bhayli

Date of incident: 28 February and 1 March 2002

The area

Bhayli is a village on the outskirts of Vadodara on the Vadodara-Padra Rd. The people living here make, among other things, mattresses for a living. The report is filed on the basis of testimonies of affected people in Saudagar Park, Tandalja.

Details of incidents

On 28th February, a mob of around 100 people came to the village. 7-8 quintals of cotton belonging to one family were burnt. The mattress-making machine was also burnt. On 1st March, the mobs came in the evening and took out all their belongings from the house and burnt everything. According to the family, their house was spared and not burnt down since their neighbour is a Hindu.

Kalidas who deals in liquor lives across the house of some of the informants. They had had a fight because drunkards used to make mischief outside their house and trouble them – so they had complained against him. Because of this enmity, everything in their house was burnt. According to the informants, the neighbours were all Hindu Vasavas and those living in the huts were all drunkards and so they did not get along with any of them.

In Bhayli, the Masjidwala Falia has not been damaged. There is a police point there with four policemen. When the trouble started, there were two policemen present. The victims had to make arrangements for their food, tea etc. Every day, I. R. Vohra had to give grains, milk, and cash to the policemen. The police said if the victims failed to do so then it would not be their responsibility to protect their property. Their stores were looted in the presence of the police and even then they had to get food on credit to give to them. The Muslims themselves fed the policemen by turns.

Role of the police

The mob action took place in the presence of the police. The police acted as silent spectators. The people suspect that the police has taken money and done all this. They did call the police but still they did not come. They said, "If we to go tell the police they abuse us. 'We'll fire on you' is what they say."

Role of local people

People alleged that those from around their house were the ones who came and took their belongings away. They said that they were ready to identify their things from neighbours' houses and get them back if the police provide protection.

Damages/losses

The victims had gone to Saudagar Park, Tandalja, in a tempo. Their entire business has been destroyed. Dawoodbhai's Tobacco godown and farms have been burnt. Four houses were burnt. In all 25 houses, out of about 70 have been damaged, four flourmills, 2 tailors' shops, and 1 flourmill shop have been broken. All the people have run away. The mobs even vandalized the cemetery. There were about 50 *neem* trees of which about half have been cut down. The room of the cemetery has been broken as well. According to other sources 9 houses and 1 shop were burnt. Local people are not ready to give details. The people who are affected are presently not available as they have left the village and gone.

Reaction

The victims had this to say: "Like the VHP has been given time for 72 hours, if in the same way we are given a free hand for 12 hours, then we'll show them. We won't touch their women, but we'll show the men."

20.4 Samiala, Laxmipura

In Samiala, 2 houses, 1 shop and 1 tempo were among the things burnt. Although the driver of the tempo was a Hindu the vehicle was burnt because it belonged to a Muslim. The Muslim families who are staying in the village were not willing to give details. The Sarpanch, Bachhubhai Vaidya, says that all the details regarding the incident have been collated and are available with the Talati of the area. He also said that the people here lived peacefully and that there is a police point.

Laxmipura is a village near Samiala. On 1st March, at about 10.30 p.m., a mob started burning the houses of Muslims in the village. PI P.R. Gehlot of the Vadodara Rural Police was present during the attacks. All 38 houses of Muslims in the village have been destroyed by the attackers, over the course of several days. The Hindu attackers threatened the local people not to return to the village. On 1st March, all Muslim residents had to flee the village in the clothes they were wearing. They left for Padra, Samiala and other areas. The looting and burning of the houses continued well into May.

The FIR was filed by PI Gehlot himself; according to the local people, the FIR was highly misleading. Around mid-March, *panchnamas* were made, but attacks continued even after this. The people have made several representations and complaints to the Collector and DSP, but nothing has come out of it, and the attacks on the remains of their dwellings continued.

Perpetrators of violence

The following is a list of those named by the affected persons as responsible for the attacks. They have been demanding that these names be included in the FIR, which has so far not been done. As of June 2002, none of these persons have been arrested; on the contrary, a few innocent Hindu men of the area were arrested by the police.

Names of the accused: *Samiala*: Narendrabhai Gordhanbhai Vaid (Sarpanch), Kamlesh Gordhanbhai Patel (Dy Sarpanch), Bhogilal Mohanbhai Patel, Mahendrabhai Harmanbhai Patel, Kishorebhai Laljibhai Baria, Natubhai Dayabhai Patel, Jagdishbhai Dayabhai Patel, Hiteshbhai Bacchubhai Patel.

Laxmipura: Bhagatsinh Gaikwad (Panchayat member), Labhubhai (Gramsewak), Bharatbhai (Doctor), Rameshbhai Bakorbhai Solanki, Chiragbhai Maganbhai Panchal, Narendrabhai Raojibhai Patel, Lakshmansinh Bodana, Poonambhai Solanki, Ranjitsinh Chatrasinh Gohil, Umeshbhai Natubhai Rawal, Kantilal Bhatt, Shantilal Shanabhai Vaghri, Rameshbhai Chimanbhai Padiyar, Punitbhai Solanki, Sukhabhai Vaghri, Dilipsinh Gaikwad, Sureshbhai Rajput, Chandrasinh Maganbhai Rajput, Dilipbhai Shantilal Valand.

20.5 Maretha

Date of incident: 28 February - 2 March 2002

Background to the area

This village is on the way to Vadodara City, near Maneja. Out of a total number of 400 houses in Maretha, 73 houses belong to Muslims and the rest to Hindus.

Details of incidents

Arguments between the two communities had started from the morning of 28th February. Later on the same day, things were sorted out peacefully by talks. The shops were kept closed on 28th February as well as on 1st March.

The threats to the minority community had started on the 28th itself. On 1st March, 73 Muslim families had left their homes and hidden outside in different places. Only one family stayed back as due to all these tensions one man had suffered a heart attack and died, so they were unable to leave home.

Shops, *dargahs* and mosques were looted, then the shops were burned. 12 shops and 5 flourmills were destroyed. On 1st March looting was carried out and on 2nd March, at about 12 in the afternoon, some shops were burned. That night all the remaining shops, houses, *dargahs* and mosques were burned. Most of the fields had vegetables. The fields were destroyed and Hindus let loose their animals in the fields. It was harvesting time, which meant a complete loss of income. Water pumps and diesel sets were stolen. On 2nd March, at about 2 p.m., Maneja village which is next to Maretha was attacked. Nearly 100 houses were completely destroyed. Six persons were

previously injured. All the Muslims ran for their lives. Between 2nd and 12th March, the mobs looted all the Muslim homes in the village.

Before burning the houses, the mob started looting the houses and shops. After several calls, a police van finally arrived, but only after the houses and shops had burned. The police personnel said that they were too few in number and could do nothing. They told the people to wait for another police vehicle to come. After it came, the police told the one remaining family to run away from there. The family requested the police to send them to Karjan village, since they had to take the body of their deceased relative there. The police refused saying they would have to wait for the next vehicle.

After three hours, at 4.30 p.m., 5 police vans arrived. The police then told the family that they had no vehicles and that they should arrange for their own transport. With great difficulty, the family managed to contact someone in Gorwa. The people in Gorwa were ready to come with a tempo but asked them to wait at a certain place as they could not go easily from one place to another due to curfew. The tempo was made to wait at that point for two hours. The police stalled all efforts to take across the dead body to Gorwa.

Perpetrators of violence

The main person heading the trouble there was Sanabhai Ishwarbhai Thakur who called people from the neighbouring villages of Maneja, Tarsali and Chappad to attack Muslim houses in Maretha. The mobs on Maneja village were led by Sanjay Chiman Thakur, Mahendra Magan Thakur and Vishnu Raisingh Bhuria (all residents of Bhathuji Faliya), Sana Thakur (resident of Santoshi Nagar) and Prakash Mulchand Wagh (resident of Magan Park). All these are well known members of the Sangh Parivar. Mobs that attacked Maretha were led by Bipinbhai Patel (resident of Alamgar), Sukhdeo Thakur, the Sarpanch of Talsat, Pramodbhai of Chappad, and some others. The mob comprised of people from the backward castes and Thakurs. Nilesh Bhogilal Patel, Mahesh Haribhai Rabari, Raghubhai Bharwad, all Bajrang Dal leaders, are also reported to have led the mob. Sarpanch Kantaben Sanabhai Vasava was one of the main persons leading the mob. In addition there were: Veenabhai Chagganbhai Patel – ex-BJP leader, Govindbhai Ramsibhai Rabari, Haribhai Icchabhai Rabari and Narayanbhai Chottabhai Thakur.

All these people were leading the mob and strongly urging the people to burn Muslim houses.

Role of the police

The police do not seem to have helped the victims, in fact were obstructionist. No FIR has been lodged so far.

Role of local people

The victims were able to recognise the perpetrators, pointing to local involvement. Apart from politicians, the Sarpanch was also involved in leading the mob.

Rehabilitation

Some people went to the village to try and retrieve their belongings. The Hindus in the village told them they would be killed if they returned. These people want to return to their village if police protection is given.

20.6 Ankodia, Koyali, Sevasi

The team went beyond Gotri Road to Ankodia via Khanpur village. Khanpur was unaffected by the violence, although in Charo village near Ankodia, there was damage to Muslim houses. Two autos and two Muslim houses were burnt. All the Muslims had left the village.

In Koyali village, next to the Vadodara refinery, 2 *laaris* and 1 shop were burnt near the *Masjid*. According to local newspapers (TOI/IE), on 3rd March, two nitroglycerine sticks were found by the police in the Koyali mosque. A man had also received burns in a godown there in the first few days of violence.

In Sevasi village proper, one Muslim house with a shop attached to it was burnt. In Ashapuri, a hamlet in Sevasi, a shop belonging to a Muslim was burnt. The team saw these two shops burning and took photographs. The people in Sevasi were hostile to the team and it was difficult to get information there.

20.7 Sokhada

Dates of incidents: 28 February- 5 March 2002

The area

Sokhada is a village 3-4 km from the Gujarat State Fertilisers Corporation (GSFC) plant near Vadodara on the

Vadodara-Ahmedabad highway. It is a prosperous village, well known as headquarters of one of the Swaminarayan sects.

A PUCL-Shanti Abhiyan team visited refugees from Sokhada at Tundav village, 12 kms from Vadodara on the road to Savli. Tundav is 5 km from Sokhada (by shortcut on a kaccha road), 2 kms from Manjusar village and about 20 kms from Vadodara. The refugees were at Tundav since 1st March, 2002.

Tundav has a population of 800 (50 percent Muslims and 50 percent Hindus). 90 households of refugees came here from Sokhada village. The Sokhada refugees were staying at Tundav and neighbouring villages with relatives and friends. The women in the camp told the team that there were around 50 persons from Sokhada— half of the original inmates have gone away to Gothada, and half to Savli and Bena; the persons present will remain here until arrangements can be made for them, they have nowhere to go to.

The Tundav population, both Hindus and Muslims, were hosting a kitchen with local donations (no government rations) for about 300 persons every day. In neighbouring Manjusar which has a flourishing GIDC, there are 400 Muslims. Some mild rioting and burning of cabins on the main road took place but nothing beyond that. Gothada village further down the road was also the site of a camp of 300 persons. Some of the refugees from Sokhada were also at Gothada.

On the day the team visited the Tundav camp, the people were still wearing the clothes they had on when they fled their homes. They had to hide in the fields, in thorny bushes, with no water.

The following report is based on interviews and eyewitness accounts of the refugees.

Background and details of incidents

According to the refugees, they were aware that the Bajrang Dal had been regularly holding meetings in Sokhada, but they did not view these as communal at the time. They also reported that they had heard that sadhus from the Hari Prasad Swaminarayan *Mandir* had been giving slogans to awaken Hindus, that the country belongs to Hindus and Muslims, we have to build the Ram Temple, how long can we tolerate these Muslims, etc. Fifteen days before the incident on 28th February, one Hashubhai Patel, alias Tikka, had said that the Hindus would break the mosque.

There was tension on the evening and night of 27th February although there was no incident that day. On 27th night, there was a meeting of a few Hindus at the local Gujarati school.

The trouble started on 28th February at around 8 p.m. A 500 - 700 strong mob, all from within Sokhada, came and started breaking the cabins and shops of Muslims. According to women refugees in Tundav, the Sarpanch came at 8 p.m. and told all of them to have their dinner. A 500-1000 strong mob from the village (led by the Sarpanch Mahendrasinh Patel) came to attack. They attacked the *dargah* first, then the *masjid* and then the shops. They continued till morning. The people watched from their terraces. They shouted '*Har har Mahadev*', '*Have Miyambhai Ungo Tame*' ('Now you Muslims keep sleeping.') The crowd had iron rods, *dharias* and axes.

About 8-9 shops were burned at night. Later, 19 shops were burnt and the people were warned to leave their houses and run, or they would be killed. After the shops were burned that night, the Sarpanch Mahendrabhai Ramanbhai Patel, told the people that they could return to their houses as nothing further would happen. The people could hear things being broken and see houses being attacked around them. They could not sleep that night.

Those with children fled the village on 28th night. On 1st March, the mob attacked again, between 8- 9 p.m. Most of the 100 odd houses were destroyed. The *masjid* was broken by the mob. Around 2 a.m, the people started fleeing the village. They hid in the nearby fields and watched as the mobs looted and burned their homes, workplaces and places of worship.

The *masjid* in the central part of the village, sharing a common wall with a temple, was completely damaged over the nights of 28th February and 1st March, including the first floor and the roof of the semibasement/ground floor. The *dargah* and the shrines have all been destroyed. It appeared to the fact-finding team that the *masjid* has been destroyed with an intent to create a second entrance/pathway to the adjoining temple.

Almost all the 100 -odd houses belonging to Muslims were completely looted, destroyed and burnt – in that order.

According to eyewitnesses, the mobs broke down house doors, took away all the vessels and other belongings. They filled up tempos and took everything away. In most cases, the land was levelled after completely ransacking and burning the houses.

There were about 15 Muslim-owned shops dealing with grocery (*kirana*), vegetables, cycle repair, *mandap* decoration, and other small shops, all of which were looted and burnt.

The looting and burning of Muslim homes and establishments continued for five days. At Sokhada, the team saw the complete destruction of all Muslim houses. A house or two had been marginally spared. In most homes there had been a systematic attempt to take away even the windows and doorframes as well as costly doors. There were at the most a couple of stories of Hindus helping and that too in the poorest quarters. The plight of the Muslim poor in such a village seems to be hopeless with their carefully accumulated possessions destroyed beyond use.

For a few days, the Muslims of Sokhada hid in the fields around the village and moved towards nearby villages to seek shelter. According to Feroz Mohd. Malik, the Hindus have threatened them that they would be killed if they returned. Many villagers met in other villages four days later. Nathhubhai Chhottubhai and Salim Ashraf tried returning to Sokhada and they were threatened by Jagdish Tailor (*'Mian ke body ko kaat dalo*).

Perpetrators of destruction

According to the people, a mob of 500 from Patelgaon caused the damage. Motiya Pura, Lalji Pura and Vashna have also been named – they apparently distributed alcohol to the villagers and went on the looting and burning spree after drinking. One Madhusudhanbhai Muljibhai Amerikawala from the USA who was present in the initial days of the looting/burning spree reportedly assured the mob to go ahead and make a good job of it. One of the people, Nizambhai Abbasbhai, saw and heard Amerikawala saying that he was prepared to spend about Rs 1 crore (for this). Other prime instigators were: the Sarpanch Mahendrabhai Ramanbhai Patel and Jagdishbhai Mohanbhai Tailor, who the people say was drunk most of the time. According to eyewitnesses, those active in the destruction of the mosque were: Hiteshbhai Purushottam (STD *Pangallawalla*), Manojbhai Thakorebhai Patel (newspaper dealer) and Sanjaybhai Thakorebhai.

Role of the police

Hydermiya Chandmian told the team that he had given 12 names of people who carried out the attacks to the police but FIRs were lodged only against 6 of them. The people also say that they had been repeatedly tried to contact the police (562600). Each time they were told (by one Leelaben) that the police van would be sent, but the police never arrived.

One woman told the team, “Three policemen came, roamed around and went away. On 28th afternoon, the police was there, they were there at night. We couldn't see them around – they ran away. With a mob of 1000-2000 who will remain present?”

FIRs were filed at Badarpur, but the police did not come to take statements. Copies of the FIRs were handed over to the men.

Effects on people's lives

The brutal displacement of Muslims from Sokhada found an eerie postscript- the reported change in the name of the village to Hari Dham Sokhada. Apart from having lost their property and livelihood, those displaced and in the refugee camp are understandably fearful of returning to an environment of terror and insecurity. There is a great deal of apprehension about returning to the village. As one woman told the team, “We don't want to go back, suppose they do this again. We heard the crowd say ‘*Miyabhai ni chhokri ni izzat looto*’ (Rape the daughters of Muslims.) If there is *bandobast*, we will go back. If someone takes the responsibility (*jawaabdar*) we will go.”

Ameena, an old woman, said, “They will burn us while we're asleep. It is not worth going back... the Sarpanch came and told us don't leave your homes, don't go anywhere. But that night itself they burnt our houses...”

Meeting with women from Sokhada in Tundav

In Sokhada many women were brutally abused – both sexually and verbally. One woman was sexually assaulted by 10 Hindu men, another was taken away and physically abused. The women found it difficult to describe the brutality and viciousness of the attacks.

The team spoke first to Mehmooda, Bismaella (who had a baby with her), Mahmuda Badran, Madina, Mumtaz and Sabeera (also with babies), and Amina Badshah. These women were all from Sokhada.

Mehmooda left on Friday night at 2 a.m. She said that on Friday, 1st March, around 8 p.m, the crowd attacked again. 'They came to our *mohalla*, broke everything. Nothing is left.' Her husband suffers from asthma. She took him into the fields. 'At 2 a.m. we started walking away from the village. At 5 a.m., we were passing Tundav on our way to the next village. We were passing by and they stopped us here...We had all our infants with us and had to hide in the maize fields.'

Around 85-100 houses were destroyed. 'No-one could go back. There is nothing left there. They broke down the doors, took away all the vessels. We saw all this before we left. They filled up tempos and took everything away.'

There were three women who were pregnant among those who escaped from the village. One delivered after 2-3 days, in Gothada. The women sent her there.

Zubeida (50 years) lost her husband many years back. She has a 15-year-old son and a 16-year-old daughter. She worked as a labourer in the Patel's fields, and has no support.

Zarinaben Yusufbhai (25 years) has five children (four are girls). She had a cabin selling cutlery in Sokhada and also did *mazdoori* in the village when business was down. She came away from Sokhada on 28th night.

Mumtazben Dilipbhai (?) (24 years) has two children. She had two cabins in Sokhada – one behind her house and one in the bazaar. Both were burnt. Her house was completely looted, there isn't anything left.

Her mother-in-law, Sakinaben Dawoodibhai, said they even took away the doors and windows. Her sister-in-law, Roshanben Salimbhai, has two sons. She says the FIR was done in Badarpur, but the enquiry has not yet been done. The copy was given to the men.

Roshanben said that what they needed most at this point is some assurance of physical security. They also need things to set up their homes again. 'My two sons are in Shivam High School in Sokhada. We rang up the teacher (Sir). He told us to send the certificate (actually an application that they cannot do the exam. On the basis of this they would be promoted to the next class). They cannot do the exams. We have wasted one year's fees. He says they will consider promoting them if we send the certificate.'

The Sokhada women said that the Sarpanch and the Patels of the village say that if they come back, 'we will *looto* their *izzat* (rape them); we will force them to flee without their clothes'. The Sarpanch has been there for 9 years. The people cannot get over the fact that he did this to them. "We've lived here for generations, never before has something like this happened," they lamented.

20.8 Tundav

There are approximately equal number of Hindus and Muslims in this village. Both communities are involved in looking after the refugees from Sokhada who fled here on 1st March after the incidents at Sokhada. The women told the team, 'We live in *sump* (harmony), our village is our family. No one from outside can come and take us away ('*uchkao*') from here. If anyone dares to come, they won't be able to go back.' The Sarpanch of the village is Pratapsingh Bharatsinh Rathore. The ex-Sarpanch is Chhatrasinh.

20.9 Asoj

The population of Asoj is 5500. There are about 120 Patel and 30 Muslim families in this village. A Shanti Sabha was formed in Asoj and there was no problem there.

20.10 Manjusar

The population of Manjusar village is around 5000 with about 400 Muslims. Manjusar has been affected in the violence. There were several people from Manjusar in the Tundav camp.

About 20 cabins belonging to Muslims were burnt. There are 40-50 households of Muslims which are generally undisturbed except the home of Syed Hussain Mian Babu Mian (loss of Rs 1-1.5 lakh), who did farming (*khetibari* in *bhagidari*.)

Asraf Malik, Mir Sahab Goram Khan Pathan and two brothers (4 brothers in all), long term employees of Vadodara Tiles were dismissed by their boss on 3rd March because he said he could not afford to face the wrath of the mob destroying his factory because of their presence. The owners are Maheshbhai Govindbhai Patel (from Morbi) and Dineshbhai Patel.

Sadduben Ashrafbhai worked as a plasterer for nine years in Vadodara Tiles, before being fired on 28th February. Her husband worked as a driver in the company before his accident on 19th October 2001, after which he was given three months' salary and relieved by the company. Ten other workers of the company were also chucked out on the 28th. They have gone to Khambat and Khanpur. Sadduben came to Manjusar with her family after violence broke out, a month back. Her husband has a fractured leg, but having no money to go to a private hospital, they went to *sarkari* (government hospital).

Rabiaben Mirsab Pathan (35 years) has a 10-year-old daughter, Shabana. Her husband made *ladi* for tiles in Vadodara Tiles. She also worked in the factory. They lived on the factory premises. Her daughter studied in Class 4 in a school in Manjusar. She said she liked her school. Her brother Zakir Hussain worked in the neighbouring company (Jagadamba Tiles). He also fled the village after violence broke out.

"They came to hit us (people from the village) on the 28th. The *Seth* told us to leave. For the first two days he said we won't let anything happen. We didn't recognise the people in the mob, because we are *pardesi* (from another place). When the mob came, the Seth threw us out in half an hour. We couldn't collect our things. We came walking here, eight of us, at 2 p.m. on 1st March. We reached here around 4-5 p.m. We stayed in a school in Tundav for 15 days, and have now shifted to a rented house in the village (in Tundav). We are not yet doing anything. They took away our four goats..."

They hail from Kanba in Borsad taluka. They cannot go to Kanba, because everyone has fled the village, they do not know where to. They cannot even phone and find out where the villagers are.

20.11 Chappad

There are 200 Patel families in Chappad, which is close to Bhayli village.

The team met seven members of one family from Chappad village in the Tundav camp. Yakubbhai Rehmanbhai Mustafa, grain kirana shopkeeper, is the only resident of Chappad village near Bhayli whose house was burnt along with his shop. His mother, Doriben Rehmanbhai (60 years) was widowed ten years back. She has two sons, Yakubbhai (30 years), who is an epileptic (*ganda*) and Mafatbhai (40 years). They had two shops in Chappad. They had one Indira Awaas Yojna house, and one of their own.

At 9 p.m. on the 28th, the dairy horn/whistle was blown, for the Patels to collect. This mob surrounded the Muslims. There were 60 persons, all from the village. They shouted, 'Kill the men, leave the women'.

Doriben said that they hid for 2-3 hours in their Waghri neighbour's house, before going into the fields. They then phoned her *jamai* who came and took them away. They walked 15 km to Sarsavni and stayed two nights there.

The mob looted everything from Doriben's house and burnt it. They took away her goats and chickens. Their total loss was around Rs. 1-1.5 lakh.

While the mob burnt down Doriben's house, they (the mob) managed to save their Waghri neighbours' house from burning down.

Doriben said, 'They are still looking for us, threatening us. We don't want to go back, we don't even have the fare (money) to return.'

The perpetrators of the looting and arson were: The Sarpanch, Pramodbhai Shankarbhai Patel, Rajubhai Shankarbhai Patel, the Sarpanch's *bahu* (who was seen sitting behind him on the scooter when the mob came), Pradipbhai Tarjabhai Patel, Manojbhai Laljibhai Patel, Somabhai Himmatbhai Patanwala, Pramod Thakkar, Pradip Patel, Jyotishbhai Vasava and Kanu Ratilal Vasava.

20.12 Ranoli

Ranoli is located next to Gujarat Refinery. Many of the residents are lower-level employees of the Refinery and of other petrochemical industries in the area. There are *bastis* of migrant workers around Ranoli, of mixed Hindu and Muslim population.

The team met refugees from Ranoli at a relief camp in Tandalja, Vadodara. The following is a report based on discussions with them.

There were 25 Muslim families living in Ranoli, which is around 17-18 km from the city. The rest were all Hindus numbering 5000 or so. Some of these Muslims had small shops dealing with scrap metal, *paan-beedi*, working as daily wagers or in the local cinema hall, Dawal Cinema. Stoning began on 1st March and the Muslims were threatened by local people to leave the area. The local Sarpanch Chandrakant Patel was the main instigator. The people ran and hid in the fields "like animals for 2-3 days without anything to eat". One of them had a mobile phone and kept informing the police although they were also scared to tell the police where they were hiding. But the control room repeatedly told them that there is no help for them. They made their way to Vadodara, having lost everything. One person told the team, "There are many like us from Bajwa, Karachia, Dasrat, Padamba, etc. A mother of three grown-up sons was in tears. She said, "I am 65 and beginning to rest in life as they began getting settled. We never had much money but were in peace. We worked hard all our lives, where do we begin from here? How can I begin a new life at this age? We hid from the Sarpanch and his men as if we were criminals. What is our crime?"

Abdul Rashid lives in Kantibhai Bhailal Chawl, behind Dhawal Cinema, Ranoli. Kantibhai Bhailal Patel (50 years) and his son Paresh Kantilal Bhailal (23 years) are the owners of the chawl. The team met him on 14th March.

Abdul Rashid has been living in this chawl since the past 15 years in a 12x12 room. He worked at Dhawal cinema. On the day of the incident, Abdul was locked in a room in the cinema hall to protect him from the mobs. Kantibhai (who works at IPCL), along with his son Paresh and two friends came and looted Abdul's house, and transferred his belongings to their own house. Hence, Kantibhai, his son, and two friends took the opportunity provided by the rampaging mobs to evict Abdul from their chawl, which they had been attempting to do for some time. In Abdul's case, his is one of 35 houses, and the only Muslim one. The other tenants were not harassed. Abdul also owned an audio cassette selling cabin – this cabin was destroyed by a mob of fellow villagers. Abdul has apparently filed a case.

The mob was of about 100 people that included the Sarpanch, Chandrakant Patel and his sons (Kirti and another one) were also involved. Kaushik Patel, an employee of GACL, also took part in the looting.

Usmanbhai, an employee of Gujarat Dyestuff, lived in Ishwarbhai ni Chaali in Ranoli. On 1st March, at around 3.00 p.m., when mobs advanced towards his home, he left his neighbourhood. He said he found out that his house had been completely looted. The house apparently has not been set on fire as it belongs to a Hindu. Usmanbhai and his family fled to Pharma SMX, Gujarat Dyestuff. His family was sheltered in the electric panel room for two days without food. The children were fed a little each time. The family went to Jawahar Nagar Police in Ranoli at around 10 p.m. on 3rd March. The police then escorted them to Musra Park and sheltered them in a building under construction. On 14th March, there were about 40 people staying there and the kitchen fed about 180 people.

21 KAWANT TALUKA

Kawant taluka is in the tribal belt of the district. The Muslims living here are largely traders or engaged in business activities. They have lived in the area for several generations. The violence that took place in Panwad and Kawant, where *adivasis* looted and burnt the houses and establishments of Muslims, was unprecedented in the history of the area. Rajesh Mishra, an activist of twenty years, born, brought up and working in the Kanwant region, asserts definitively that Muslims and *adivasis* have co-existed in harmony till recent times. It is widely being stated that the *adivasis* attacked Muslims as a retaliation against Muslim moneylenders' exploitation. However, it should be noted that the logic of *adivasis* being mobilised against the exploitation of Muslim moneylenders does not hold in this area. In Kanwant, Baniyas are involved in moneylending but they were not attacked by *adivasis*. This indicates that Hindu communal organisations explicitly mobilised *adivasis* against Muslims.

The following reports are based on interviews with refugees from Panwad and Kawant at relief camps at Tandalja and Qureshi Jamaatkhana, Moghulwada, Vadodara. Additional inputs are from Kalpana Kannabiran's article in *The Hindu*, dated 24 April 2002, which is based on the findings of a team which visited the area in early April. An affidavit filed by an activist of ARCH Vahini is also included.

21.1 Panwad village

Date of incident: 10 March 2002

The area

Panwad is a largely *adivasi* area within which this village is located. There are over 600 houses, of which 200 belonged to Muslims. Muslims have been living in Panwad since seven generations during which there have been no incidents of communal violence. They say they used to attend *adivasi* functions and weddings, and the *adivasis* too would come to their functions.

Baniyas and dalits also live in the same village. Most of the Muslims who have left Panwad are petty traders with small businesses, *paan-beedi* shops, trading, or are working in other shops, dealing with forest produce, or at the most taking on small contracts for construction material. None of them own much land or have any money in banks. Most trading activities were carried on with Chhote Udepur and Kawant.

Details of incidents

According to the Panwad refugees, over the past two months there used to be nightly meetings among the *adivasis*. "We never bothered about them. People from the VHP, Bajrang Dal and RSS would address these meetings. However, they were being organised and instigated against us without our even being aware of it. Rumours are rife that the *adivasis* have been paid a lot of cash and given alcohol too. But we cannot verify this." The Hindu report states that refugees from Panwad staying in the Chota Udepur camp named three non-*adivasi* Hindus who, they said, had directed the violence.

There was continuous violence in the surrounding areas right from 1st March. Individual houses had been burnt in around 60-70 villages. Many people from these areas came to Panwad. On 8th March the people were threatened that their village would be burnt on the 10th. According to the refugees, the police was present when the threats were made.

The trouble began at 2.30 p.m. on 10th March. Around 5-7,000 people surrounded the village. They used everything to intimidate the people - arrows, stones, *dharias*, weapons, private firing, etc. Two *adivasis* got killed in police firing in the commotion. "We were stoning too but were very soon outnumbered and realised we could no longer resist them. 50-60 SRP police standing there ordered us to go inside instead of stopping the mob. This continued till 1 a.m. We were terrified. Most of the women were asked to hide in one *pucca* house while most of the children were in another 2-3 *pucca* houses. There were 4-500 men standing out all night with no hope, no weapons and no police support."

There was firing in the air, and teargas was used to disperse the people instead of the mob. They were also severely beaten by the police. "The mob was not warned even once. In fact at one point the police went up to them and came back, and the mob got even more violent and active. It was clear what was happening. They were *adivasis* from nearby villages: Panibar, Bhindol, Jhaab, Sadli, Kawra, Chimli, etc."

According to the refugees, "They told us we would be lynched because two *adivasis* had been killed. We appealed to the DCP. We told him that we wanted to shift to Chhote Udepur and he should help us shift. They asked us to wait till 8 a.m. and said that nothing could be done before that. We could not hold out any longer and 1000 to 1500 of us left at around 5 a.m. with nothing on us but the clothes we were wearing."

At 8 a.m. the *adivasis* entered the village, looted all the houses and burnt them systematically. Around 1000 people are still in the camps in Chote Udepur (Nazar Bagh). Most of the people had left their daughters and other young women there for safety. There are around 500 Panwad residents in Vadodara. According to one person, "People from our community are helping us with whatever they can. One of them is Judge Sadiq Bhai. But how long can they help us?"

"It is evident that they do not want us there, nor any trace of us. They looted all we had and saw to it that we left empty-handed. Some of us barely managed daily wages. A small contractor dealing with bricks has lost around

1.5 lakhs while another contractor has lost property worth 8 lakhs. Otherwise, most of them had a meagre income. Women used to carry loads for Rs. 40-50 per day."

The people are further disappointed in their Congress leaders who they feel were of no use. The local MLA is Sukhrambhai Rathwa, while the MP of the area is Ramsingh Rathwa. Most of the people had all their cash in their houses and have lost all their belongings. They continue to maintain that they faced no problems from the local Hindus in the village. They say that it was the *adivasis* instigated by the VHP, Bajrang Dal and RSS.

According to Kannabiran's report, when a team visited Panwad on 3^d April, they found all the houses burnt to rubble after being looted. On the sooty remains of walls were etched slogans like 'Hindustan is the land of Hindus' in abusive language. Fifty-five houses in nearby Karwal were razed and the village mosque and books in it were burnt. In the debris on the mosque's floor was inscribed 'Jai Siya Ram'.

21.2 Kawant village

Date of incident: 12-13 March 2002

The area

Around 185 Muslim and 52 Bohra families live in Kawant village of Kawant taluka. The total population of Kawant village is around 10,000, with Muslims, numbering between 1200 and 1500. They have been settled here for several generations. Most are engaged in small trades and business activities. In recent times, some have invested in the building construction business.

Details of incidents

According to refugees in Qureshi Jamaatkhana Camp, a great deal of tension was created among Muslims since the second day after Id (24th February) by tribals from the surrounding area, who were traumatising the Muslims by asserting that they should all be thrown out of the village.

There was increased tension in the area since 1st March 2002. The local people, including the local MLA, repeatedly appealed to the administration for deployment of SRP and BSF forces, but this was not done. On 10th March, after the withdrawal of SRP and BSF forces, violence broke out in Panwad village, 12 km from Kawant. The local people in Kawant had been warned that their village would be attacked next. Despite appeals to the District Collector by a member of a NGO, ARCH Vahini, and a local BJP leader, armed forces were not deployed in the area. The Hindus of the village also felt threatened and asked for security forces to be brought in.

After many attempts over several days, an army unit finally arrived the night of 11th March. In the early morning of 12th March, at 3.30 am, 135 households consisting of 990 people of the Muslim community were shifted to Bodeli town (40 km away) under police protection. On the same day, Bohra Muslims families took shelter in the Kawant Police station in the afternoon and later on, late at night, these families too were shifted under police protection from Kawant to Dahod town. According to the Hindu report, 300 families were shifted to Vadodara (115 km away) on 12th March.

On 12th and 13th March, more than 250 houses and shop establishments of Muslims, including those of the Bohra community, were looted and then set on fire by mobs of *adivasis* from villages around Kawant. According to refugees in Vadodara, the mob was around 500-strong. To save their lives, people fled their houses. They sheltered in the houses of other Muslims. The mob then attacked and looted these houses as well.

The assailants attacked with spears, bows, arrows, etc. and were shouting (*chichiaariyo*). Because of the attacks and burning of their houses, people were homeless and had to spend three days in the fields along with their small children, without food and water. Some of the victims of the atrocities went to Chote Udepur, where they reported the incident and asked for help. A Ghanchi Muslim of Chote Udepur, Shri Farookbhai, sent cars to get the people from the fields and brought them to Vadodara.

According to Meherunissa Fakir Mohammed, a resident of Kawant staying in a camp in Tandalja, "A mob consisting of around 4000 *adivasis* had come. Initially they pelted stones but later they started shooting with arrows that burnt because they had tips wrapped in cloth and soaked in kerosene. We then went and asked the police for protection to take us to a safe place. They gave us a jeep (M 7-8) that had about 5-6 policemen. We ourselves arranged 5-6 jeeps and followed the police van. When we reached Bodeli there was curfew in the area. Some Hindus refused to shelter us in Bodeli citing the curfew as an excuse but their reluctance was probably more because they didn't want to shelter Muslims coming from outside. The D.D.O. asked us to make our own arrangements and leave the place in two hours. We finally landed up in Tandalja Camp. Here they give us meals in

the daytime and in the evening. But, how long this will continue? Now we don't want to go back to the same place.”

Sabirabibi was staying in a house with 19 members. The house was set on fire. While the others managed to get out and flee, Sabirabibi could not find her way out in the smoke, and she lost her voice. Later, volunteers of the Qureshi Jamaatkhana got her treated by a doctor, after she regained her voice a bit.

Damage/losses

All 185 Muslim households lost all of their belongings. Their houses and business premises were looted, burnt and destroyed. They have lost property approximately worth Rs 3.50 crore in their shops, garages, cabins and lorries and vehicles. The 52 Bohra households were mainly well-to-do traders in Kawant. Even by very conservative estimates they have lost property worth Rs. 7-8 crore.

Role of the police

During the burning and looting, the police did not take any action. According to Rajesh Mishra of ARCH Vahini (see report below), the mob largely consisted of women and children who were not heavily armed, and the incident could have been quickly brought under control had the police taken some action, even by firing in the air or tear-gassing the mob. But this was not done. Curfew was imposed by the police only on the afternoon of 13th March, and the mob dispersed. According to Rajesh Mishra this was because the Collector and the DSP were visiting Kawant that day.

After Panwad was attacked, people in Kawant had been informed about the impending attack on 12th March. They went to seek police help but the police officer said that they were short of staff.

The Kawant police did make some efforts to shift the people out to safer places under escort. However, according to the *mukhia* of Kawant village (see *Hindu* report), the police in Bodeli put pressure on them to leave since they felt there would be problems if they stayed there. 900 of them then went off in search of shelter in different directions. This was corroborated by refugees' testimonies.

Role of local people/*adivasis*

In the words of Jaitunbibi, "In my whole life, we have never had trouble or conflict with the *adivasis*. This is not their work, some people from outside have provoked them and local *adivasis* have looted and burnt shops using petrol bombs. Because of this incident, the children are frightened, their education has been affected and their future is uncertain."

According to Mehrunissa Mohammed, some Hindus in the area had paid around Rs.1000 to 1200 to the *adivasis* to get their houses burnt. Muslims targeted in the attacks generally seem to feel that the *adivasis* could not have participated in the loot and arson without instigation and direction by non-*adivasis*. An *adivasi* schoolteacher in Joj, quoted in the *Hindu* report, expressed a similar opinion, stating that *adivasis* had been used. The schoolteacher said that *adivasis* who had taken part in the violence told him that they were given liquor and money and forced to participate in the arson, and that many of the *adivasi* women had wept while watching the destruction. Victims of the violence too believed that *adivasis* had been threatened and coerced into participation by VHP activists, with active police support.

An important respect in which the attacks by the *adivasis* differed from much of the general pattern of violence was that they were restricted to destruction and looting of property. While the Muslim victims were driven from their homes, there were no killings, and women were not sexually assaulted or abused by the *adivasi* attackers.

21.3 Pipalda village, near Kawant

Date of incident: 02.02.02

The following report is based on testimonies of refugees at Qureshi Jamaatkhana Mughalwada Camp, Vadodara.

Banobibi Mohd. Rashid's home was looted. 15-20 goats and her provision store were also looted. Her family shifted to Kawant, and stayed there for 8 days. However, when trouble started there, they shifted to Vadodara.

Role of local people

Five *baniya* boys helped the affected people to get to the station. Local people who were not part of the mob flatly refused to help the victims; instead they made fun of their helplessness.

Role of the police

When the people asked the police for help, they were told that the mob was so big that the police would not be able to stop them. They did not offer any protection.

Role of the Sarpanch

The Sarpanch is Rajubhai, a BJP office-bearer/leader. The deputy Sarpanch is Atulbhai. The Sarpanch said that he personally tried whatever he could do, but nonetheless the attack could not be stopped.

Rehabilitation

The refugees in relief camps in Vadodara say that if they get an assurance from the Sarpanch (that we will be safe) then the villagers are ready to go back.

Conclusions of the fact-finding teams which interviewed Panwad and Kawant refugees in the camps: It seems that the attacks had been planned months before the incident. The attackers had noted and knew exactly the location of Muslim houses and shops - how many and in which lanes - and the attacks on these places were well timed. In all places, petrol bombs and gas cylinders were used. Threats had been issued to non-Muslim residents not to support the Muslims, and in some places, the attackers were supported by local people. There seems to have been pressure from above on the police and fire brigade not to help. The police and fire brigade arrived late on the site. In many cases, the police were in the front helping the rioters in the attacks

21.4 ARCH-Vahini Report

Eyewitness Account of Looting and Burning in Kawant

I, the undersigned, Mr. Rajesh Mishra, son of Shri Jagdambaprasad A. Mishra, presently residing and working with Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) ARCH Vahini at village Mangrol Taluka Rajpipla Dist. Narmada, affirm on oath that:

1. I was present at my native village Kawant, Taluka Kawant, District Vadodara of Gujarat state between March 10 and 18, 2002.
2. On 12/03/02 and on 13/03/02 in Kawant more than 250 houses and shop establishments of Muslims including Bohra community were looted and then set on fire by mobs of tribals of surrounding villages. Most of the houses belonging to Muslims have been totally destroyed and their business is completely ruined. There were 185 Muslim and 52 Bohra households living and conducting their business in Kawant.
3. Even elders cannot recall when and from where the Muslims came and settled into this interior village Kawant. Some of them had their traditional businesses like cycle selling & repairing - automobile garages, fruit vending, grocery shops, poultry and goat-farming etc. Some of the Muslims were also engaged in services in shops and business of other trading communities of the village. For the last few years some of them were diversifying into new enterprises like building construction, contractors, building material supplier, rural transport business with tempos and jeeps, second hand vehicles trading etc.
4. All the 185 Muslim households have lost all of their belongings. Their houses and business premises have been looted, burnt and destroyed. Out of 185 households, 38 had *pucca* RCC structures and the rest were *kachcha* structures. They have lost their property approximately worth Rs 3.50 crores in their shops, garages, cabins and lorries and vehicles. They are homeless and have become paupers taking shelter in Vadodara and Chhotaudepur with relatives and Muslim Jamaatkhanas.
5. 52 Bohra community households were mainly well to do traders of Kawant. They were also settled in Kawant for more than 100 years and had developed business in varied sphere and on bigger scale. Besides their traditional business of wholesale grain trade and grocery shops, the bakery, printing press, soft drink manufacturing, rural transport business were some of the new areas where the enterprising Bohra had stepped in for the last 2-3 years. Even by very conservative estimate they have lost property worth Rs. 7 to 8 crores.
6. From 1st March onwards Muslims were receiving threats and threatening calls from various sources that had made them tense anxious. They were constantly requesting the local administration, the Mamlatdar and police authority to provide protection. As the tension mounted, they also demanded deployment of Border Security Force (BSF) or Rapid Action Force (RAF) or State Reserve Police (SRP) in adequate numbers.
7. Their fears were not unfounded for the Sarpanch and other village leaders had cancelled the traditional weekly market *Hat* scheduled for 4/03/02 and on 11/03/02. Cancelling of *Hat* was most unusual and extraordinary decision because *Hats* are almost never cancelled. This indicated gravity of the situation and the danger loomed large over the law and order situation and the target was obviously the Muslim community.
8. The local MLA of Chhotaudepur confided into me personally that for that whole week he was pressurizing and

persuading the district administration to employ BSF/RAF or SRP personal (minimum 40-50) in number at Kawant. He even informed the Home Secretary and the DIG of the State of the looming threat. But the administration did not respond to the requests.

9. On 10/03/02, in a nearby village Panwad, 12 km from Kawant, the houses, shops and cabins of Muslim community were looted and set on fire by mobs from the surrounding villages. Prior to looting and setting fire to the houses and other establishments, the mobs had set on fire the tempo trucks that were parked inside the police station campus for safety and security. The incident took place on the very day on which the SRP and the BSF forces were withdrawn from Panwad.

10. As the report of incidents in Panwad reached Kawant, the Muslims desperately urged the local administration to provide them security or else they would be ruined and their life was in grave danger.

11. The Muslims in Kawant received this report and they panicked because they knew that it was their turn next for the stories were constantly pouring in from all the sides during the past ten days that the mobs would first do Panwad then it will be the turn of Kawant. I called the District Collector on the same day and informed him that prior to final attack on Panwad the tribals were constantly threatening that Panwad would be the first followed by Kawant. The local BJP leader, who was trying to keep peace in Kawant, had also sensed the great trouble. He was also constantly imploring the District Collector and the Police authority to provide adequate police BSF protect to Kawant to avoid great tragedy that could overtake Kawant.

12. In the next two days, I made several calls to the Collector and the DSP and pleaded with them to provide security to Muslims and Bohras of Kawant. I constantly argued with them to deploy BSF/RAF/SRP in Kawant.

13. All that district administration had done before this was to organize flag march of the security forces in Kawant. I argued out of desperation that it was not useful. Kawant is an interior village. The Hindu community of Kawant was not threatening the Muslims. In fact, the Hindus also wanted security forces because the fear was from the mobs from the surrounding villages. The administration claimed that they had limited army personnel. I was informed that there were 106 Jawans at their disposal for the area. If so, I argued that they should be divided in three parts and take positions in three sensitive localities, Chhotaudepur, Panwad and Kanwat. I even argued that since Chhotaudepur was a bigger town, may be Kanwat and Panwad may be assigned 20-24 Jawans along with thirty SRP. A flag march lasting for ten to thirty minutes without a constant presence of the Jawans would serve no purpose, I kept on arguing. My pleadings along with the pleadings of the other leaders fell on deaf ears.

14. On 11/03/02, I contacted the regional in-charge of National Human Rights Commission Mr. Nambuthiri in Ahmedabad through Mr. Gagan Sethi of Jan Vikas, Ahmedabad and urged him to intervene and impress upon the administration to deploy enough force at Kawant to provide protection to Muslims and Bohra community. The Jan Vikas office informed that Mr. Nambuthiri had contacted DSP Vadodara and had discussed the matter with him. The office then informed me that I should contact the DSP Vadodara and discuss with him about deploying BSF/SRP forces in Kawant immediately that I had suggested to him. Following this I contacted the DSP office and discussed with him the above suggestion and also other suggestions about making preventive detentions and imposing curfew.

15. On the same day I also contact my senior colleague Dr. Anil Patel at our headquarters at Mangrol, Rajpipla. I requested him to contact Congress M.P. Mr. Madhusudan Mistry at New Delhi and ask him to intervene. Dr. Anil Patel contacted Mr. Mistry who in turn immediately contacted the State DIG and the Chief Secretary of the State and asked them to deploy effective force in Kawant.

16. I contacted the MLA of our region and he too took up the matter once again with the Chief Secretary and the DIG. 17. I then contacted a senior and reputed journalist of Gujarat Mr. Digant Oza over phone. He then approached the Chief Secretary's office, but since the Chief Secretary was not present in the office he left urgent message with his personal secretary to bring to attention of the CS about the Kawant situation and act immediately.

18. Rohit Prajapati and Trupti of Vadodara Kamdar Union based in Vadodara were also continuously interacting with the district administration since 10th March 2002 for deploying effective force at Kawant and were also representing that police was not handling the Kawant situation effectively.

19. Army unit did not arrive till the night of 11 March. Therefore, in the early morning of 12/02/03 at 3.30am, 135 households consisting 990 people of Muslim community were shifted under police protection. On the same day, Bohra Muslims families took shelter in the Kawant Police station in the afternoon and later on in the late night these families too were shifted under police protection from Kawant to Dahod town of Gujarat. They left their houses and property exposed.

20. On the morning of March 12th 2002, Mr. Rohit Prajapati informed me that an army platoon had left for Kawant and would reach Kawant any time and that it would stay put up to 16th March 2002. The army unit did arrive on March 12th in the morning, staged flag march and left in about thirty minutes. While the army was conducting flag march, I was told by one of the traders that soon after the march was over the unit would leave. I panicked and called the District Collector and informed him about this. He seemed surprised and said, "this should not happen, I will call the DSP." It is a fact that the unit did leave. Later, I also sent a fax message to the Collector and the DSP

that the army had left and the people and property were left exposed.

21. The property of Muslims and Bohras was looted in the daylight of 12th and 13th of March. The police was merely a spectator. It was not that the mob was violent, it was unarmed and consisted of young children and women, but the fact was that the police had not taken any action to prevent the mob from looting and the administration had not deployed enough force. Even the simple measure like teargas or firing in the air were not resorted to by the police to prevent the mob from looting and setting fire to Muslim and Bohra's property.

22. On 13th March 2002, the looting and burning spree started from early morning and went on till late afternoon. Suddenly at about 3.15 p.m. the police imposed curfew and within minutes it drove away the looting mobs. I was wondering why the police did not act in this manner the previous day and that day. Within an hour the mystery was solved and we came to know that the Collector and the DSP were visiting Kawant. I was asked to see the Collector. I went and told him that if the administration was willing to bring the situation under control and protect the Muslims and Bohras of Kawant, it could have easily done so.

23. The circumstances under which the Muslims and Bohras had to flee and their properties were looted and burnt, the panicked communities is not likely to return to Kanwat for a considerable time period and when they return it is imperative that a sizeable SRP force has to be stationed in Kanwat for a fairly long period. It is also imperative that the communities which lost all its properties should be appropriately compensated so that they can restart their lives.

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22 ODH VILLAGE, UMRED TALUKA, DISTRICT: ANAND

Dates of incidents: 28 February – 2 March 2002

Background to the area

Odh village is called an NRI village. There are many rich businessmen running tobacco businesses. 200 homes in this village belong to Muslims, who mainly worked in the tobacco fields. Four areas within the village are inhabited by Muslims. They are Sarewali Bhagol, Malao Bhagol, Pirawali Bhagol and Odh Nawabpura.

The people from Odh village are now staying in Sureli. In the Sureli camp, on 1st March there were 800 people but the numbers have been coming down, with some people moving to the homes of their relatives. A few people are also in Bhalej.

The following report has been filed on the basis of testimonies of refugees at Sureli.

Background to the violence and details of incidents

Over the past five years, every attempt was made to pick up fights with Muslims at any excuse and escalate tension between the two communities. Two months back the RSS/VHP had a meeting at the house of Haribhai Valabhbai Patel. For the last two months posters of the VHP and RSS were visible everywhere. For two months the Hindus had been claiming that Muslim boys had been teasing and troubling Hindu women and because of this they had entered the mosque.

Over the past two months, Hindus had been meeting in the fields. When asked they were told that the meetings were about the fields.

On 28th February following the Godhra incident, there was a lot of tension in the air. On 1st March, people did not even go to the mosque for *namaaz*. After the *namaaz* time, some people - Harishbhai Valabhbai, Vasantbhai Poonambhai Patel, Natubhai Sanabhai Patel went to a Muslim *mohalla* and spoke to Yusufbhai Yakubbhai who lives in Bhagol and told him not to worry. They said they would only take out a rally and nothing more. However there was no rally.

On the same day, at 2.00 p.m., a mob of more than 3,000 people armed with petrol bottles, stones, petrol bombs came screaming, "*Maro* (kill), *Kapo* (cut)". They hurled abuses calling the Muslims "*bandiya*", urging people to kill them and burn their houses.

After a few hours the mob told the people not to leave their houses. However, some people left their houses and

ran. Those who remained at home were locked from the outside. There were 30 people in these houses. The houses were set on fire with petrol and kerosene. 2 men managed to run away with serious burns. 28 people were left out of which there were 7 small girls in the age group of 6 to 16 and two older women 45 and 55 years old. The remaining were men.

Rehana Yusufbhai Vohra saw these 28 people burning. The remaining 9 members of her family had keys to the house of a Hindu friend. They ran and hid there for three days without food or water. Escaping from there they walked to Sureli camp which was quite far to seek shelter.

The four Muslim *mohallas* were burnt simultaneously. The 2 mosques and 5 *dargahs* in the village were all burnt with LPG cylinders and bombs.

By the night of 2nd March, the four Muslim *mohallas*, 200 houses, shops, the *masjid* and mosques, all were burnt and a bulldozer was used to level the land. The area where all these were located now looks like an open ground.

People were burnt to death and their bodies were burned repeatedly so that no evidence would remain. Of 6 people only parts were found, it was not possible to tell whether they were male or female. 22 bodies had been burned to ashes.

During the incident, the people in Odh village desperately called Farid, a Congress worker from Sureli, to come and rescue them from the village.

Farid, the Congress member from Sureli took the help of the police and with PI Bowa he took a tempo and brought away 400 people to Sureli village. On the way, people riding on 2-3 bikes tried to chase them and set fire to the tempo with petrol, but the tempo managed to speed away. After dropping the first batch of people at Sureli village they tried to return to Odh to get more people. However, a tree was kept to block the road and so they had to turn back to Sureli. The remaining people in Odh managed to escape, except for a little boy who hid back and his old grandfather who could not walk properly. The Hindus burnt the grandfather-Sayed Ghulam Hussain.

Perpetrators of the violent attacks

People have identified and named those involved in the violence in Odh village. According to reports, Harish Valabhbhai carried a petrol can, Nantubhai Sana carried a long stick (*bhala*) and Basant Poonambhai had a can of kerosene and a *kankda*, Lalabhai Bakoor bhai carried *dhariyas*. Leading the mob were Dilipbhai Valabhbhai Patel, Chotobhai Ranabhai Patel, Prakashbhai Jamnadas Patel and Hemand Kumar Rathod. Also in the mob were: Ghanshyambhai Ambala, Devendrabhai Harshadbhai Patel, Prakashbhai Jashbhai Patel, Dilipbhai Sanabhai Patel and Girishbhai Somabhai Patel.

Those involved in obstructing the safe passage of affected people to Sureli have also been named by the people. They state that the mobs arrived in the vehicles of Haribhai Valabhbhai Patel, Ganesh Panwala Odhi (ex-Sarpanch) and Ashabhai Patel (male ex-Sarpanch). People who were leading the mob were Godabbhai Patel, Arvindbhai Patel, Anil Kumar, Niranjana Kumar (Bobo), Arvind Ramabhai, Raoji Satarbhai, Rajubhai Samabhai and Chotobhai Ramabhai who were from Dakoravad and Das Bungla. Chotabhai Ramabhai Patel was the one who set Sayed Ghulam Hussain on fire.

The people from Odh say that a new magazine called *Padkaar* (Editor, Deepak Sathi) reports that 18 Muslims are missing and the claim of the Muslims that the Hindus burned 28 Muslims is false.

Role of the police

The police did help some of the people escape to Sureli. Their help was organised by Farid, the Congress worker from Sureli. After these incidents the police arrested 23 Hindus, and eventually released 16. Now only 7 people are in jail. (A BJP ex-minister Dilipbhai Mani, his personal secretary Maheshbhai Raojbhai Patel are taking responsibility to help the Hindus with their cases.)

Role of local people

By all reports, the local people were heavily involved in the rioting, burning, looting and killing. This is clear from the number of people who were recognised in the mobs as well as those who were seen inciting violence.

A Doctor's Account

This is an account by a doctor who works in a government hospital about 40 km away from Vadodara. He said that

there was a virtual deluge of patients pouring in to the hospital from 28th February to 1st March, with all kinds of injuries that he had never witnessed before in situations of communal violence. There were countless injuries caused by swords. The mutilation of breasts in the case of women was common. There were some cases of mutilation of the penis. In yet another hospital a friend of this doctor conducted 17 post-mortems, the majority of whom were women who had been gang-raped. There were 3 survivors of gang rape. In one case, the police had intervened and saved the victim from death.

A woman from Kheda district who was gang-raped had her head shaved and an *Om* cut into her head with a knife by the rapists. She died after a few days in the hospital. There were other instances of *Om* engraved with a knife on the back and other parts of women's bodies, as well as of some men. The doctors in the hospital also tended to Hindu men and women. According to them, some of the deaths of Hindus resulted from being caught in the commotion for disobeying prohibitory orders.

Young children had been hacked to pieces in the presence of parents. There were countless cases of bullet injuries. People were burned by putting burning truck tyres around their necks. The doctor said that it is not possible to adequately describe the mental state of the patients, many of who were migrant labourers with no idea of what awaits them beyond the hospital doors.

RSS volunteers who had been donating a lot of blood for their Hindu patients threatened the doctor. They said that the blood is not to be used for the Muslims. Of course, the number of Muslim patients is very much higher.

Someone supportive of the violence maintains the blood bank at the hospital. The doctor strongly condemned their policy of killing and injuring innocent people and told them that he will continue to save and protect the lives of all who come to his hospital without succumbing to their threats and persuasion tactics. The doctor stood his ground and said that he will continue to use the blood from the blood bank, in keeping with his professional ethics.

Area-wise List of Accused Persons

| | |
|--|--|
| Wadi Taiwada | Sandip Bhonse, Mukesh D. Sirsagar, Hitesh R. Dhomse, and Bharatesh Desai of the RSS. PI P.P. Kanani and DCB staff |
| Bavamanpura | PI Katara, PI Kanani, Jayanti and Satya |
| Hajimiyan ki Sara, Baranpura | Ishwar Machhi, Soni Bhooria, Dr Thakore Patel, Vimal Thakur, Bhaya (Machi), Bhuriyo (Soni), Mochi, Ramesh, Hardik and Maniyo, son of Ranjeet from Chobdar Mohalla. |
| Roshannagar (Tulsiwadi/Hathikhana) | Umakant Joshi (ex-mayor), Kanubhai Panwala, Narendra Pandya s/o Parvati, Rajubhai Kuberbhai, Suresh Sharma (STD walla of Tulsiwadi), Hillayyabe (ex- corporator of Ward No 5) |
| Machchipeeth | Ajay Dave, (Leader of BJP), PI N.K. Rathod, Niraj Jain, (leader of Vadodara chapter of VHP), Baka Brahmhatt (a factory owner in GIDC, Makarpura), and Milind Ambegaonkar (Shikshan Samiti, VMC). Police personnel named: MS Patel of Raopura police station, PI Bhagirathsinh Jadeja, of the Goonda squad, PSI Rao of ECO cell station, Kanu Patel of Karelibaug police station and Fatehsinh Patel of Karelibaug police station. |
| Vadsar Road | Manoj, Yogesh, Maradi and Mr. Shrimali. |
| Shivshakti Nagar and Indiranagar, Makarpura | VHP and the Bajrang Dal, like Nattubhai Dayabhai Prajapati, Naresh Sharma and A.P. Singh (all residents of Indiranagar, D group; Raju Vishnu More, Lotan Patil, Hiralal Lotan Patil, Sanju Marathe (residents of Narayan Nagar); Dilipsingh Jethisingh Raj (resident of Tulja |

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| | Nagar), Ramanand R Yadav and Sahebrao Patil (residents of Shreeji Nagar); Shyam Vishnu More, Sanju Marathe (driver) (residents of Ghanshyam Nagar). Others from Maretha involved were: Sanabhai Thakur, Ishwarbhai Thakur, Narayanbhai Thakur, Sureshbhai Chotabhai Thakur, Mansingbhai Jethabhai Thakur, Nilesh Bhogilal Patel and Chimanbhai Tribhovanbhai Thakur. |
| Best Bakery, Dabhoi Road | Jayanti Chaiwala, Mahesh, Munna, Sanjay Thakkar, Santosh Thakkar, Jagadish Rattiwala, Dinesh Bakeriwala, Shanabhai |
| Noor Park, Tarsali | <i>Accused in Salim Memon's murder</i> Raju Bangri (of Adarsh Nagar, a Bajrang Dal leader); Alpesh (Bajrang Dal), Jagdish Patel (Ex-Sarpanch of Tarsali and BJP member), Amar Ghanti, Raman Ishwar Dishwala, Raju Thakore, Anil Tailor (both of Vijay Nagar). <i>Accused for rioting and arson</i> Raju Thakore, Jasbhai Patel. |
| Vishal Nagar, Tarsali | <i>Accused in Iqbal Hussain and Nasir Hussain's murders</i> Narendrasinh Solanki (BJP, Taluka Panchayat member), Sunil Bhoieto, Ajit Kalia (of Vishal Nagar), Sunil Patel (of BJP), Sudhir Meldi, Pradip aka Padiyo, Kallo Jaiswal, Bhupendra, Ravi, Dharmendra, Kanchia, Manish Gurkha (all of Vishal Nagar) |
| Raghovpura Village, near Tarsali | PSI Vadalia, Sarpanch Shantilalbhair Patel. |
| Gotri village | Ghanshyam Brahmabhatt (BJP worker), Kanchanben Barot (BJP councillor), Bhailal Parag Patel and Dilip Bhagat Patel. |
| Kisanwadi | PI Kanani DCB, Vishnu Prajapati, Kishore |

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| | Marathi, Santosh Hajam, Jogi, Chandrakant, Uma, Dhamma, Rahul, Karia, Jayanti, Pappu, Subhash, Natu, Chandu Plumber, Ramesh Stickerwala. |
| Indiranagar, Karelibaug | Shankar and Pinto |
| Ajwa Road Aalishan Apartments, Borsali Apartments, Bahar Colony and Sabina Park | Hemraj R Parmar of Panigate Mobile No. 2, PSI Parmar of Panigate Police Station. |
| Roshannagar-Ashapuri, Navayard Cabin D Area | Councillors: Pradip Joshi (Ward no. 12) and Bharat Shah. Rajubhai, Dilipbhai and 'Painter' |
| Amarnagar, Navayard | Kanu Acharya, Kamlesh Gandhi and Councillor Pradip Joshi and Raju Vaghela |
| Das Patel ni Chaal, Sardarnagar, Navayard | Dilip Keria |
| Ektanagar, Navayard | Councillor Pradip Joshi |
| Fatehgunj | Gopal N. Rabadi, Mahendra N Rabadi, Ashoo Dubey and Guddu Dubey. |
| Sama | Councillor Pradip Joshi |
| Atladra | Arunaben Pandya, Yogesh Patel, Hari Krishan Patel and Nikeshbhai G. Patel. |
| Bajwa | PSI Sarvaiya, Jagdish Patel, Dhirubhai Patel Jagdish Armanbhai Patel and Arun Patel of Karachiya village and Sampat Vaghri of Rajasthan colony. Mukesh Patel and Jayaben Thakkar, BJP MP |
| Maretha | Sanabhai Ishwarbhai Thakur, Sanjay Chiman Thakur, Mahendra Magan Thakur and Vishnu Raisingh Bhuria (all residents of Bhathuji Faliya), Sana Thakur (resident of Santoshi Nagar) and Prakash Mulchand Wagh (resident of Magan |

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| | <p>Park), Bipinbhai Patel (resident of Alamgar), Sukhdeo Thakur, the Sarpanch of Talsat, Pramodbhai of Chappad, Nilesh Bhogilal Patel, Mahesh Haribhai Rabari, Raghubahi Bharwad, all Bajrang Dal leaders, Sarpanch Kantaben Sanabhai Vasava, Veenabhai Chagganbhai Patel – ex-BJP leader, Govindbhai Ramsibhai Rabari, Haribhai Icchabhai Rabari and Narayanbhai Chottabhai Thakur.</p> |
| Sokhada | <p>Motiya Pura, Lalji Pura, Vashna, Madhusudhanbhai Muljibhai Amerikawala from the USA, Sarpanch Mahendrabhai Ramanbhai Patel, Jagdishbhai Mohanbhai Tailor , Hiteshbhai Purushottam (STD <i>Pangallawalla</i>), Manojbhai Thakorebhai Patel (newspaper dealer) and Sanjaybhai Thakorebhai.</p> |
| Chappad | <p>Sarpanch, Pramodbhai Shankarbhai Patel, Rajubhai Shankarbhai Patel, the Sarpanch's <i>bahu</i>), Pradipbhai Tarjabhai Patel, Manojbhai Laljibhai Patel, Somabhai Himmatbhai Patanwala, Pramod Thakkar, Pradip Patel, Jyotishbhai Vasava and Kanu Ratilal Vasava.</p> |
| Ranoli | <p>Sarpanch Chandrakant Patel and his two sons and Kaushik Patel, an employee of GACL.</p> |
| Lakshmipura | <p>Names of the accused: Samiala: Narendrabhai Gordhanbhai Vaid (Sarpanch), Kamlesh Gordhanbhai Patel (Dy Sarpanch), Bhogilal Mohanbhai Patel, Mahendrabhai Harmanbhai Patel, Kishorebhai Laljibhai Baria, Natubhai Dayabhai Patel, Jagdishbhai Dayabhai Patel, Hiteshbhai Bacchubhai Patel.</p> <p>Lakshmipura: Bhagatsinh Gaikwad (Panchayat member), Labhubhai (Gramsewak), Bharatbhai (Doctor), Rameshbhai Bakorbhai Solanki,</p> |

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| | <p>Chiragbhai Maganbhai Panchal, Narendrabhai Raojibhai Patel, Lakshmansinh Bodana, Poonambhai Solanki, Ranjitsinh Chatrasinh Gohil, Umeshbhai Natubhai Rawal, Kantilal Bhatt, Shantilal Shanabhai Vaghri, Rameshbhai Chimanbhai Padiyar, Punitbhai Solanki, Sukhabhai Vaghri, Dilipsinh Gaikwad, Sureshbhai Rajput, Chandrasinh Maganbhai Rajput, Dilipbhai Shantilal Valand.</p> |
| <p>Odh village, Umred Taluka, District: Anand</p> | <p>Harish Valabhbhai, Nantubhai Sana, Basant Poonambhai, Lalabhai Bakoor bhai . Leading the mob were Dilipbhai Valabhbahi Patel, Chotobhai Ranabhai Patel, Prakashbhai Jamnadas Patel and Hemand Kumar Rathod. Also in the mob were: Ghanshyambhai Ambala, Devendrabhai Harshadbhai Patel, Prakashbhai Jashbhai Patel, Dilipbhai Sanabhai Patel and Girishbhai Somabhai Patel.</p> |