

CHAPTER 8

RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

Relief

About ten relief camps were organised in Vadodara beginning from February 28. It is reported that in addition four were camps for Hindus. It appears that these camps ran primarily on paper, with the specific purpose of collecting relief rations from the Collector's office. In a letter of May 13, 2002, a member of the Shanti Abhiyan asked the Collector where these camps for Hindus were running and how many were there in such camps. To date there has been no reply.¹

Different Muslim jamaats ran Muslim camps on private premises like community halls or buildings under construction. Total number of persons in the Muslim camps in Vadodara was to the tune of 15,000. In addition many more displaced persons were living with relatives and friends in various parts of the city. The relief camps in Vadodara gave shelter to people from the affected city areas as well as affected villages of Vadodara district. Some affected persons of Vadodara took shelter in camps in neighboring districts at Halol, Anand and Derol.

Several relief camps reported that relief rations started coming from the Collector's office almost three weeks after the camp started. According to Afsar Khan of the Machhipeeth Relief Camp, although their camp started on February 28 with 506 people from the city area seeking refuge, government aid started coming in only on March 19 after the intervention of PUCL members. Many camps reported that a number of times, they had to stretch the rations that they received for three days, to six days. Another issue, which related to rations was that while only a certain of persons stayed in the camps, many more who were staying with relatives in nearby areas, took their meals at the camps. In fact in several places, for instance, Hathikhana, Roshan Nagar, there was no camp but a community kitchen that fed people from Maniar Mohalla, Tulsiwadi (50 quarters and Centre), Huzrat Paga, Fatehpura and many others. This community kitchen did not receive recognition from the administration. Similarly, camps and community kitchens at Tundav near Savli and Dhaniyari near Baroda did not receive any State support.

By mid-April 2002, there were a lot of pressures for the relief camps to be wound up. There were newspaper reports saying that the state government was intent on closing all the camps. The jamaats and citizens, who were supporting the camps, also wished to put their premises to more productive use. The result of these pressures was that the people staying in the camps became more insecure – some felt that there was no possibility of going back to their homes unless the administration provided justice and security. Also with all their productive assets gone where was the possibility of renting houses and beginning life once again?

By the end of May 2002, most of these camps were wound up or were in the process of winding up. However this does not mean that people went back to their original homes. Most have taken to staying wherever it was safe and economically feasible for them.

Rehabilitation

There have been several Government Resolutions (GRs) concerning Relief and Rehabilitation. The earliest ones that PUCL members were able to obtain were dated March 4. One point to be made here is that it was considerably difficult even for citizens' groups like the PUCL to obtain copies of the GRs. So much for the right to information and transparency! To compound the confusion created by the lack of information, government policies regarding compensation have been changing during this period. For instance, the compensation for the dead changed from Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 2 lakhs (for post Godhra riot victims and Godhra train incident respectively), to Rs. 1 lakh for both, to the final sum of Rs. 1.5 lakh for both. Another point of confusion is that several offices of the district administration are handling the relief and compensation. While the Deputy Collector and the Mamlatdar's office is responsible for giving compensation for injuries and damage to housing, the District Supply Office is responsible for the distribution of rations. Lack of coordination and inadequate information

¹ Letter of Shri Jagdishbhai Shah to the Collector, Baroda. Also see *Bhoomiputra*, May 21, 2002 for a more detailed critique of the lack of transparency in the relief efforts of the State.

between the two offices was apparent during a meeting with PUCL members on May 23, 2002. One can imagine the effect of this confusion on the common minority citizen!

Table 8.1: Relief and Compensation

Element	Details	Status (as Of 23rd May, 2002)	Response Of People
1. Death Compensation	Rs. 1,50,000/-	18 given Rs 1 lakh 13 given Rs 1.5 lakh	
2. Injury Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10% injury or disability - Rs 2000 - 10%-30% - Rs 3000 - 30%-40% - Rs 5000 - above 40% - Rs 50000 <p><u>Procedure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For the first three levels, a Medical certificate is required countersigned by Civil Surgeon. This has to be submitted with an application to the Mamlatdar. - For 'above 40%', a certificate of permanent disability is required from government medical specialist. 	211 persons given total of Rs 4.22 lakhs 15 persons who have applied, not given compensation because they were out of station.	Several women with injuries/bruises on private parts, pregnant women who delivered prematurely have not reported their injuries and not sought compensation – <i>PUCL team</i>
3. Gharvakhri Cash Dole and Household material compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cash dole Rs. 15 per person for not more than 5 persons in a family for 15 days only – only for those whose houses are damaged more than 50% and family has no other support. - Rs. 1250 per family for families whose houses are damaged more than 50%² - Persons in <u>approved</u> Relief Camps will not get cash dole but will get household material compensation. 	915 cases given Rs 11,43,750 after a Procedure of survey And FIR	<p>Many persons in relief camps, specifically Amir Complex and Qureshi Jamaat Khana (QJK) reported that they had not received Rs 1250/-.</p> <p>Rs 5 per head to be given over and above rations to camp organisers was not given for all the days - <i>QJK</i>.</p>
4. Compensation for damages to houses/buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Totally damaged kutcha houses: Rs 5000/- - Pucca houses: Rs 50000 maximum (irrespective of original value of building) <p><u>Procedure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 member survey team assesses damage - Collector gives permission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 91 cases of total damage compensated to the tune of Rs 7,93,000/-, i.e. average Rs. 8,700/- - 632 cases of partial damage compensated to the tune of Rs. 41,35,400 i.e. average of Rs. 7,000 	Many people whom we met in the course of our relief and rehabilitation work were not satisfied with their compensation packages. Their FIRs and panchnamas show higher values and compensation is meagre and irrational, they feel. Several have refused to accept the

² Since last week of May 2002 it has been increased to Rs 2500/-.

	in urban areas - District Development Officer in rural areas.		compensation or accepted it under protest.
5. Damage to Productive Assets	- Rs 10,000/- maximum - Those with loss of more than Rs 10,000/- have to apply to District Industries Centre. - Proof required - copy of FIR - Corporation papers about lari, gallas, etc. - affidavit of persons who know that loss was suffered	- 648 cases compensated to the tune of Rs. 33,34,600/- i.e., average of Rs. 4500	People whom we spoke to said that they did not know where to go to get their compensation procedures moving. At the police stations, their FIRs were noted with lower values of their losses. Owners of hardware shops, shoe shops, whose loss is to the extent of Rs. 12-14 lakhs, report receiving compensation of only Rs. 6,000 or Rs 10,000/-.
6. Food and Grain Relief	- When people leave the relief camps, and only if they have the BPL card, they will get rations for two months - Per person quantities are 4 kg wheat upto 24 kg. 1 kg rice upto 6 kg. 500 gm dal upto 3 kg. 500 gm oil upto 3 kg. 500 gm sugar upto 3 kg.		There was tremendous confusion about this stemming from (a) the confusion between the two categories BPL & APL, itself. (b) What happens to those with APL cards who have been rendered BPL in this carnage? (c) What about all affected persons rendered homeless whether BPL or APL? The Dy. Collector and the Mamlatdar were not able to tell us the procedures that DSO follows for distribution of these rations. What happens to those whose cards have been burnt and looted in the riots? There are reports from some families who have received rations that the quality of grains provided is very poor. Others say, it is quite acceptable.

The content and structure of these GRs reveal a routine bureaucratic approach and has no relation to the nature and magnitude of the sufferings inflicted on Muslims in particular. Old GRs drafted 20 years ago are being used with little frequent illogical modifications resulting in utter confusion among those who have to implement these GRs and those who need to get relief under these GRs.

Table 8.1 above on Relief and Compensation gives details of the various packages and the responses/reactions of the affected persons. People are extremely dissatisfied at the undervaluing of their assets both by the Police (in the FIRs) and the Administration (in the assessment) and in the very structure of the compensation schemes. **At the time of going to press, the PUCL-Vadodara and Shanti Abhiyan Rehabilitation Committee had data of 155 persons who received compensation from the government. Analysis of the data shows that only 10 persons got Rs 10,000 and above. The highest received was Rs 20,000 against a loss of Rs 4.4 lakhs. It is difficult to decipher a pattern in the compensation and assessment methodology. Thus those with Rs 25,000 loss as well as those with Rs 1.5 lakhs loss and Rs 2.0 lakhs loss received the identical compensation amount of Rs 10,000. A family with a loss of Rs 30,000 received Rs 500. Families with losses of Rs 1.3 lakhs, Rs 60,000 and Rs 1.8 lakhs all received Rs 1,000 each. One person has received the carefully worked out figure of Rs 171. Adding lack of concern and indifference to enormous insult and injury is about what it amounts to.**

Assessment procedures certainly need to be examined. According to newspaper reports (*Indian Express*, May 28, 2002), in Ahmedabad, out of 650 cases reassessed following people's complaints, 151 cases were revised upwards after reassessment. Many do not even know reassessment is possible.

The District Administration also needs to be proactive in dissemination of information of its relief and compensation packages amongst people. Easy to understand language as well as easy to follow procedures should guide the information dissemination. The contents of the relief and compensation packages also need to be made more just.

When the PUCL-Vadodara and Shanti Abhiyan team members met the District Collector of Vadodara on June 10, 2002, the Collector while agreeing that the compensation given in many cases was paltry, he said he is willing to double the amount for everybody rather than going in for reassessment. This is also not really a solution, as somebody who got Rs 171/- will get Rs 342/-.

The Gujarat Minorities Financial Corporation (Laghumati Nanakiya Nigam) has come out with schemes and packages for those needing amounts over Rs 50,000 – the interest is 6 percent per annum and there is a 20 percent subsidy. These may go some way in alleviating the enormous distress and resource crunch faced by the riot victims.