

## The Crackdown on Education

This team's investigations revealed that there has been a systematic crackdown on the education of minority children and youth at all levels, in both private and government schools, in Gujarat. This is a process that was initiated months prior to the carnage and peaked in the period starting February 28<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the more obvious economic, physical and psychological devastation that the largest minority community has been subject to, the denial of education to its children has been the surest way of crippling its chances of its recovery in the future.

The communalization of education in Gujarat is a well known fact now. Teesta Setalvad's detailed analyses of the Gujarat State Board Social Studies Textbooks (SS) highlighted, among others, the following aspects:

- Depiction of ancient Indian culture as Hindu culture (SS, Std.V)
- Muslims, Christians and Parsees categorized as "foreigners" in a section titled "Problems of the Country and their Solutions" (SS, Std. IX)
- Silence on the role of the RSS in the murder of Gandhi (SS, Std VIII)
- A frighteningly uncritical account of Fascism and Nazism (SS, Std X)
- Glorification of Hitler for lending "dignity and prestige to the German government" and "instilling the spirit of adventure in the common people" (SS, Std. X)<sup>1</sup>

As a logical extension of such communal and fascist indoctrination, the examination papers too listed the following questions, even as violence still raged through the riot-torn state:

- The English paper of the Gujarat Higher Secondary Board, in the section on transforming sentences, asked Class XII examinees to remove the "if" from the following sentence: "If you do not like people, kill them."
- The same paper also asked them to join five sentences like these into one: "There are two solutions, one of them is Nazi solution. If you do not like people, kill them, segregate them. The strut up and down. Proclaim that you are the salt of the earth."
- Examination papers of Classes V and VI also listed a question that read "What is the basic difference between *miyans*<sup>2</sup> and Others?"<sup>3</sup>

These questions rocked the parliament in late April in the midst of continued violence in Gujarat. One leader even observed that "such questions could create a psychological fear among students and could result in carnage and destruction."<sup>4</sup>

No action has been taken so far against the Gujarat government. Moreover, its response to the recommendations of the Standing Parliamentary Committee on Textbooks to remedy the distortions of history has been to

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<sup>1</sup> From a printout of Teesta Setalvad's analysis, which has been much cited, both by the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Culture in 2000, and by various newspapers across the country since March 2002.

<sup>2</sup> A derogatory term for the largest majority community in India.

<sup>3</sup> The Telegraph, Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April and Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> The Telegraph, Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

- a) send in a letter stating its disagreements with the parliamentary committee's observations
- b) reprint the textbooks in 2002 in complete dismissal of the committee's strictures against these sections.<sup>5</sup>

It was with such knowledge fresh in mind that this team heard anguished testimonies of children and youth, mothers and sisters, teachers and lawyers. They talked of minority children being forced to withdraw from private schools, of the differences in the numbers admitted in municipality schools, and their phasing out in stages in minority areas, and of the pressure to conform to the appearance and dress codes of the majority community in colleges in the build up to February 27<sup>th</sup>. In the direct aftermath of the Godhra train incident they discussed the looting of computers and equipment in the better off institutions, the large scale arrests and torture of school children and college students, and of the problems relating to the examinations. They also voiced their apprehensions about future access to education in light of their current destitution, the major displacements of populations now in camps often in areas remote from their original places of residence, and of the treatment they would receive in schools in their original areas if they could return there. Fear and despair were the sentiments underlying each one of these testimonies that was narrated to us.

## **FORCED WITHDRAWAL OF CHILDREN FROM PRIVATE SCHOOLS: ISSUE OF BASIC SAFETY**

### **Afrozben: Resident of Juhapara, mother of Naved, in class II, Ankur School, Paldi, Ahmedabad.**

Juhapara, on the southern outskirts of Ahmedabad city, and home to 4 lakh members of the minority community in Ahmedabad is also known as "Mini Pakistan" for that reason. Afroz, was a senior volunteers in charge of Rang Avadoot, one of the seven camps in this area, and which sheltered approximately 400 victims, including 62 children, from Naroda Road, Ahmedabad, as well as some from areas as far off as Vadodara. All the children were from middle class families and had been attending private schools. Afroz was giving us the backgrounds and histories of various children around us, when she suddenly burst out with her own narrative: "Where is there safety for our children, I ask you? The Bajrang Dal attacked the schools, broke down sections, beat up the watchman and demanded that the principal hand over lists of minority children in the school. Similar events took place in Little Flower, Don Bosco, Trinity, GLS, all English medium schools. (See "Muslim schoolkids targeted" in The Hindusthan Times, April 6<sup>th</sup> for more details, and regarding other schools too. - Included in appendix .) Two of them have already sent notices to parents asking them to take Transfer Certificates for their children as they could no longer guarantee their safety."\* With tears silently streaming down her cheeks, Afroz continued, "After the riots started, my son's results dropped drastically, we ourselves are so frustrated, how are we to see to our children? When he went to sit for his exams, we'd be pacing up and down outside.....his mother, father, grandfather....all

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<sup>5</sup> The Telegraph, Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2002.

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afraid that something may happen....how will I educate my son like this? ..... I'm thinking of leaving Gujarat, *inshallah*, I cannot bear this any more. He is my only child, what if something happens to him?"

Her voice wavered, "And my son loves India, he loves the Indian flag, he keeps seeing the film "Gadar"...He has such a strong Indian identity, we could not bear to tell him that Indians were behind the riots, that the Bajrang Dal Hindus were behind it. He thought that Pakistan was behind the riots and we let him believe that....and he was so angry when he found out we had been lying to him.

Everybody is sitting at home. Those of us who are in government jobs cannot go to work. "*Hamara khuda bhi hamare saath nahin hai – usne bhi chhutti le rakkhi hai. Allah ne itni maar maari hai, wo hi raasta nikalega, insaan toh kuchh nahin kar sakte hain.*" Till three days ago they came in tolas of 10,000 to 20,000 to Ekata Maidan. Now they stand on the terraces in hordes. When I went to distribute foodgrains in Srinathnagar, the Bajrang Dal men stood on terraces, and stripped, they called out abuses, they are all under the leadership of the promoter Anil Bakeri. Whenever I go out of this area he harasses me, they harass me.

Even though I am from Gujarat, I still say I want to leave Gujarat. I'd even leave my large four-bedroom flat in which just the three of us live, and go share a one-bedroom flat with the joint family in the Konkan.

In these camps we have been so busy just keeping people alive that we have had no time to address questions of education. Admissions have to be completed this week – it is very necessary. But who will take these children into schools is the question?

Fellowship programmes for children in boarding schools in other states? How can a mother let her child go away from her after what has happened, who will guarantee her child's safety? Will those who put them in such schools give it to us in writing that our children will be safe, will the schools give it to us in writing? How can we trust that our children will be safe in boarding schools, even in other states?"

Afroz finally broke down, sobbing uncontrollably: "I have never talked about myself like this before... I've always been told not to get emotional, to keep my control....I'm opening up to you for the first time today because I can't bear it any more, I'm so scared for my son...."

When she recovered she asked in a grim voice, "The questions I have for the authorities in this state are: Which are the schools for our kids? Is there safety on the roads? Is there safety in the schools? Will we find our children when we go back to get them at the end of the day? Will the teachers not be callous even if our children can go back to their schools? Will my son's teacher not say 'Why are you back? Smile Iqbal!'

The basic question is : How do we give our children an education?"

**Source: Afrozben, Samarth, organizer of Rang Avadoot camp, Juhapara, Ahmedabad. May 5<sup>th</sup>.**

- \* Anandibehn, the education minister denied vehemently that such threats were being issued by anybody to private schools; and that if anybody had received such letters, they should show them to her. She had already issued a directive against such threats, she would issue it again, as well as stop schools from sending such letters (c.f. full text of interview in appendix).

**DECREASING STRENGTH OF SCHOOLS IN MINORITY AREAS;  
STEADY PHASING OUT OF CLASSES 5-7 IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS;  
LABS DESTROYED, COMPUTERS LOOTED IN BOYS HIGH SCHOOL;  
DRESS CODES IN COLLEGE – STUDENTS COMPELLED TO LEAVE**

**Sirajuddin, Teacher of English in a private school in Godhra.**

This team met Sirajuddin while talking to children on the terrace of the Iqbal Primary School. This camp housed 748 people, of whom 305 were children. In addition to this it also provided the rations for 3,200 other victims living with relatives in the area. Most of these victims were from the villages of Panchmahal, Dahod and Kheda districts, and some from Khanpur. A gentle, soft spoken man, Sirajuddin narrated to us quietly and precisely the ways in which the education of children and young people in his community had suffered across the last two years. Like Afroz, he too emphasized how the ground had been prepared for the crackdown on his community long before February 27<sup>th</sup>.

“The Municipality Schools here are staffed chiefly by the majority community. All the schools in the majority areas have only majority community teachers; and the schools in the minority areas have 50% minority community teachers. In the Municipality Board, for both Gujarati and Urdu medium schools, 90% of the members are from the majority community.

As we live in Gujarat, we want our children to be trained in Gujarati. My own son goes to a Gujarati medium school. The strength of the eight Gujarati medium municipality schools in the minority area has been scaled down; now there is an average of only 40-50 children in each of these schools, whereas the Gujarati medium schools in the majority areas run to full strength, with approximately 700 children in each. That is why upto 95% of the children in the majority area Gujarati medium schools on the "border" come from minority families..... so we send our children to those schools because they are better run and better equipped.

In the last two years there has been a gradual closing down of classes 5-7 in the primary schools in the minority areas. This year, three municipality schools shut down classes 5-7. The school opposite the railway station used to go upto class 7. For the last two years now classes 5-7 have not been run there. The strength of classes 1-4 has also been

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decreased; there are now 4 classes and only 2 teachers there. After the *danga* (riots), Urdu medium teachers have also been transferred to Gujarati schools.

The only day on which large scale violence took place in Godhra was on February 27<sup>th</sup>, after the burning of the train. But they deliberately targeted the Boys High School opposite the Civil Hospital. They looted all the computers and destroyed the laboratories before setting fire to the building.

Many of our youth attend the local government aided Commerce College in Godhra. Here too they have had to face harassment in both the internal and the external examinations. They have been pressurized to follow a dress code – no beards, no caps, no kurtas allowed. No Urdu allowed. If they have not followed these codes they have been penalized in their examinations, or even been failed.....sometimes they've received 30%, sometimes even less. So many of our students have been compelled to leave college without completing their education.”

*Source: Sirajuddin, volunteering in the Iqbal Primary School Camp, Polan Bazar, Godhra. May 6<sup>th</sup>.*

## **LACK OF PROVISIONS FOR EXAMINATIONS; SUPREME COURT CASE FOR SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMS FOR STD. X & XII**

**Father Vinayak, Teacher St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad. May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002.**

This team held a discussion with Father Vinayak in his office. He also supplied us with photocopies of the list of all the minority area centres that had been shifted to the majority areas, and the Supreme Court judgement.

“I started visiting the relief camps on the third day of the riots and picked up the problem of the class X and XII exams that the students were supposed to write on 11<sup>th</sup> March. How would the displaced minority students take their examinations?”

I wrote a paper to the press highlighting the issues of trauma, stamina, lack of textbooks and notebooks for preparation and the absence of any funds to buy new material, safety while travelling to the exam centres etc. The press sent reporters to camps and published their findings in the newspapers, so the exams were postponed from 11<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March. There was a demand for further postponement, so the government announced that the exams would still be held on 18<sup>th</sup> March, but supplementary exams would also be organized all over the state on 6<sup>th</sup> May. On 17<sup>th</sup> March however, it cancelled the 6<sup>th</sup> May option overnight and declared that exams would be held all over Gujarat on 18<sup>th</sup> March only, except in Ahmedabad and Baroda, for which a new date would be set within a few days. So the May 6<sup>th</sup> option was totally scrapped, irrespective of the problems students in the rest of Gujarat would face.

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The Times of India reported that children in examination centres on 18<sup>th</sup> March had tears streaming down their faces and were hallucinating about fires etc. On 18<sup>th</sup> March again there was trouble, including the stabbing of a student in Bharooch, and exams in 7-8 centres had to be dropped.

The original petition for the postponement of all exams scheduled to start on the 18<sup>th</sup> had been filed by the Lok Adhikar Sangh in the High Court 45 days before the exams. On the 19<sup>th</sup> I filed an affidavit in my name saying that it was not fair to go on with the exams during the riots and there should be supplementary exams. Approximately 10,000 students had not been able to sit for their exams, and this would cripple their careers. The case was heard immediately, but the affidavit was rejected on the grounds that 1) one such petition had already been filed before, and 2) it was a government matter.

Then Colin Gonsalves filed a petition in the Supreme Court in the name of Aparna Bhatt and three others. The PIL was filed on 1<sup>st</sup> April. The hearing was held on 15<sup>th</sup> April in Delhi – I was also called to present the case in the hearings. On the very first day the SC issued notices to the Gujarat State Education Board and the Secretary of the Education Department, Gujarat Board to appear in the SC within 3 days. Harish Salve argued for the government.

*The government argued that it had distributed books and pens etc. in all the camps. This is a complete lie!* \*Justice Kirpal (who is the Chief Justice now), on the bench, said: “Mr. Salve, you expect 40,000 children to study in relief camps!”

Within 3-4 hearings the case was decided. The SC came down heavily on the Gujarat Government,\*\* and stated that it should decide to hold supplementary exams, or else the SC would order it to do so. By the third hearing the government had to return with the dates. The government claimed that only 20% of the students had not taken exams. We argued that given the high dropout rate, this 20% was the majority of the minority community.

18<sup>th</sup> April was the new date set. But there were riots again in Ahmedabad, Barod and 6 other centres, so again more students could not sit for their exams. Another affidavit was added to the SC case. This made the case stronger.

Also, three days before April 18<sup>th</sup> the government shifted all the minority area centres to the majority areas, so this created complete insecurity for the minority students. I have this list here of approximately 30 such centres that were shifted. The minority community announced a boycott, and 60%-70% did not sit for the exams.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April the SC issued a directive that exams would be held all over the state – if a student had missed even one exam, he/she could sit for all the exams again. Further, students in relief camps would also be allowed to sit for their exams again if they wish to do so. The date set for the exams is now in the first week of June. The government has announced that 26,000 students will be sitting for these exams.”\*\*\*

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When this team asked him about the future role of educational institutions and teachers, he replied, "What has been the impact of witnessing such carnage and torture, and how do we deal with it? There are 200 colleges in Gujarat – one of them, Xaviers, is a Christian college. We have a network of Christian Schools – but *what can be done with the teachers? Their attitude is shocking too. College professors also say: "They deserve it, they asked for it."*

*Also, at the moment we are in a phase where we can't even open our mouths. No peace initiatives have worked. Anybody who talks of harmony is a traitor. We are waiting for emotions to calm down.*

I teach Value Education too in this college. I'm planning to introduce something like national integration in this course.

I believe that this is neither a religious nor a communal conflict – it is a political conflict. I want students to start thinking how we have been used...how to shift the focus from a communal focus to a political focus.

**Source: Father Vinayak, in St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad. May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002.**

\* In her interview with us too, Anandibehn claimed that not only had the government supplied textbooks, notebooks and pens to every single camp, it had also sent teachers to each of them to help students prepare for their exams. *Every single camp organizer in the minority camps that this team visited stated categorically that the government had done no such thing. If they had received any books and stationery at all, then only NGOs had provided the material. No teachers had visited any of these camps either.*

\*\* Anandibehn also claimed that the Gujarat government had won the case hands down. She said *"They went to the Supreme Court. We came back the victors.....They [the Supreme Court] confirmed that what we had said was right..... they agreed and just said you don't have to do anything...they praised the arrangement we had made for the exams"*

\*\*\* Yet, within a few minutes she completely contradicted this statement while saying regarding the supplementary examinations: *"We [said we] would hold a supplementary test for them in June. Now let me tell you, I just called the heads of the secondary education board for the number of forms we have received. How many have we received? 500. 500 children filled up their forms – for the Xth and XIIth standards, both inclusive. And they made us spend crores for this...."*

## **GIRLS' EDUCATION AND THE IMPACT OF WIDESPREAD SEXUAL ABUSE AND BURNING OF WOMEN**

In the few camps across the state from which students did sit for their board exams, most of the students who had not dared to venture out to examination centres were girls. The grotesque sexual abuse, rape and burning of minority women has completely destroyed the confidence of young girls and women right across the state, and they feared to step out even in places like Godhra city, where no rioting had taken place after the 27th of February until May 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Latifabehn: Mother of Sultana, B.Sc. 3<sup>rd</sup> Yr. Residents of Godhra.**

We spoke to Mohammed Yusuf Giteli and his wife Latifa, a middle-class couple, and two of the organizers in charge of the Iqbal Primary School camp. They obviously share a relationship of mutual respect and love. Latifa, a confident and dignified woman in a purdah, spoke of her own bitter disappointment at being withdrawn from school after class VII, and her lifelong dream to see her daughter graduate from college resolve to educate her daughter. She is a housewife who has never worked outside her home, and now works in the camp from 7 A.M. to 10 P.M. everyday, supervising classes for children, and helping the women train their minds onto therapeutic embroidery and handiwork.

“ I took great joy in my studies, but my deep regret is that I was made to leave school in class 7 to be married early. I decided that my daughter would become an educated woman. I have two daughters and a son; both the daughters now live with their in-laws – we have to get them married early in our community, it is difficult to find good young men who are still unmarried at a later age. My younger daughter was not interested in studies but Sultana, the elder one was; so we even found a family who believed in educating women and agreed to let her continue with her studies after marriage. Now look at what's happened..... The riots took this town by storm just a few days before her final B.Sc. exams and she was too terrified to go to the centre to sit for them. Various male members of our family and friends offered to escort her and sit outside and wait till she finished her exams, but she was too terrified to even consider the possibility.” Latifa's eyes brimmed with tears as she continued, “Now her spirit is broken. She says she will never be able to take her exams again.....and my dream for her has turned to ashes.”

That same night, Latifa and her husband gave us shelter in their cousin's home near the camp. As other women and children of the community came into our room in Tahiraben's house to chat with us, their genuine warmth and ease contrasted sharply with our feelings of confusion. For the first time we were coming to terms with the shame of having been born as “Hindus”, and for the first time one of us acknowledged herself as one: ‘I feel ashamed of being a Hindu, Latifabehn. The way the Hindus have tortured your community is unpardonable, but ...can you still forgive us?’ Latifa pulled those shaking hands gently into hers and said, ‘There are good and evil people in both our

communities.....You all are tired; please take a little rest: tomorrow we shall meet again in the camp...”

**Source: Latifabehn, organizer in the Iqbal Primary School Camp, Polan Bazar Godhra. May 6<sup>th</sup>.**

**Sultana: 20/21 yrs, 3<sup>rd</sup> yr. B.Sc., married, with an infant daughter. Godhra.**

We met Latifa's daughter Sultana later in the same camp. She had just come out of teaching the children.

“We used to go to English medium schools. Our mother wanted us to continue with our studies. After passing my Higher Secondary exams, I got admission into the B.Sc. course. Then my marriage was arranged – my father said he's a good boy, let them get married. In any case girls get married early in our community. My mother insisted that my in-laws be requested to allow me to study after my marriage; they agreed. My husband and his family always encouraged me to continue with my studies. My college is located after two stations from here. I would have taken the B.Sc final this year. I was very keen about continuing with higher studies after my graduation. But see what's happened. Our college is co-educational, I used to travel on my own, never before had I felt uneasy..... But after what has happened I cannot take my exams.... a sudden fear has gripped me..... I cannot trust anybody anymore.....if we continue to live here it will probably never be possible for me to sit for the exams. But where else can we go?

A few days before 27<sup>th</sup> February the walls had been plastered with posters which declared “*Hindu jage, Miyan bhage*” (When the Hindu wakes up, the Muslim flees), “*Jo Ram ka nahin woh kam ka nehin*” (He who does not pledge himself to Ram is of no use), “*Hindusthan mein rahena to Hindu banke jiyo*” (If you want to live in Hindusthan then live as a Hindu). Even these had not made me afraid. Now I am scared. The BJP and the Bajrang Dal do not want us to be educated, to be employed. They want us to remain backward. The streets are not safe for us – and neither are our homes. But at home at least I can die with my own people.....”

**Source: Sultana, volunteering in the Iqbal Primary School camp, Godhra. May 6<sup>th</sup>.**

## **LARGE SCALE DISPLACEMENTS OF POPULATIONS; FEAR OF RETURNING; THE PROBLEM OF REHABILITATION AND EDUCATION**

There has been a massive displacement of populations, which have taken refuge in camps, and homes of relatives in other areas. All the adults we talked to in the minority camps, from Naroda Patiya in Shah-e-Alam, from Naroda Road and Vadodara in Juhapara, from Ode in Sureli, Anand, and from various villages of Panchmahal in the Hallol camp and the Iqbal Primary School, Godhra, said that they were too scared to go back to their homes, and did not know where to go. The children from these areas too

voiced their fear of ever returning to their homes and schools in these areas. While people from certain areas have started returning to their homes under police escort, thousands still continue to live in the camps, and the government has now promised not to shut down the camps till the question of rehabilitation is settled. The central problem every single organizer, and parents, in the above camps discussed concerning children in this context was that of schools admitting them in their new areas of residence. The fear is that if the municipality and private schools in these areas cannot extend their capacity to admit these children, or if new municipality schools are not set up, then thousands of displaced children will be further deprived of education; the only alternative these members of the community can see is admitting as many children as possible, into madrasas.

*Source: Every single organizer of the minority camps visited, and all the parents interviewed. May 3<sup>rd</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2002.*

## **RESPONSE OF A PROMINENT EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

### **Leenaben Sarabhai, Founder of the Shreyas Foundation, Ahmedabad.**

This team interviewed Leenaben, who is above eighty now and is in charge of the Shreyas Foundation, in her home and in her car on the way to the Foundation. Shreyas Foundation runs a school that imparts creative education along Gandhian lines, to children from a wide range of backgrounds, and emphasizes that their “facilities are open to all regardless of sex, creed or economic condition.” It has also been running Shreyas Balgram, an SOS village (by affiliation), since 1964 for homeless and destitute children and those from broken families. When Leenaben heard that we had come to talk to her about the impact of the communal carnage on children and orphans, and what could be done to address the problems, her face twisted with emotion and she said:

“This government has clipped our wings, we cannot do anything; it is impossible for any NGO or autonomous organization to do anything worthwhile in this state. This is not the country that Gandhi and Nehru led to independence; this is not the country they dreamed of.” A little later regarding whether programmes for fostering communal harmony among children could be set up across the state, she said, “My hands are tied, my lips are sealed; they will not let us do anything. I cannot tell you how much we have been harassed in the last few years.”

“I have been wanting to do something about these children. I have been saying send children to me, we will look after the destitute, the orphans; we take in children from all communities in the Balgram - but nobody has taken up my offer.” After a minute’s pause she said abruptly, and firmly, “But I do not want any interference. No I would not like their relatives to come and visit them, take them away from here, they interfere too much.....But I can tell you this much – I am willing to take in 30 children – I will take the responsibility for 30 children.”

*Source: Leenaben Sarabhai, at her residence in Ahmedabad. May 8<sup>th</sup>.*

## THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

### **Anandibehn Patel,<sup>6</sup> Education Minister of Gujarat, Gandhinagar.**

The government has adopted a stand of brazen callousness. In an hour long recorded interview given to this team by Anandibehn Patel, the Education Minister of Gujarat, not only did she deny flatly every aspect of the crackdown she was questioned about; she also responded to a question regarding initiating programmes for fostering peace and communal harmony in schools with a diatribe on the “mentality” of perpetual rioting in Gujarat. Regarding how one could address through education the fear in children who have witnessed such butchery and burning and how one could work towards a better future in Gujarat she said:

*“See, the situation of Gujarat is such – this is not the first time that there have been riots? Every ten years there are riots. There was one in 69, another in 85. There were also riots in 82, then 92, 90, and now too. There are always riots. I won't say solution...after a riot, the fear you see, the fear you experience..... the local people don't [they don't]] get scared. You come from outside, that is why you are scared, ....I just made my rounds today, I'm not scared. The people who live here, the local people, they don't feel scared. They easily get back together.....”*

This was shortly followed by her extremely articulate invective against the minority community and how they had massacred members of the majority community in the months after the Godhra incident.

She also claimed that the government had set aside Rs. 1 lakh as compensation for each orphan, and also 1 lakh per affected family for the education, books and uniforms of its children from class 8 right through college, since education was free up to class 7. As to how they would access this compensation, she said that they did not have to go to the government, the government would go to them. All they needed to do was register in the schools and colleges, and the government would pay the schools/colleges directly. As to whether families in camps knew about these compensation packages, she declared that this information had been put up in every single camp in the state, and all knew about it; that all had been informed about this compensation in the same way as they had been about the postponed examination dates.\* She also added that the government would not channel the funds through NGO, implying that NGOs swindle the money – “... we are not going to give this to any NGO. Because it never reaches if we give it through NGOs.”

**Source: Interview with Anandibehn in the Circuit House, Ahmedabad. May 9<sup>th</sup>.**

*\* Not one of the organizers in any of the camps we visited had any knowledge whatsoever of these compensation packages for either orphans or for the education of affected children and college students.*

### **Mr. Bhad, Chairperson of the DPEP, Gandhinagar.**

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix for the full text of this interview.

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The Chairperson of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) proudly emphasized that this was a programme run independently of state control,<sup>7</sup>. Even as he kindly shared with us the DPEP 2000-20001 booklet with “Mission – Education for All” writ large over the cover, he showed complete ignorance of the problems the large scale displacements of population, and the communal fury in various areas, would cause for the schooling of minority children. He also insisted that every single teacher, in all the municipality primary schools under his charge in the Godhra, Banaskantha and Dangs districts, was an enlightened and progressive person with no communal bias whatsoever. As such any orientation programmes for teachers on fostering communal amity in the classrooms, was completely unnecessary. And when he finally grasped the idea of initiating peace programmes for children in primary schools, he thanked us profusely for the excellent suggestion.

***Source: Recorded interview with Mr. Bhad, in the office of the DPEP, Gandhinagar. May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002***

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<sup>7</sup> As a part of the national *Sarvshiksha* programme, and funded by the Netherlands. This interview too is recorded.

**The Next Generation: In the Wake of the Genocide**

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