Chapter 4

Role of Police in Gujarat: Post-Ayodhya Violence
CHAPTER-4

ROLE OF POLICE IN GUJARAT POST-AYODHYA VIOLENCE

Brief History

Gujarat is a state in western India. It borders the state of Rajasthan to the north and north-east, Madhya Pradesh to the east, Maharashtra and the Union territories of Diu, Daman, Dadra and Nagar Haveli to the south. Historically, the North was known as Anarta, the Kathiawad peninsula, "Saurashtra", and the South as "Lata". Gujarat was also known as Pratichya and Varuna. Gujarat also share international border with Pakistan to the north-west. The Arabian Sea makes up the state's western coast. Its capital, Gandhinagar is a planned city and is located near Ahmedabad, the commercial center of Gujarat. Gujarat has an area of 75,686 sq mi (196,077 km²).

The name of the state is derived from Gujjar (Gujjar Rashtra), which means Gujjar nation. Gujjars were an old tribe that was present even during the Mahabharata period, according to another theory, they are one of the Central Asian tribes, from the Gurjiya or modern day country of Georgia (anciently referred to as Gurjistan). These Gurjars migrated to India beginning from around the first century BC. From around 35-405AD it was settled and ruled by the Iranian Sakas. Gujarat was part of the Indo-greek kingdoms. Gujarat's coastal cities, chiefly Bharuch, served as ports and trading centres for the Maurya and Gupta empires. After the collapse of the Gupta empire in the sixth
century, Gujarat flourished as an independent Hindu kingdom. The Maitraka dynasty, descended from a Gupta general, ruled from the sixth to the eighth centuries from their capital at Vallabhi, although they were ruled briefly by Harsha during the seventh century. In 775 the first Parsi (Zoroastrian) refugees arrived in Gujarat from Iran. The Arab rulers of Sind sacked Vallabhi in 770, bringing the Maitraka dynasty to an end. A branch of the Pratihara clan ruled Gujarat after the eighth century. From the ninth century it was ruled by the Solanki dynasty and saw many invasions by Muslim rulers from Central Asia. Solanki rule continued until Gujarat was incorporated by the Muslim rulers of Delhi in the late thirteenth century. History of the Gujarat state of India is very ancient. Evidence comes from the prehistoric trading centre - Lothal and Dholavira in Gujarat; situated at head of the Gulf of Cambay; which marks the south-western site of the old Indus Valley Civilization, radiocarbon dated to c. 2500–1900 BCE by the archaeologists.

In 1297 to 1298 Allauddin Khilji, Sultan of Delhi, destroyed Anhilwara and incorporated Gujarat into the Delhi Sultanate. After Timur's sacking of Delhi at the end of the fourteenth century weakened the Sultanate, Gujarat's Muslim governor Zafar Khan Muzaffar asserted his independence, and his son, Sultan Ahmed Shah (ruled 1411 to 1442), restructured Ahmedabad as the capital. Cambay eclipsed Bharuch as Gujarat's most important trade port. The Sultanate of Gujarat remained independent until 1576, when the Mughal emperor Akbar conquered it and annexed it to the Mughal Empire. The port of Surat become the prominent and main port of India during Mughal rule.
Gujarat remained a province of the Mughal Empire until the Marathas sacked eastern and central Gujarat in the eighteenth century; Western Gujarat (Kathiawar and Kutch) were divided among numerous local rulers.

Portugal was the first European power to arrive in Gujarat, acquiring several enclaves along the Gujarati coast, including Daman and Diu as well as Dadra and Nagar Haveli. The British East India Company established a factory in Surat in 1614, which formed their first base in India, but it was eclipsed by Bombay after the British acquired it from Portugal in 1668. The Company wrested control of much of Gujarat from the Marathas during the Second Anglo-Maratha War. Many local rulers, notably the Maratha Gaekwads of Baroda (Vadodara), made a separate peace with the British, and acknowledged British sovereignty in return for retaining local self-rule. Gujarat was placed under the political authority of the Bombay Presidency, with the exception of Baroda state, which had a direct relationship with the Governor-General of India. From 1818 to 1947, most of present-day Gujarat, including Kathiawar, Kutch, and northern and eastern Gujarat were divided into dozens of princely states, but several districts in central and southern Gujarat, namely Ahmedabad, Broach (Bharuch), Kaira, Panch Mahals, and Surat, were ruled directly by British officials.

Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Morarji Desai, K.M. Munshi, Narhari Parikh, Mahadev Desai, Mohanlal Pandya, Bhulabhai Desai and Ravi Shankar Vyas all hailed from Gujarat. As well, Mohammed Ali
Jinnah's, Pakistan's first Governor-General, father was from an area which later became Gujarat. Gujarat was also the site of some of the most popular revolts, including the Satyagrahas in Kheda, Bardoli, Borsad and the Salt Satyagraha, the famous civil disobedience movement.

After Indian independence and the partition of India in 1947, the new Indian government grouped the former princely states of Gujarat into three larger units; Saurashtra, which included the former princely states on the Kathiawad peninsula, Kutch, and Bombay state, which included the former British districts of Bombay Presidency together with most of Baroda state and the other former princely states of eastern Gujarat. In 1956, Bombay state was enlarged to include Kutch, Saurashtra, and parts of Hyderabad state and Madhya Pradesh in central India. The new state had a mostly Gujarati-speaking north and a Marathi-speaking south. Agitation by Marathi nationalists for their own state led to the split of Bombay state on linguistic lines; on 1 May 1960, it became the new states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. The first capital of Gujarat was Ahmedabad; the capital was moved to Gandhinagar in 1970.

Economy

Gujarat is recognised as one of the leading industrial states in India, augmenting the growth of the services sector and leading to immense prosperity for its people. The state's manufacturing sector has been instrumental in its growth and development, with the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector playing a key role in shaping the manufacturing
industry. Gems & Jewellery is one of the fastest growing sectors in the country. The state of Gujarat has the distinction of being the world's second largest producer of gold jewellery, contributing the highest share (85 per cent) to the total national jewellery production. With eight out of 10 diamonds in the world being polished in Surat, it is known as the 'Diamond Capital' of the World having the world's largest diamond processing hub with a 72 per cent world share and 80 per cent of the Indian market.

Population

The population of the Gujarat State was 50,671,017 as per the 2001 census data. The density of population is only 258 persons per km² and compares favourably with the other states of the country. Its official and primary language is Gujarati. About 89.1% of the population of Gujarat are Hindu. Muslims account for 9.1%, Jain 1.0% and Sikh 0.1% of the population. Most of the Gujarati Hindus are strict vegetarians. Amongst Hindus the deity of Krishna is famously worshipped in His form of Shrinathji throughout Gujarat. Gujarat is the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi. Gujarat is also the birthplace of the Swaminarayan sect of Hinduism.

71% of Hindus in Gujarat speak Gujarati while the other 29% speak Hindi. Almost 88% of the Muslims speak Gujarati while the rest speak Urdu. Almost all of the Jains speak Gujarati (a few speak Marwari as well). Parsi Zoroastrians also speak Gujarati as their native language. Marathi is spoken by
a large number of people in Vadodara and Surat. Besides Gujarati the Kutchi/Kachchi language is widely spoken in the Kutch District.

The press in Gujarat comprised 2257 newspapers, including 179 Dailies and 10 tri or bi weeklies. Among periodicals, 1118 were weeklies, 20 Forthnightlies, 567 Monthlies 77 Quarterlies, 70 of other periodicities and six Annuals in 2001.

Gujarat as a heavily industrialized state of India, attracts lots of outsiders from various parts of India. Gujarat controls some of the largest businesses in India. Major Agricultural produce of the state include cotton, groundnuts, peanuts, dates, sugar cane, milk & milk products. Industrial products include cement, and petrol.

Gujarat is endowed with abundant supply of natural resources. Besides crude oil and Natural gas, other important minerals avialiable in the state are Bauxite, Limestone, Lignite, Calcite, Dolomite, China Clay, Silica, Flourpar, Chalk and Fire clay. Gujarat is a leader in the production of various agricultural products e.g Castor, Groundnut, Tobacco, Cotton etc. The three different types of soil of Saline, Plain and Rockey are suitable for cultivation of various agricultural products resulting in considerable potential for agro based and food processing industries.

Gujarat has largest sea-shore of 1670 km. Which has world's largest ship breaking yard near Bhavnagar at Alang. Reliance Petroleum Limited, one of the group companies of Reliance Industries Limited founded by Dhirubhai
Ambani operates the oil refinery at Jamnagar which is the world's largest grassroots refineries. The company has also planned another SEZ (special economic zone), in Jamnagar.

**Government and politics**

On 1st May 1960, Gujarat was created out of the 17 northern districts of former State of Bombay. These districts were further subdivided later on. Gujarat State at present comprises of 25 districts, sub-divided into 226 talukas, having 18618 villages and 242 towns.

Gujarat is governed by a Legislative Assembly of 182 members. Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) are elected on the basis of adult suffrage from one of 182 constituencies, of which 13 are reserved for scheduled castes and 26 for scheduled tribes. The term of office for a member of the Legislative Assembly is five years. The Legislative Assembly elects a speaker, who presides over the meetings of the legislature. A governor is appointed by the President of India, and is Assembly, and to address the House after every general election and the commencement of each year's first session of the Legislative Assembly. The leader of the majority party or coalition in the legislature (Chief Minister) or his or her designee acts as the Leader of the Legislative Assembly. The administration of the state is led by the Chief Minister.

After gaining independence in 1947, the Indian National Congress party (INC) ruled the Bombay state (which included present-day Gujarat and
Maharashtra). Congress continued to govern Gujarat after the state's creation in 1960. During and after India's State of Emergency of 1975-1977, public support for the Congress Party eroded, but it continued to hold government until 1995. In the 1995 Assembly Polls, the Congress lost to the BJP and Keshubhai Patel came to power. His Government lasted only 2 years. The fall of that government was provoked by a split in the BJP led by Shankersinh Vaghela and has won most of the subsequent polls. In 2001, following the loss of 2 assembly seats in by-elections, Keshubhai Patel resigned and yielded power to Narendra Modi. The BJP retained a majority in the 2002 election, and Narendra Modi has since served as Chief Minister of the state. On 1 June 2007, Narendra Modi became the longest serving Chief Minister of Gujarat. On Dec 23rd 2007, the BJP won the state elections in Gujarat and Narendra Modi became the chief minister for the third time in a row.

Gujarat- the strong hold of the communal politics

The communal propaganda unleashed by the forces of Hindutva found a very fertile ground in Gujarat. In fact, Gujarat has become the bastion of the Hindu communal forces. These have steadily increased their strength ever since the formation of Jan Sangh. However, it is not only communal facism, which is asserting itself in isolation. In the society itself there are fascist tendencies. The brutal suppression of dalits and tribals in Gujarat is far more inhuman than in other regions. With such conservative and fascist ethos, communal facism of the upper cast Hindu quickly gained ground with the forces of Hindutva
providing the ideological justification for such tendencies and practices. The explanation for these tendencies has to be historically located. The western Gujarat is surrounded by Arabian Sea. First Cambay and later Surat served as important ports. It was situated roughly midway between markets of China and South East Asia. Historically, Gujarat has had flourishing trade and prosperous class of traders. The size of this trading class has grown significantly in the last four decades.

These traders, with a conservative and orthodox outlook, have traditionally provided the political base for BJP. The trading class and the rising middle classes always clamour for stability and faster growth. This is root cause of the tendency to brutally stifle any voice of dissent, which is viewed as uncertainty that can hamper stability and growth. As mentioned earlier, it is this conservative and authoritarian tendency in the society that nurtures communal fascism.

There are other geographical and historical reasons for steady growth of communal fascism on the fertile soil of Gujarat. Gujarat shares its border with Pakistan as well and some agencies in Pakistan are trying to supply arms to terrorist in India. The Rann of Kutch, bordering Pakistan and the coastal belt of Saurashtra have provided ideal for such activities. The media in Gujarat has widely publicized this fact and magnified its dimension giving it undue importance. The neo literates and the rising middle class/caste read such news with keen interest thus increasing the circulation of the newspaper concerned.

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The state govt too, in order to divert the attention of the people from day to day problems, give misleading statements that create apprehension in the common man about the all pervasive Pakistan terrorist. The common Hindu perception sees Muslim as natural allies of Pakistan. They are suspected of clandestinely helping Pakistan in smuggling of arms into India. The BJP and other forces of Hindutva exploit such popular perceptions and beliefs to portray Muslims as anti-National and pro-Pakistan. This common misconception benefits all the ruling class parties, including the Congress, and hence instead of clearing such misconceptions, they are sought to be strengthened. Thus they start appearing as universal truths.

The bankruptcy of the Congress has led to disillusionment of an increasing number of people in the state. Ordinary people had been mobilized for anti-price rise movement and anti-corruption movement like Nav-Nirman against the Congress. In such a crises, to maintain its hold over the people, the congress reformulated its strategy and came with the slogan of KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi and Muslim) alliance. This led to widespread resentment against the members of these groups in the conservative Gujarat society. In the state, there have been violent anti-reservation movements. Gujarat perhaps is a unique state in which the anti-reservation agitation of 1985 that witnessed brutal anti-dalit violence by the upper caste could later be converted into communal riots between dalits and the Muslim. The people of the Gujarat, tired of the corrupt Congress rule are increasingly turning towards the BJP as an alternative to the Congress.
Though the BJP's growth has been quite phenomenal all over India thanks to the Ramjanambhoomi issue that it took up during late eighties, its growth in Gujarat has been much faster and deeper. One can say the BJP has really, as of now, struck deeper roots in that western state. It is the only state today in India where it is in power on its own without any support from other allies. Again it is the only state where it and other members of its parivar (family) like the VHP, the RSS and the Bajrang Dal are not only sticking to their ideology but also behaving in an aggressive manner.

The attacks on Christians began in Gujarat in the Dangs since 25th December 1998. The VHP has been carrying on militant attacks on the Christians and the law and order machinery has been a silent spectator throughout the period. The Gujarat government also has now permitted its employees to join the RSS, vide: its circular dated 3rd January 2000 issued by the General Administration Department. The circular says, "Taking this into consideration (i.e. permission of the Central Government), the State Government has decided to remove Rashtriya Swayam Sevak (RSS) from the list of banned organisations, issued under Government circular dated 5/6/1986 referred to above." Thus the government employees in Gujarat are now free to join the RSS. One shudders to imagine what will happen to the objectivity and impartiality of the Gujarat administration. As its, administration is generally found to be subservient to the political bosses and now that they are free to join one of the ideological organs of the government, it will be even difficult to distinguish between the political rulers and the civil employees. Will the police
personnel, if they join RSS, remained impartial in controlling a communal violence? Their open partisan role has been a matter of grave concern for all those who are active in promoting communal peace.

Naturally the RSS leaders are so pleased by this act of the Gujarat government that they want the Central government also to adopt the Gujarat pattern. Thus the Rashtriya Syam Sewak Sangh in its Gujarat state level Sankalp Shivir has demanded that the Centre adopt the Gujarat government pattern and allow its employees to participate in the activities of the RSS. Had the BJP-led government not dependent on 22 party alliance at the Centre it would have obliged the RSS leaders by now. After all the ban has been lifted by the Gujarat government with the permission of the Home Ministry at the Centre. What is surprising is that the allied parties still swearing by secularism have not even lifted even a little finger against the fact that the Union Home Ministry has allowed the Gujarat government to lift the ban. Now the VHP leaders have demanded that the government employees be permitted to join the VHP.

Now the important question is why there has been an unrestricted growth of the BJP in Gujarat, a state which is supposed to be one of the highly industrialised state in India? Does industrialisation not result in secularisation of the civil society? This, of course, has been assumption of many leftist theoreticians. Also, Gujarat at one time produced Gandhi, the greatest champion of communal harmony and yet today it is the stronghold of
communal forces. Nothing moves in straight line as far as the social phenomenon is concerned. It often adopts a convoluted pattern. Thus one has to seek explanation for phenomenal growth of the BJP in Gujarat in various developments, which have taken place there since the Independence.

The growth of the BJP in this state is not a sudden phenomenon. The Jan Sangh (the pre-1980 version of the BJP) had been steadily making headway in Gujarat since its formation in 1952. The Jan Sangh had succeeded in establishing its hold in Gujarat by late sixties and it played a leading role in the 1969 communal riots, which had shaken the whole country. The 1969 riots were aimed mainly to weaken Mrs. Indira Gandhi's government at the Centre. Mrs. Gandhi's government had then tried to woo the minorities through its secular plank. The Jan Sangh was, therefore, quite uncomfortable with it and wanted to weaken it any way.

The Congress could rule Gujarat unchallenged for quite sometime but its decline began due to many reasons. It got divided when Mrs. Gandhi split it in 1968. It was the Congress (O) under the Morarji Desai's leadership, which captured Gujarat. When 1969 riots took place Mr. Hitendra Desai, political protégé of Morarji Desai was the chief minister. It lost much of its own due to the split. When in early seventies the Indira Congress captured power it soon came under cloud. Jay Prakash Narayan launched his anti corruption movement from Gujarat. Mr. Chimanbhai Patel was alleged to be most corrupt and he had to resign under pressure from public opinion. The RSS and the Jan Sangh
played an important role in this movement indirectly and got credit. The Jan
Sangh in those days was always in the forefront of anti-corruption movement
as it had not tested power. The anti-corruption movement further consolidated
its position. The RSS cadre was of immense help.

Later Mr. Solanki won the Gujarat Assembly elections with 2/3rd
majority with the help of what was known as the KHAM formula in February
1985. He announced reservation for Kshatriyas, Harijans (now called Dalits),
Adivasis and Muslims (KHAM) and won their overwhelming support. But
Patels, politically and economically, most dominant caste in Gujarat brought
down the Solanki Government within one and a half year by staging caste and
communal riots. The 1985 communal riot in Ahmedabad was the most major
riot after 1969 that lasted for one and half year. Thus the fall of the Solanki
Government broke the back of the Congress in Gujarat for good. The Congress
greatly lost the support of the backward and minority sections as faced with the
anti-reservation agitation by the Patels, the Solanki Government suspended
reservations for them. This opportunism on the part of the Solanki Government
delivered a serious blow to the Congress from which it could not recover. Thus
the BJP consolidated its position further by helping bringing down the Solanki
Government. It added to its political clout. The Congress could never recover
from this blow and after Solanki it did not have any leader of considerable
political clout. It lost all its appeal among the electorate. It was seen as corrupt
and weak party.
The BJP projected itself as a 'party with a difference' and filled the vacuum. There was another reason for the BJP to establish itself well. The Janata Dal which claimed to represent the interests of weaker sections, Dalits, backward class Hindus and minorities unfortunately came into existence under the leadership of Chimanbhai Patel who had been earlier thrown out as allegedly 'most corrupt' and hence the Janata Dal could never take off and capture the imagination of the people. Also, unlike the U.P. Gujarat did not throw up any Dalit leader of Kanshi Ram's status or a backward leader of Mulayam Singh Yadav's status. It was unfortunately the BJP which succeeded in attracting these sections to its fold and still continues to do so. Mr. Shankar Sinh Waghela, who belongs to the backward class, broke off from the BJP and floated his own outfit and subsequently joined the Congress. He too failed to attract the backwards and the dalits to his fold. Waghela failed to convince them that he was their messiah, probably because he himself was associated with the BJP for long and was seen breaking away from it only for grabbing power, instead dedicating himself to the cause of the dalits, backwards and minorities. These are some of the reasons why the BJP continues to rule unchallenged in Gujarat and sees no threat to itself so far. The Congress will have to work very hard to replace the BJP in Gujarat.
## The BJP’s Performance in the Parliament (Lok Sabha) and Gujarat Assembly Elections

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Source: Election Commission of India, [http://eci.gov.in/ElectionResults/ElectionResults.fs.htm](http://eci.gov.in/ElectionResults/ElectionResults.fs.htm), 3/1/05.

### Babri Masjid- Ramjanambhoomi Controversy

The Babri-Majid and Ram-Janambhoomi controversy is one of the major controversy that has been extensively exploited politically in India. It was undoubtedly, the biggest controversy after the Shah Bano case, and attracted maximum media attention in our country in the mid- and late eighties. In a way both are related to each other. Had the controversial Muslim Women’s Bill not been passed in early 1986, the Ramjanambhoomi controversy would not have arisen. What was worse was cynical exploitation of the issue for
electoral gains, not only by the Bhartiya janta party (BJP), the Shiv Sena and other communal outfits but also by the most important secular party of India the Congress which has proud record of fighting India freedom struggle along with the Muslims. These are the hazards of parliamentary elections. Every party competes with the other parties to capture the popular imagination so as to encash it as votes. It can be said without any fear of contradiction that the rise and spread of Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism and communalism since the early eighties was due not to religion or religious issues, but primarily for party or group politics. Religion was, at best, used as an instrument. Both the controversies, the Shah Bano and the Babri Masjid-Ramjanamabhoomi issue, must be seen against this political background.

The Ramjanamabhoomi- Babri masjid controversy is not of recent origin. It originated in the nineteenth century, thanks to the British policy of 'Divide and Rule' to be more precise. It was originated in 1855 before the 1857 war of Independence. To pursue their policy of 'Divide and Rule' the Britishers had kept the issue alive and smoulder. It will be appropriate if we shed some light on the existence or other wise of Ramjanamisthan on the site of Babri masjid today. It is a controversial subject to deal with. Myth and facts have been fused together. It is difficult to separate one from the other. First of all one has to ask the question whether Ram was a historical figure? Was he born in Ayodhya? And was he born on the very site where the Babri Masjid existed? These questions are most fundamental not only to a historian but also to all those who are in search of truth not myths based on faith alone. It should also be note that
all the research that have been undergone on the subject fails to answer these fundamental question convincingly the first and the most important question is the location of Ayodhya, Do Ayodhya exist when Ram was supposedly born? When was lord Ram born? We get entangle in myths. Sukumar Sen in his Origin and Development of Rama legend says that the event of Ramayana in the Treta Yuga are said to have taken place nine lakhs year ago. Dr Shukla holds that the time is calculated on the basis of the Ikshvakus’ genealogy as given in the Puranas. If so, Ram ought to have live about four thousand years ago, did Ayodhya exist then? How could this be established?  

**Ayodhya**

Ayodhya is a place of great antiquity. In addition to its strictly historical importance, it had great religious and cultural consequence, says Faizabad District Gazetteer. In ancient times, the country round about Ayodhya was known as Kosala and both find mention in ancient literaure. The first three Vedas, however, do not mention either Kosala or its capital, Ayodhya; it is only in the Atharveda that the city has been described as having been built by the gods and being a properous as paradise itself. The Aitreya Brahman (Viii,3-4) and Shankhaya Shrautasutra (XV,17,25) however, describe Ayodhya as a mere village. The satapatha Brahmana speaks of Kosala as one of the countries of the vedic Aryans and the grammarian Pannini mentions it is one of his Sutra (iv,1,171). Vivid descriptions of Ayodhya are to be found in the Ramayana of
Valmiki, and the Mahabharat gives it the epithet of Punyalakshana (endowed with auspicious signs).

Muslims too had special attachment with Ayodhya. Hazrat Adam A, the first prophet and Bibi Hawwa (his wife) were the first human being on earth. Their son Shees A was also a prophet and said to be buried in Ayodhya. Hazrat Nuh A, another religious personality of the pre-Mohammed era, was a great Prophet believed to have lived in Ayodhya for thousand of years ago and still a locality there called “Nabi Nuh ka Mohalla” and a 14-yard long ancient grave still attract crowds of visitors.

Ayodhya is about seven kilometer from Faizabad, a name of both of the district and of the town which is the headquarters of the district. Faizabad mean “City of beneficence or bountifulness”. There is no authentic record to show why this name of a Faizabad was conferred on the town which is not more than 280 years Old and was so named during reign of Safdar Jung, the second Nawab of Avadh (1739-54). The founder of the ruling dynasty of Avdh, Mr Muhammad Amin, entitled Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk, who traced his descent from the seventh Imam of the Shias, was a native of Nishapur in Khurasan, now in Iran.

A majority of the population here (in Ayodhya) are Pundits, Sadhus and Bairagis. There are 4000-5000 old and new temples here, and some hundred old mosques, of which the four ones bear the names of Babar, Shajahan, Alamgir and Shah Alam. There are 72 graveyards in official records; of these.
dead bodies are allowed to be buried in only six. Most of the mosques are in a
dilapidated condition but there repair is not allowed. No new mosques can be
built either, while there is no ban on building temples. Also no meat shop can
be opened in fifteen-kilometer radius from Ayodhya. It is said that Muslim
entry is prohibited in a fifteen-kilometer radius from Ayodhya, while no court
order in this regards exist\textsuperscript{14}.

\textbf{Major Events at Ayodhya}

\textbf{1528}; Babri Mosque was built by Mir Baqi Tashqandi, 
governor of the Emperor Babur.

\textbf{1857}; Controversy rises over the place, but Raja Devi Bux 
Singh, Moulvi Amir Ali and other resolve the Babri 
Masjid dispute by agreeing to raise a wall between 
the Mosque and the Chabutra. The Britishers 
executed them.—The controversy rose again during 
the mutiny.

\textbf{1885}; A Hindu-Muslim riot took place over the Mosque 
issue. Mahant Raghunar Das files a suit at the 
Faizabad Sub-Judge’s court seeking permission to 
build a temple on the chabutra. The plea was not 
against the mosque, but for the erection of a wall 
and sheds to save the idol from wrath of the 
vagaries of nature. The judge however, dismissed the
plea, saying that the awarding of permission to construct the temple at this juncture will be laying the foundation of riots and murders between Hindu and Muslim.

1886;
The mahant's case was also finally dismissed by the Judicial Commissioner of Avadh, who had the power of the high court.

1946; March:
The civil Judge of Faizabad authenticated that the Babri Mosque was in use of Shia and Sunni sects of the Muslims. However, the civil judge in 1946 held it to be a Sunni waqf property.

1949; December 22/23: The controversy took a new turn with the illegal placing of idols in the mosque's inner sanctum which was being used by the Muslims for Namaz for the past 421 years. A lock was put on the 'structure' by the order of the Magistrate under section 145 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.P.C). A first information report (FIR) was lodged against Abhya Ram Das, Sudarshan Das, Ram Sakal Das and 50-60 others under section 148 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that is rioting, armed with deadly weapon, Section 295 (injuring or defiling places of worship with intent to
insult the religion of any class) and section 448 (punishment for house-trespass).

Dec 29: The magistrate attached the mosque on a police report of the apprehension of breach of peace and also appointed a receiver of the place of worship. However, idols put illegally and surreptitiously remain there to the advantage of the local Hindus. The Muslims, however deprived of their over four-century old practice of offering Namaz in the Babri Masjid.

1951; January: Deputy Commissioner filed a written statement in the suit stating that the property in the suit is known as Babri Masjid and it had for a long period been in use for Namaz by the Muslims.

3 March: The civil judge of Faizabad allows unfettered rights to offer puja and have darshan by confirming the interim injunction order but the main inside door remains closed.

1955; April 26: The high court upholds Hindus rights over puja by confirming injunction order of the civil judge.

1967: The Indian civil service (ICS) officer Mr KKK Nayar, who as a deputy commissioner of Faizabad
had refused to obey the state government orders to remove the idols from Babri Masjid, won Bahraich Lok Sabha parliamnetry elections.

1975; May 09: The Allahabad High Court stayed the operation of the appointment of Mr Dubey as Reciever with the direction that Mr K.K Ram Verma shall continue to function as Reciever.

1986; February 01: The faizabad District and Session judge Krishna Mohan Panday on a Miscellaneous civil appeal, filled just a day earlier passed an order for the opening of locks and allowing puja by dismissing original suit of 1950 under which the gates were locked thus the gave full control of the converted temple to the Hindus. The judge refused to hear Mohammed Hashim, a party in the title suit despite applying for it. The unlocking was done on an application moved by a man who was not even a party to the case. Earlier, Munsif Magistrate had rejected this prayer in the month of January.

The opening of locks and its wide visual publicity through the state owned television – Doordarshan-triggered off chain reaction all over the country.
There were Bandh and violent demonstration in many parts of the country.

**February:**

Muslim leaders decided to form Babri Masjid Action Committee, for launching movement for the liberation of the ancient mosque.

**1989:**

VHP announces a programme to raise Rs 250-million temple at the disputed Babri Masjid site.

**September:**

BJP chief Lal Krishan Advani announces that he will take out a 10,000 K.M motorised Rath Yatra from Somnath, a renowned temple town in the western state of Gujarat to culminate at Ayodhya on October 30, the day when the Kar Seva will be taken up, although without any legal sanction to construct the temple.

**October-November:**

Pujan-Shilas (bricks) brought from all over the country to Ayodhya under a planned manner by the Sangh Hindus for laying the foundation stone of a grand Ram temple at the disputed site.

**1990; May 24:**

Saints and Sadhus close to RSS in a meeting announced the launching of temple construction in Ayodhya from October 30.
September 25: Advanis much publicised Rath Yatra begins from Somnath, taking the country to ransom. The Yatra causes widespread communal tension and violence, costing many lives in several cities including in Vadodra and Banaskantha in Gujarat state, Karnailganj of Gonda in UP and Udaipur in Rajasthan. BJP threaten to withdraw support to VP Singh Govt at the centre if Rath yatra is stopped.

October 23: Advani was arrested in Samastipur district of Bihar, by the Laloo Prasad Yadav led the Janata Dal Government. The Uttar Pradesh Government of Mulayam Singh Yadav had taken extraordinary measures at the UP–Bihar border in the eastern part of the state to prevent entry of the Advani’s Rathyatra.

October 30: Some people (karsevaks) climb the domes of Babri Masjid damage them and try to hoist the Safforn flags on the building already in the use of temple. Police resorted to firing leading to death of 16 people (karsevaks). The rule of Law however remains established. Riots erupt in many parts of the country to protest against the sangh Hindus action of
damaging the dome and the Babri compound wall. Abroad, some temple came under attack as a protest.

1991; June 24: BJP Government led by Kalyan Singh formed in Uttar Pradesh. General elections were also held.

1992; 6 December: Kar Seva begins, Shrine attacked and 464-years old helpless Babri mosque demolished. The act of “national Shame” continues for the whole day and the whole world and the whole machinery of the Democracy and the Government remain a mute spectator. Idols removed and reinstalled. A wall and the shed was also allowed to erect on December 6 and 7. Kalyan singh resigend but the central govt on the night dismissed the BJP Government, apparently with heavy heart. President rule was imposed in UP and assembly dissolved. President Shankar Dayal Sharma in his national broadcast condemn demolition.

Dec 7-8: Para- Military forces take control of the Babri Mosque-Janambhoomi area.15

Gujarat Police

Gujarat police, which was governed by the Bombay Police Act of 1951, has now governed by Bombay Police (Gujarat Amendment) Act 2007 which
their legislative assembly passed on 20 July 2007. During the last few decades, Gujarat, the state of father of the Nation, had became the hotbed of conflict, collective violence, concomitant social and political disorder and the politicization of police force, symbolizing perhaps the shape of things to come in the national polity as a whole. Due to politically motivated promises and concessions made to the poor by the ruling party during the run up to the 1985 state assembly election there was a wave of violence by the upper castes and classes against the poorer castes and classes. The Gujarat police not only failed to contain the violence but also participated in the violence against the poor in many cases. A near complete breakdown of law and order followed and the Army had to be called out. The disturbances in Gujarat during the last quarter of 1985 was more prominent in the history of 1980’s than even the Punjab violence or the Hindu-Muslim conflicts.

Heavy reliance on the police force since 1981 in dealing with the communal and caste violence underline its importance and made the policeman to exaggerate their demands on the state exchequer. They also became politicised. The Janta government gave recognition to the police unions following the police agitations of 1979. Ashok Bhatt, the convenor of the coordination committee of the four unions representing the inspectors, sub-inspectors, head constable and constable perfected the art of blackmail and organized police strike on six occasions since 1979 which led to ghastly communal riots in 1985 and 1986. In 1987 too, Ashok bhatt was able to get his demand fulfilled by a threat of strike and caused considerable destruction. The
communalisation and politicization of Police force in the state is clear from the fact that a senior police official had resigned from service and is taking part in politics on a frankly communal platform.

The following features of the police unrest in Gujarat are noteworthy from a long-term point of view;

i). As many as 21 police leaders had been arrested and 72 dismissed. Still the police strike was only tamed and not crushed.

ii). During the course of governments action, 34 Armouries of the state police had to be taken over by the central police forces within forty minutes from 2.30 a.m. on July 24; all the 24 police stations in Ahmedabad had to be locked up; and over 40 percent of the personnel had abstained from the duty in Rajkot.

iii). Several battalion of the state SRP had to be evacuated out of the Gujarat to Punjab on the eve of the government action for fear of provoking a serious police mutiny; as many as 70,000 Army BSF or CRPF personnel had to be inducted into the state on special duty to contain the situation.

iv). The politicisation of the police and erosion of its discipline can be gauged from the fact that Ashok Bhatt, an inspector, was able to get elected to the police leadership even after showing contempt for the PM and the President and that parallel flag hoisting was organised on national days. He was the convenor of the coordination committee of the four police unions representing inspectors, head constables and constables. He was flamboyant, sports a tilak
on his forehead even while in uniform, prints his photograph on his union’s letterhead, and was known to be close to several senior police officer as well as politicians.

v). The major intervention by the central paramilitary forces and intelligence agencies and the high level coordination of measures by the central and state governments indicated the emergence of a new level of management of socio-political tensions in the polity; some reports mentioned that the state chief minister did not even take his cabinet colleagues into confidence.

vi). There were reports of serious discord among top policemen and action had to be taken against at least one top police officer for corruption.

The action in Gujarat appears to have been of a crises management nature, not intended to go into the deeper, underlying causes.

It needs to be remembered that the Police in Gujarat is thoroughly corrupt, with the misguided prohibition policy being a major source of corruption. In line with important section of Gujarati society, the police is often communal and plays a decidedly partisan role in times of conflict. It is attracted to and responds to middle class causes and to political parties such as the BJP, which represents these causes. And in former Baroda police commissioner Jaspal Singh, the politically inclined among the police have a symbol and a model. Jaspal Singh showed an unusual tenacity in jumping from the police force into active politics. After he resigned from the police some year ago, he
contested two elections under the BJP banner, lost both, and formed his own party ‘Savadhan’.

Notably, after serving as DGP of Gujarat police, Julio Rubeiro had stated that ‘the police force here (in Gujarat) has been ruined due to heavy politicization. Every transfer used to take place at the behest of politicians. Police officers were pressurised to do what politicians wanted’. In his autobiography, Riberio stated that corrupt police officers in Ahmedabad regularly received large sums of illegal money from bootlegger. At the station level, police officers were reluctant to carry out Riberio’s orders to arrest bootleggers who ‘were friends of different ministers and (the police officers) would have to face their wrath’.

The government of Gujarat had appointed the Justice Jaganmohan Reddy Commission to inquire into the causes of 1969, most catastrophic and major Ahmedabad riot. The Reddy Commission Report while commenting on the police role says that suggestions made cross-examination against Hindu officers that because they were Hindus, they showed anti-Muslim attitude to officers other than Hindus or Muslims the suggestions were that because they wanted to please the government, they showed anti-Muslim biases. It is, not unnatural for the Muslim community which has suffer a great loss in life and property in the riots and felt helpless in most cases in not obtaining relief and protection in time, to view the matter with a sense of suspicion, grievance and frustration and feel that everything that could have been done had not been
done because the officers and men, majority of whom were Hindus were partial. Similarly it was suggested to Muslim officers, particularly to Ismail-A-Shaikh by the Hullad Pidit Sahaty Samiti that he was partial to Muslims by trying to cover up cases and in which Muslim were involved either by not disclosing the fact or by showing Hindus were involved. To what extent there is justification in these allegations must be examined because if the feeling in the minority community is justified, the government and the police force has failed in their most fundamental duty to afford its citizens of whichever community they may belong as it is expected from a civilized government and a well discipline force.

Further on the report says, “If, however, there is no justification for these allegations and suggestions it is equally essential that it should be stated in no uncertain terms in order to assure the citizens at large particularly the minorities and give confidence to the police force”.

The report also says that we find it also necessary to advert to another allegation of the Muslims organizations that a great number of Muslim religious places which were near the police chowkeys and police station were damaged by communal minded police officers and men. It is true that these places, which were, near the police station and chowkeys were damaged as pointed out in chapter XV on the ‘Toll of Disturbances’. The explanation given by police officers was that at that time there may not be sufficient policemen at the chowkey and police stations or they may be engaged elsewhere but there is
no satisfactory explanation of this nor is there any evidence contrary that this was allowed to be done deliberately. We have, however, an impression that though the whole of the police force may not be communally involved, there were some instances when police were affected by the Jagannath temple incidence. The communal virus is such that it is likely to affect even policemen who are not apart from society which is affected though in our view the training, the discipline and the traditions that they are protector and preserver of public places and tranquility should keep them free from such inhibitions. It is therefore in the larger interest of the police force itself and the confidence that the force must inspire in all sections of the community, that an inquiry by some competent officers of the rank of not less than a secretary to the government of should be held and the report published to inspire that confidence.

In subsequent riots in Ahmedabad also there were many cases of either indifference on the part of the policemen or dereliction of duty on their part. There also had been instances of direct collusion. In the 1985 Ahmedabad riot in one of the labour area of Ahmedabad a section of which was almost exclusively Muslim area, a police Inspector gave petrol from his motorcycle to set afire Muslim houses there. The officers concerned of course denied the charge. But the way houses were burnet in that part of the city there is no doubt that the police was indifferent and inefficient if not downright communal. During investigation of these riots in Ahmedabad we heard from the victims
numbers of stories in relation to the ‘communal attitude’ of the city police. However, there were no such complaints about the Army by the Muslims.

**History of Communal Violence in Gujarat**

The state of Gujarat has been identified as an extreme case of the rise in communalism and communal violence where the misuse of religion for political ends resulted in the worst carnage against a religious minority in post-Independence India. Although the first major post-independence communal riot in India took place in Ahmedabad in 1969, the 1970s and 1980s saw relatively little Hindu-Muslim tension in the city. The ethnic conflict of the 1980s were primarily about reservations and the status of the backward castes, and communalism began gaining political prominence in the city and in the state only from the middle of that decade. The emergence of communalism in Ahmedabad at this time can be traced to tensions among Hindus rather than to a deepening conflict between Hindus-Muslims. Indeed, the riots of 1985, which marked the rise of communalism in Gujarat, developed initially over preferential policies for the benefit of the backward castes. The case of Ahmedabad undermines the conventional view of the origins of communalism as lying in Hindu-Muslim antagonism. It also calls into question the rise and nature of communalism in states where BJP has gained less prominence and communal violence has recurred less frequently. The case of Ahmedabad, therefore, has a strategic importance in relation to understanding the rise and intensification of communal conflicts since the 1980s.
Between 1961-71, 16 districts in Gujarat were rocked by communal violence, recording some 685 incidents in urban and 114 in rural areas. Of the 685 incidents in urban Gujarat recorded for the decade, 578 occurred in 1969 alone, during the worst riots in that ten-year period.22

"A gruesome episode in the afternoon of September 20, 1969, brings out the depth of animosity against the Muslims. A young Muslim, enraged by the destruction of his property said he would take revenge. Upon this the crowd seized him, showered blows on him, and tried to force him to shout ‘Jai Jagannath’. Staying firm, the youth refused even if that meant death. To this, someone in the crowd responded that he might indeed be done away with. Wood from broken shops was collected, a pyre prepared in the middle of the road, petrol sprinkled on the pyre as well as on the youth, and he was set alight with ruthless efficiency. What is remarkable is that there was no resistance from any Hindu. The wails of the Muslim inhabitants of the area were drowned in the celebration of the incident by the Hindus."23.

This was Gujarat’s first major bout of communal violence involving massacre, arson and looting on a large-scale. The violence took over 1,100 lives and property worth several crore rupees was destroyed. (Vengeful slogans on the streets shouted by Jansanghis – the BJP in its former incarnation — basically called the violence a reprisal or revenge for 1946. (Before Partition and Independence, the Muslim League had a significant presence in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation). Planned riots took place for the first time
in Vadodara in 1969. Shops of Muslims, marked out in advance for easy identification were systematically destroyed, suggesting pre-planning and organisation.

The issue of reservation quotas for backward castes and communities became the focal point for the hostile political mobilisation of the upper castes, which turned violent. Communal riots between Hindus and Muslims now began to follow on the heels of caste violence as the former served the cynical purpose of diverting attention away from the growing cleavage within caste-Hindu society. Fortuitously for the caste-Hindus, the caste struggle in Gujarat coincided with the establishment of the VHP and soon thereafter, the Bajrang Dal in the state. These RSS outfits were conceived with a specific agenda - wooing of the ‘lower’ castes with a programme of ‘Hindu unity’.

People in affected areas of Ahmedabad (which led the way for Vadodara and other cities) firmly denied any build up of hostilities prior to the riots. More telling was the way in which the burning of shops was balanced out, arithmetically as it were, between the Hindus and Muslims in the initial stages. It took some time before rioting gathered momentum on its own. Retaliation and counter-retaliation sent waves of violence across cities, its virulence manifest in the fact that for the first time stones and crowbars were giving way to guns, petrol bombs, and other explosives. This was ‘progress’ of a nasty kind. The caste war had dovetailed into a communal conflagration.
A striking new feature of the 1985 anti-reservation stir was the mobilisation of upper caste women in support of their men folk. They stood like a buffer between the agitating mob and the police. Facing insults and brickbats, the police was effectively prevented by these women from taking any strong action against the mob. In April 1985, the police revolted and participated in the violence. They burnt down the office of Gujarat Samachar in Ahmedabad. In the course of the communal riot engineered to quell the caste war, it was under police supervision that 400 Muslim houses were set ablaze and reduced to ashes all over the state.

To bring the difficult situation under control the army had to be called in. It soon found itself in the midst of extremely trying circumstances. The VHP, hardly a force so far, launched a vicious campaign charging the army with pro-Muslim bias. The reason: its commanding officer happened to be a Muslim. The Muslims, on the other hand, complained of a pro-Hindu bias. In order to win civic confidence the army even had to undertake a poster campaign.

Unlike 1981-82, by 1985 the lower castes were better organised, often with aggression. The last phase of the agitation saw an Adivasi backlash. Huge rallies were organised in tribal areas sending warning signals to the upper castes. In Bhiloda, a tribal pocket in Sabarkantha district, armed young tribals went on the rampage. Patels living in the neighbouring village of Takatunka were attacked and robbed. Within a few minutes, 26 shops were devastated.
The nexus between anti-social elements (of both communities) and politicians, which was started in 1969, when Hitendra Desai was Chief Minister, and encouraged under Chimanbhai Patel’s rule from 1969-1970, got a further boost in the '80s when Madhavsinh Solanki was chief minister. The patronising of liquor mafia dons belonging to rival communities, Hindu and Muslim, by different factions of the Congress in Ahmedabad and Vadodara led to the criminal-politician nexus behind communal violence surfacing with a vengeance.

In 1982, in Vadodara, there were riots around a Ganesh Chaturthi procession. In 1983, there was the first political mobilisation by the Sangh Parivar around the ‘Ganga Jal’ (‘Holy water from the river Ganges’) and the ‘Bharat Ekta Yatra’ (India unity voyage) symbols. In 1985, it started with antireservation riots again, the issue being a hike in quota for OBCs by the Congress government. Communal riots were then engineered by the party in power to defuse the explosive caste conflict.

Between 1987 and 1991, 106 communal incidents took place in Gujarat. Political rivalry and conflicts during elections were responsible for triggering around 40 percent of these riots. Tensions related to ‘religious processions’ were responsible for another 22 percent of these clashes.

It was from Gujarat, in September 1990, that LK Advani launched his Somnath to Ayodhya rath yatra leaving a nationwide trail of violence in its wake. In 1990 itself, there was major violence in Gujarat because of Advani’s
rath yatra. Starting from Somnath, the yatra traversed through the heart of Gujarat. Advani message was clear ‘If the Raja (PM, V.P Singh) persisted in his attempt to win votes by fragmenting Hindu society with such weapons as the Mandal Commission report, the BJP would go all out to unite Hindus on the Ram Janamabhoomi issue’.24.

The chief architect of that yatra was Narendra Modi. During the years of communal violence in 1986, 1987, 1989 and 1990, Modi was general secretary of the BJP. That is when the Ramjanmabhoomi campaign became a central issue in Gujarat. Men, women and youngsters from Gujarat, constituting possibly the largest contingent from anywhere in the country, participated in the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992. Surat, a town with an unblemished record of communal harmony, joined other centres in Gujarat, which had a more fractured history of inter-community relations. Violence spread to rural areas that had hitherto been largely unaffected.

In September 1990, on the occasion of Ganesh Visarjan, Vadodara saw the worst- ever riots in the walled city. Shops belonging to Muslims in the walled city and Raopura were broken open with the aid of gas cutters, looted and burnt. During the Ganesh Visarjan procession, the destruction took place in broad daylight, in the presence of the police. Elected leaders of the BJP directed well-planned attacks on the property of Muslims on the main road. The Jumma Masjid near Mandvi was also attacked. It was soon after this riot in
Vadodara that Advani’s rath yatra began. Stray incidents of violence continued for months after this incident.

Sustained and systematic efforts were made by organisations like the BJP and its Sangh Parivar affiliates to communalise Gujarati society, through large-scale distribution of hate literature and other means. Hinduism was given more and more aggressive interpretations with a conscious design to promote a feeling among Hindus that they, the majority community, were being treated unjustly through ‘appeasement’ of Muslims by various ‘vested interests’. The view that Muslims were fundamentalist, anti-national, and pro-Pakistan was systematically promoted. In some cases, Hindus were even exhorted to take up arms to defend their interests.

After 1992, there was a relative lull punctuated by stray incidents of violence against Muslims. From 1997 to 1999, especially in south Gujarat, a new trend was visible. The Sangh Parivar managed to create a divide, turning Hindu tribals against Christian tribals. In ’98 and ’99, Christian institutions — churches, schools, hospitals were systematically targeted particularly in Dang, Surat and Valsad districts. This divided the tribal community into two camps — Hindu and Christian.

The BJP first came to power in Gujarat in the mid-nineties. But, since 1998, with the coming of the Keshubhai Patel government, and more so with Narendra Modi taking over as CM in September 2001, public space and atmosphere has been completely vitiated within the state. In recent years, the
unending barrage of hate literature helped create a state of mind, even as persistent communal tension contributed to the perpetuation of violence as a way of life. Steady state support was extended to the activities of organisations such as the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and the organisations it spawned. Anti-Christian propaganda and violence were initiated. Posts within the bureaucracy at various levels, police and home guards and educational institutions have been steadily filled with persons wedded to a communal worldview.

Sustained efforts have been made to penetrate the tribal belt, where the influence of the BJP was earlier limited. Trishuls, swords and other weapons have been distributed during ceremonial and religious functions. Training campaigns were organised to spread hate-ideology.

Contrived ‘aggressions’ by the Muslim community (‘abduction’ and ‘forced marriage’ with Hindu girls), and Christians (‘forced conversions’) have been used to whip up local sentiments to a fever pitch. The utter failure of the law and order machinery and other wings of the state to check such blatantly unconstitutional behaviour are truly worrying for the future of secularism and democracy.

In the past four years alone, an atmosphere of threat and intimidation has deeply affected the social fabric of Gujarati society. In 1999, during the Kargil war, violence erupted in Ahmedabad city when Gujarat’s Muslims were subtly and not so subtly projected as being pro-Pakistan and anti-India. In 2000, Muslim property running into crores of rupees was looted or destroyed all over
the state in 'retaliation' to the killing of Amarnath yatris by terrorists in the Kashmir valley. The activities of organisations like the VHP, RSS and BD have become more and more brazen as they defy the law, confident that with 'our government' (BJP) in power, they need have no fear of any censure or penal action.

It is under this political dispensation that the ground for the 2002 carnage was carefully laid and at any appropriate moment, ruthlessly implemented. If the letter and spirit of the Indian Constitution are to be redeemed and reaffirmed, that exercise must begin with Gujarat - the land of the Mahatma. Let every man or woman guilty of base crimes, however highly placed they be and irrespective of the short-term political consequences, be tried speedily and punished. India and its Constitution are crying out for redressal. As are the souls of the victims massacred in gruesome fashion. And the plaints of the traumatised survivors of the Gujarat carnage.

Judicial Commissions on Communal Violence in Gujarat

The Jagmohan Reddy and Nusserwanji Vakil Commission of Inquiry was instituted in 1969 in the wake of the violence that claimed 1,100 lives. Unfortunately, irrespective of their political affiliation, successive governments in power have shown no interest in punishing the guilty, or in initiating the systemic changes recommended to check the recurrence of unbridled violence. In 1986, the Dave Commission was appointed, but the Congress(I) government under Chimanbhai Patel found its recommendations politically inexpedient.
Hence, it simply did not accept the findings that were made. In between, the Kotwal commission also investigated bouts of communal violence in Ahmedabad city. Again the report was not implemented.

The Chauhan Commission was set up after the brutal violence in Surat in 1992, in the course of which, too, women were gang raped. This commission had completed its report and needed barely a 15-day extension for finalisation of the document, when the Congress-supported Vaghela government disbanded it. As a result, the findings of this commission could not even be made public, let alone the issue of its recommendations being acted upon.

Post-Ayodhya violence in Gujarat

After the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh was demolished by the mob of thousands of Kar-Sevaks, there were a wave of communal conflict and antagonism between Hindus and Muslims all over the country. Thousands of people died (in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Haryana. Muslims were infuriated by the sacrilege at Ayodhya and went out on the streets to protest. Finding, in several states, that the police were using considerable force against them, they felt even more indignant. As Saeed Hamed, editor of ‘Tanveer Weekly’ in Bombay, said, “the feeling was that the police did not even raise a lathi when Kar sevaks demolished the mosque but are shooting us when we protest against the destruction.”25. Major riots occurred, as result of Babri mosque demolition, in
Bombay, Kanpur and Surat in which many people were died. In Gujarat there were violence in different cities namely Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat. But the violence that erupted in Surat had surprised many, unlike Ahmedabad who have a history of repeated communal conflict even on petty issues, not only in its occurrence but also in its ferocity. Surat, is an old mercantile center on west cost of India. Situated at the bank of river Tapi the town has already an important international harbour long before the beginning of the colonial era. Both the British and Dutch East India Company made Surat their entry point when they first came to south Asia. Traces of early colonial history can still be found, e.g. Valanda Bandar, the site of Dutch factory now changed into public garden and a monumental cemetery where sailors and agents of Dutch EIC were buried. In the images of colonial literature Europeans dominated during the 17th and 18th century but the urban economy and the linkages from Surat with the sub continental hinterland were firmly controlled by a coalition of Muslims, Hindu and Parsi commercial interest. The city’s speedy industrial growth attracted waves of labour immigration from backward areas of Khandesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. There came also entrepreneurs from the Hindi speaking states, including Marwaris and some Muslims in the textile and processing industries. About 2 lakhs Oriya and 1.75 lakh Telugu labour settled in industrial areas like Pandesara and Udhgna on the perimeters of the city. Surat was considered as the pace setter in the industrialistions of Gujarat and the nerve center of south Gujarat, one of the fastest growing regions in the country.
Surat is divided into an old medieval city and newer settlements. Surat's proportion of Muslim residents, at 12.3 percent, mirrors Ahmadabad's 13.0 percent\(^{28}\). Yet, over the course of the 20th century, Surat witnessed virtually no religious violence. It was consider as an 'Oasis of Peace'. Even in 1969, when most other large Gujarati cities, particularly Ahmadabad, succumbed to religious rioting, Surat was unaffected\(^{29}\). Also during partition of the country in 1947 there was no communal outbreak. The last major riot in the Surat city was in 1927. It took the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in December 1992 to end Surat's unusual record of religious peace, when six days of rioting left around 175 people dead officially. But the riot after demolition of Babri Masjid have been characterized by a brutality even cities of chronic history of riots such as Ahmedabad and Baroda have not seen.

**Background of the 1992-93 Surat riot**

1) *New Commissioner of Police: P.K Datta*

P.K Dutta had a reputation of a tough cop when he was transferred to Surat as Commissioner of Police, two months before the outbreak of the communal violence. He had been cracking down heavily on the bootleggers who, in collusion with the police, has been carrying on a lucrative business. So complete had been Datta’s drive that the women engaged in the bootlegging business were, with unmistakable exaggeration, said to have been forced into prostitution for a living. The drive created two disgruntled elements: the unemployed bootleggers and the police deprived of their regular commissions
from the illicit trade. The demolition of Babri Mosque came as a god-send to the bootleggers who, given their penchant for criminal activities, organised anti-Muslim riots and the police refuse to obey the order of their chief who had deprived them of a rich source of income. The two conspired to create a situation in which their *bete noire* would transferred from Surat

It is widely believed that one high level intelligence officer who wielded lot of influence over the rank and file of the police force had locked horns with the C.P may be responsible for the manipulation of the intelligence report. The rank and file of the police force was already in the rebellious mood. Pre-planned connivance between the planner of the riots and the police could and did benefit both. For one, possibility of large-scale violence without reprisal and for other, transfer of the problematic C.P. As a result, no precautionary steps worth the name were taken. The government singularly ignored the response that the communalist were getting for all their programmes like Kar Seva, Rallies, Rath Yatra, Ram Shila Pujan etc. The intelligence also failed to warn and apprehend the situation. There was no adequate police force in the city on the eve of the riots. There were no preventive arrests after the news of demolition of the Babri mosque came. In fact 3 out of 9 police station of the city were without the police inspector to lead them\(^3\) where as Varchha road PI was sent to kamela for special bandobast. ACP Gadvi who knew the city well was transferred. The city had a new Commissioner of Police, a new DCP, a new ACP and 3 P.Is on leave. None of the rest knew the city well. The police
force did not seem to have made any arrangement to face any eventuality in the wake of demolition of the Babri Moque.

2). Elections

Municipal Corporation elections were to be held on 27\12\1993 and full-scale propaganda was going on. The BJP's main plank was goonda raj of Congress versus their Ram Raj. By high lightening the goonda raj it mainly referred to the Latif gang and Local Muslim criminals. It was propagating mostly communal issue in the lection. It also tried to portray a few of its accomplishment during its rule in the corporation like construction of Narmada library and Sardar Bridge over river Tapi connecting Rander and Surat. The congress did not counter the BJPs communal propaganda politically but was only trying to point out the BJPs failure in the corporation and hammer that it alone could run the corporation effectively and ensure proper development of the city. About a year ago there was a severe malarial epidemic and dengue fever both spread by Mosquitoes. It was reported that 10,000 people were affected by the disease and 101 died in the epidemic which the corporation had failed to control. To save its face the BJP administration suspended deputy Municipal Commissioner Dr. Mohanty. However he went to the high court and got the suspension order cancelled. BJP totally lost its face. In the construction of Sardar Bridge, the BJP had increased the contract amount to the contractor. All this had reduced its credibility. It was therefore mostly banking on the Hindutva plank and criticizing the Congress goonda raj. Before 6 December, it
devoted its almost entire campaign to mobilize Kar Sevaks for Ayodhya. As 6 December came close the media gave front-page photographs of Kar sevaks leaving Surat in various trains for Ayodhya. In each ward grand celebration were held to give send offs to the Kar Sevaks who were garlanded and taken in a procession. Emotional speeches were made and praises were showered at the time of the send offs.

The Surat Riot: events and analysis

Riots in Surat occured in two phases and some minor communal skirmishes a little later. The first phase began a day after the demolition of Babri Masjid on 7 December 1992 and continued till 14 December and the second phase began on 17 Jan 1993 and continued till 22 January 1993. Thereafter some stray incidences of violence were reported. The then Chief minister Mr Chiman Bhai Patel visited Surat on 9 December and announced massive deployment of the police force – 7 companies of SRP and military were deployed in 60 sensitive areas including Varachha Road, Udhna, Umra, Chowk, Salabatpura and rander. Despite the presence of the police and military on such a large scale, riots continued till 14 December 1992.

The First Phase

The riots after the demolition of the Babri Masjid seemed to have been well planned. However, it is doubtful that even the planners could have anticipated their ‘success’ in mobilizing massive mobs for attacking Muslims (More than 90% victims of the riots were Muslims). The broad pattern of riots
in Surat indicates various important features. The first striking feature of the riots during the first phase was that they were concentrated at the outskirts of the city, outside the walled city. The second striking feature was that the mob of attackers on Muslims almost exclusively consisted of migrant labourers-Kathiawadis, Oriya workers, Maharashtrians and North Indian workers, who by and large occupy and reside at outskirts of the city. The pattern of riots suggested that they were planned well in advance and in detail. The area where communal violence in the first phase included Varachha Road, Udhna, Rander, Limbayat, Dindoli and Neol - where the train incident took place in which a train was stopped at about three or four kilometer away from the Udhna on 10th December. A mob of 500 equipped with lathis, choppers, and iron bars. They pulled out around 50 Muslims and killed them. Some of them were women who were raped and were video filmed, killed and burnt and many of the other women were forced to undergo the traumatic experience of their husband and children being killed before their eyes. In almost all the incident, motivated rumours were first spread in a systematic manner to provoke people into gathering and then attacking selected targets involving Muslims.

When Muslim passengers were attacked rumours played a major role. A large crowd of Maharashtrians from areas came to Dindoli-Neol village. They were shouting slogans like ‘Jai Bhawani’ & ‘Jai Shivaji’ and were armed with guptis and swords. They had been instigated by Shiv Sena activists who wanted to establish themselves politically in the city and contribute their share in riots to demonstrate their strength. The rumours spread by them claimed that they
had definite information about an impending attack on the Hindus by Muslims, who were coming there in a truck with arms and weapons. Thus the agitated Maharashtrains were led towards railway tacks near the village. There the crowd was informed that when the Muslims learned about the ‘self-defence’ preparation of Hindus, they have taken to their heels and fleeing away in train. The intention of the rioters seemed to teach the Muslims who were fleeing from the city to escape the rioting, to their native places on Tapi-Bhusaval line, a lesson.

Second Phase of Riot

The second phase of riots were began on 17 January 1993 and continued till 22 Jan 1993. There was a marked difference between riots in the first phase and the second phase. In the first phase Muslims were at the receiving end and the riots appeared to be one-sided but in the second phase, Muslims were also involve and causalities on both the sides were almost equal. This points to the fact that during the second phase, Muslims were better prepared unlike the first phase. This might have been due to the realization on their part that riots were likely to erupt again because the communal campaign was being kept alive by the Hindutva forces. Another difference was that this time, riots largely took place in Rander and the walled city and not at outskirts. Though there were incidents of arson ad looting, Muslim business was not made a specific target to the extent it was in the first phase.
Also the migrant workers did not participate in riots in the second phase because most of them had fled away after the first phase and in any case they do not stay within the walled city. In addition, this time, the violence of the mob was not so intense as in the first phase perhaps because slightly better off people participated in riots, unlike frustrated, over-exploited proletariat rioters in the first phase who witness and experience violence in their day-to-day life.

In the latter part of the second phase of riots, Muslim began to retaliate attacks on them in a number of ways. On 30 January 1993, a bomb exploded in the a market area in Ahmedabad and mill workers were fired upon AK47 rifles, allegedly by Muslim anti-social elements, with this, the second phase came to an end and temporarily at least, peace returned to the city even as stray incidents continued to occur.

*Third phase of riot*

After the second phase, relative calm prevalent for about two and a half month. During this period, the BJP and hindutva forces were pre-occupied with other activities like election for the Mayour on 01\02\93 and mobilization for the BJP rally in Delhi on 25\02\93, letter banned by the central government. They also actively participated in Ambedkar jayanti celebrations on 14 April 1993 and the BJP mayor laid the foundation stone for a proposed Ambedkar hall to be built by the municipal corporation of Surat. Then, the BJP got another opportunity to conduct its vicious campaign of communal divide and propagate its ideology of Hindutva. The priest of a Patali Hanuman temple in
Mugalisar had good relations with some young Muslims. Later, some dispute took place between them. It is alleged that on 18\04\93, these Muslims get drunk and damaged idol. However, the Hindutva forces did not want to let go this opportunity to foment trouble. They began to unite priests of all temples, including Munees of Derasars, on one platform. Priest with VHP links took lead in this action. They said that the police should have consulted them before the new idol was installed because it could be done only after certain necessary ritual were performed. They demanded handing over of the broken idol to them for its proper disposal. The police claimed that it immersed it in Tapi River.

Role of Police in the riots

After the riot that broke out in Surat the role of Police needs to be scrutinised. As the riot that broke out in Surat on the 7th December 1992 there were large-scale arson, looting, killings and rapes in different parts of the city. Following is the relevant newspaper clippings, during the days of communal violence, about the role of police during the 1992 Surat riots;

10 December 1992

‘Death stalks Surat Street’

‘Death stalks the street of Surat and fear lurks from every corner. The eerie silence which has descended here is punctuated periodically by police firing, bursting of tear gas shells, the roar of the police and army vehicles, the shrill sirens of the fire fighters and ambulance ’
'A 23-year old woman, the sister of a Surat police offices, was brutally gang raped, set on fire and later beheaded. The entire house where she was staying with her aged parents was later looted and set on fire'

11 December 1992

'22 Rail passenger lynched in Surat'

'In one of the most gruesome incidents as many as 22 passengers traveling in Surat–Nandurbar passenger were lynched at Navagam village in Surat district d 13 more dead bodies were recovered by the police from the riot torn Surat city taking the death toll in the current orgy of violence in Gujarat to 22'.

'The police reached Navagam village to identify the passengers who had became the victim of a well-planned massacre. One person with injuries was brought to Surat and hospitalised'

13 December 1992

'Myth about Surat shattered'

'The chains of events in the last few days which shook the very foundation of Surat and the magnitude of these events were frankly speaking, not predicted either by the police, the intelligence department or for that matter, by the political leaders. Even the chief minister, Mr Chiman bhai Patel, who air dashed to Surat on Wednesday, accepted that the unfortunate developments were totally unexpected. The question that still remains to be answered is
whether the riots were spontaneous or pre-planned. No body has the answer right now and only a full-fledged inquiry by Mr A.K. Bhargav, IGP, Intelligence, may provide some answer Primarily it was a “system failure” on all the fronts as the city known for its mercantile nature throughout the country did not even know the “C” of communal riots. The Surat police, which is not only understaffed, over-burdened and ill-equipped failed totally not only in handling the situation as it had no prior experience in tackling communal disturbances, but also in its forecast. The present police strength in the city stands roughly at what it was 22 years ago in 1970, while the city has developed in leaps and bounds on all the fronts, including population. Development is a very misleading word for Surat, for the development has not added any muscles to the city but has just made it obscene with a lot of fat. While this “development” was rapid and unplanned, the home department failed to match this pace by not sanctioning adequate staff, chowkeys and police stations, which was resulted in what the former police commissioner, Mr. PK Dutta, rightly described as ‘naked areas’ as far as police is concerned. One may be surprised to learn that the present police force in Surat, and that too the reinforced police force is equivalent to the police strength Baroda has during peacetime and interestingly the population of Surat is nearly double than that of Baroda. So what happened in the first two days of rioting was just no men were available to rush to trouble spots as hundreds of frantic calls were made at the police control room and if the police at all managed to reach the spot, it was after the act was over and done with.
The other factors which may also be taken into consideration are the “disturbing of the equilibrium” and “the bruised ego of the police-men”. So far in Surat, a sort of equilibrium had prevailed between different segments of society, including the underworld. The attitude was “gentlemen, you do your duty, let me do my work”. This equilibrium functioned in smooth harmony with the easy-going life-style of Surat. What happened was the” Dutta factor” disturbed this equilibrium in the last one and a half months. The former police commissioner was a man in hurry, to stem the rot and immediately on resuming the charge, he started taking action left, right and center’

14 December 1992

'Army lends soothing touch to Surat'

‘Children, Teenagers and Senior citizens watch officers and jawans of Indian army with awe and fascination. Many of them are seeing the army in real life for the first time in Surat’

‘The maiden brush with the armed forces has been indeed very positive for this mercantile city. The presence of the army has not only boosted the morale of the police but also instilled confidence in the shaken people’

'Mufti for probe into Surat incidents'

‘Talking to reporters after visiting the violence affected areas of the city, Mr. Sayeed said that the situation in several parts of Maharashtra and Gujarat was still tense and the state administration should continue patrolling by Army in sensitive areas. Mr. Sayeed blamed the police for using excessive force
which had resulted into heavy causalities of the Minorities. Mr. Sayeed said 
that the people in minority dominated areas in the city told him that the police 
had resorted to indiscriminate firing causing more deaths. He said that the 
police should have controlled the situation without firing.\textsuperscript{38}

15 December 1992

‘Chiman for cautious approach on Surat’

‘Among other things that are being considered by the state government 
in a broader perspective is having a total separate set-up for Surat. What 
exactly does a separate set-up mean is yet not known. Secondly, the 
government may also beef up the police presence in the city, which as the chief 
minister put it has “outgrown” itself. Instead of having one police station in one 
area, more police chowkeies may be provided at different points in the same 
area. There are some of the broad criteria on which the government is actively 
thinking on.\textsuperscript{39}

16 December 1992

‘Super cop played the boss, not the leader’

Easy-going Surat on rough turf after riots

‘But the myth has exploded and the police force is finding itself utterly 
inadequate to cope with the viciousness and suddenness with which the 
communal virus has engulfed the city. When everyone finally woke up, it was 
first to replace Mr P.K.Dutta, city police commissioner, who had earlier
effectively handled places like Ahmedabad and Baroda during 1985. Two days after the frenzied violence saw people falling like ninepins, hot-heated Datta was replaced by a diplomatic P.K. Bansal.

The army has now taken over the city and indications are available that the violence has abated. The ineffectiveness of the police was first reflected in the fact that as many as 272 policeman were injured in the riots. The Surat policemen in fact had never faced a situation like this and over the years has earned the reputation of being a corrupt force.

In many respect, the riots in Surat were unique. While over the last five years only stray incidents were reported, when violence erupted on December 7, it immediately enveloped the entire city and not the "sensitive" pockets only. "We had not expected Surat to explode with such intensity. Nobody, including the police force, had anticipated this", admit Home Minister CD Patel and Chief Minister Chiman Bhai Patel. The force was thoroughly unprepared.

While in a much smaller place like Baroda, 13 Companies of the State Reserve Police (SRP) were posted, on December 6, there were only four SRP companies in Surat. The entire strength of the police was about 2,600 for a population of 22 lakh. "Only 70 percent of them could be termed effective" points out a senior police official, not wishing to be named.

The former police commissioner, Mr Datta, has taken most of the blame for the situation in Surat today. A super cop in the making, Mr Datta had come to Surat just 55 days back with a big reputation. Immediately after assuming
office, he launched a crackdown on the massive bootlegging and gambling network in the city. The force was obviously not happy and middle ranking officers found Mr Datta's approach towards his subordinates offensive.

It was also a lack of rapport between the commissioner of police and his officers that made a mess of the bandobast. Officials who attending meetings with Mr Datta on the eve of the Ayodhya demolition, found that they had only to receive directions for deployment of force and any initiative from the middle-ranking officers was not encouraged. "For instance, a deployment plan chalked out by the special branch was not taken up for discussion," claim an officer.

In fact, before the riots broke out, Mr Datta had stated that he had not asked for any additional reinforcements. When the riots actually broke out, he said, "I am doing a good job considering the men and material at my disposal."

17 December 1992

'Political storm brewing in Gujarat'

'The only advantage the Chief Minister has, is that he has became victim of circumstances, unlike the Prime Minister, Mr. P.V Narasimha Rao, who is alleged to have committed a blunder by trusting the BJP. On the other hand, Mr Patel has been fighting a relentless battle against the BJP from the day he parted company with it when coalition ministry collapsed in October 1990.
So politically, he is on a strong footings but he cannot shrug off his responsibilities from the recent happenings. Cold statistics cannot convey the bone chilling events that over-look the administration and the police, which were virtually found sleeping, particularly in Surat. If one go strictly by the official figures, as many as 109 people have been roasted alive, maximum of them in Surat and its surrounding areas, of the total estimated deaths of 275. Of the total 600-odd people injured, nearly 150 have sustained bullet injuries in police firings alone.

Despite the deployment of entire police force, having a strength of 80,000 plus 30,000 home guards, and summoning of seven SRPF companies and the army taking position in Ahmedabad, Surat, Sidhpur, Palanpur, Mehsan and even in Baroda, curfew had to be imposed in 30 cities and towns of the state at one stage, when riot were at the peak.

_Panic-stricken labour fleeing Surat_

"Panic striken labourer from Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan have started fleeing the city due to unprecedented communal riots witnessed here. Of the city estimated population of 1.5 million, the industrial labourer accounts for nearly 50 percent.

This mass exodus of industrial workers is likely to upset industrial production if timely preventive measures were not taken said, the southern Gujarat chamber of Commerce and Industry president Mr Ramesh Gajiwala. He added that the production loss per day in textile industry alone stood at Rs
25 corers. The production loss in the diamond industry where most of the labourer are from Saurashtra is estimated to be Rs 1.75 crores per day. The daily loss of wages in the power loom sector, having 2.5 looms is estimated at Rs 2 crores according to the vice-president of the Federation of Indian Art silk weaving Industry. Mr Arun jariwala. The livelihood of 400,000 workers depended on 20,000 power loom units which have been closed for the past ten years. The assistant excise collector, Mr Jasdeeo Srivastava, said the revenue loss to the central excise department for the riot period was Rs 16 crores. A projected loss till the industry returned to normal functioning by the end of this month prepared by the central excise is placed at Rs 50 crores in Surat city alone.

18 December 1992

'Policemen stand by as criminals move around freely in Surat

Camera unit films mob stripping women’

It was no ordinary file shooting in the riot affected Ved Road areas of Surat. A group of women, naked to the waist, had run out of their houses chased by a mob not with firearms in their hands, but with video cameras. Even as Surat burned, these people had found a novel way of utilizing the situation. They were filming the molestation of women. The victims were angry with the State Reserve Police and local police who, they said, watched from a distance when the clashes took place. At one place in Vijay nagar, police fired at the...
people who were standing guard to protect their houses rather than at the advancing mobs.

21 December 1992

'No CBI probe into Surat carnage'

'Raising the matter during zero hour, Mufti Mohammed Sayee (JD) said the tragedy that unfolded in Surat in the wake of Ayodhya incidents was shocking. Scores of men and women and children were burnt alive by anti-social elements and communal forces. Some of the women were raped, he charged. Demanding a CBI inquiry, Mr Sayeed blamed the local administration for not creating confidence among the public.'

22 December 1992

'Chiman misused Surat police force'

"The Chiman bhai Patel ministry has politically misused the Surat police force during the current bout of communal riots", a five member BJP delegation has alleged. Talking to the newsmen last night Mr Mehta and Ashok Bhatt, senior BJP leader and MLA from Ahmedabad, said that peace would elude Surat until the use of police for political ends was not stopped.

23 December 1992

'Punish Surat cops, Says Madhu Mehta'

"Hindustani Andolan has demanded stern action against the local police and SRP personnel in Surat who looked the other way while goondas brutally
molested and raped helpless women while their accomplices videotaped this most shameful incidents. In a letter written to the President, Mr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Mr Madhu Mehta, national convener of Hinsutani Andolan has stated, "We are sure, Rashtrapatiji, you will agree with us that those responsible for this shameful and barbaric behavior should not be allowed to get away Scott-free, sternest possible action must be taken against all the police and SRP personnel also who were present but took no notice of this incident as reported in the press". Besides, what is uppermost in the mind of every sensitive Indian who has come to know about this incident is the question. "Whether, a government which cannot protect the dignity and Izzat of a women has any moral right to continue to govern?"46

24 December 1992

'4 Cops suspended over Surat riots'

"The Gujarat government has suspended four police officers for 'negligence of duty' during the riots in Surat following the Ayodhya development, an official spokesman said here today. They are Police inspector of Varachcha police station, Mr M.L Rathod, inspector, Udhna police station, Mr B.K Dodia and two police sus-inspector of the chowk bazaar police station, Mr RG Jadeja and Mr AK Gadhvi. The government was also contemplating strict action against the police officers who did not take decision on time to deal with the law and order situation, the spokesman added."47
27 December 1992

"Police hands in Gujarat riots alleged"

"The Union home minister, Mr S. B Chavan, who made a flying visit to riot ravaged state on December 12 was the first leader to suggest to the chief minister, Mr Chiman Bhai Patel, to act firmly to all those police officers, who were directly or indirectly involved fanning communal fire. He has also suggested to Mr Patel to punish police personnel who were also allegedly involved in perpetuating atrocities including unprovoked firing. Over at his press briefing, Mr Chavan affirmed that he would not like to "sit in judgment" but the chief minister would certainly act against the police as there were many "lapses" pointed out to him during his visit to the riot-affected areas. At that time, the chief minister has avoid taking any action pleading that Mr AK Bhargav, special IG (intelligence) had been entrusted with the task of probing the lapses by the police in Surat and burning alive of 11 people at Shahpur and Danilimbdia areas of the city. Again on December 20, a high powered six-member AICC team headed by Mr Balram Jakha visited Ahmedabad and Surat and bluntly told the state administration to act sternly against erring police officers to instill confidence in the minorities in the administration.

On receipt of a report of Mr. Bhargav, only two Pls and two PSIs of Surat were suspended, pending inquiry against them for dereliction of duty. But no action was taken against the controversial police commissioner of Surat, Mr PK Datta. In his report, Mr Bhargav have not only passed strong stricutures
against Mr Datta and many other police personnel but has also indicated that if the curfew was imposed in the worst affected areas and no timely help of the Army was sought, causalities in Surat could have been avoided. The report of Mr Bhargav has also pointed out that the two tragedies at Shapur in which nine person were burnt to death and at Dani Limbada, where a couple was torched to death. In Ahmedabad riot could have been avoided if the police had not turned a Nelson's eye to the acts of the hooligans and murderers. Both Mr Chavan and Mr Jakhar also wanted the government to take strict action in these two cases to set an example in the police force, but somehow the government has so far not taken any action. In the shapur incident, the police has arrested nine persons for interrogation but it has yet to initiate action against some people involved in the riots including some home guards It is learnt that the resident of shapur have given 37 names of persons involved in perpetuating the crime but hardly two of three of them have been detained for interrogation.

Forty leading citizens, including doctors and advocates, have sent as petition to the Prime Minister, Member of Parliament, Central Ministers and others to impress upon the state government the need to initiate a proper inquiry into two incidents. For the Surat carnage, the spiritual head of the Ismaili Khojas, Prince Aga Khan, is reported to have taken up the issue with the central government. But there also, the police have not been able to make much headway in catching the alleged culprits. Belatedly, the government has only suspended two PIs and PSIs.\(^{48}\)
31 December 1992

'Task in Gujarat' (editorial)

"An over starched police force has proved unequal to the task. Although the police and bureaucratic set up can be only as effective as permitted by the political leadership, there is still no gainsaying police inefficiency since December 6. There is crying need, therefore, for a change of guard in both the police and home department". So far to ask a retired judge to probe the riot but the choices as well as the manner in which the judge was approached have not inspired any confidence in the administration sincerity".

16 January 1993

'The Killing fields'

"The latest out break of violence in Ahmedabad has shattered many myths. That the Chief Minister Mr Chiman bhai Patel, is not only a shrewd politician but also an able administrator; that the police is the protector of the people and their properties; that the deployment of the army can bring situation under control and last but not the least, that the religious frenzy prevail only for a few hours and not for weeks together. First, the chief minister failed to gauge the intensity of violence, its changing character and get his orders strictly implemented by the top brass of police. The police commissioner not only erred in his judgment but also even ignored orders from his political bosses, further messing up the situation. In many instances the police turned a Nelson’s eye to the acts of the hooligans and in some cases even encouraged and
provided protection to arsonist and hooligans. In the second phase of communal violence the problem was more a collapse of the police force rather than the lack of political will to act.

The deployment of the army was first delayed for days. Then the entire force hierarchy opposed tooth and nail the government's move to hand over worst hit areas like Odhva, Bapunagar, Gomtipur, Vatva and Amraiwadi in the eastern belt of the city to the army, on the ground that this would hurt its morale. The army's presence has so far remained symbolic while a corrupt and communal police force has failed both the people and politicians. The result is there for everyone to see and repent. Many head may roll in the coming days but that cannot be solace for the people who have suffered immensely. The police is estimated to have fired more than 5,500 rounds since December 6 to disperse rampaging mobs in different parts of the state, including Surat, Ahmedabad, Broach, Baroda, Mehsana, Godhra, Sidhpur, Palanpur and Anand. The state's death toll has mounted to 367 in just 36 days, while Ahmedabad's toll is 148. The loss to private and public properties, trade and business, state government and various civic bodies as well as to wage earners is roughly estimated at Rs 9,600 crore. A reshuffle of police force in Ahmedabad and Surat, the appointment of a one-man commission headed by a retired high court judge, Mr Justice I C Bhatt, and the announcement of a package deal for mercantile community and industrialists to help them revive their units may not go a long way because such measures are routinely announced after devastating tragedies. The transfers of Police officers are seen as eyewash to shift the
people’s attention from the failure of politicians and to make scapegoats of the police.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{17 January 1993}

‘This can not be my beloved city, Sir’

"Why was Mr P.K Datta, an honest, tough policeman, sent to Surat as police commissioner when he was most likely to put an end to the profitable alliance among policemen, politicians, bootleggers and gamblers? Didn’t the bosses in Gandhi Nagar know that Mr Datta would get no co-operation from the police force? How could the local Congress leadership allow Mr Datta to stay in Surat?

The riot proved far too fortuitous for far too many people, Mr Datta was sent packing back to Ahmedabad. His successor is Mr PK Bansal, who during an earlier stint as police commissioner became favorite officer of the business community. Mr Bansal says cracking down on bootlegging and gambling are not high on his priority list. And why were the police not effective? For the simple reason that Surat police was grossly understaffed. However, for good reason fewer policeman means booty is shared among few people. And an inadequate police force was always a good excuse to not perform the job of a policeman. And then the policeman down the rank wanted to show the new police commissioner his place.\textsuperscript{51}"
18 January, 1993

'No room for collective welfare'

"Constables spoke meaningfully of former officers like Gadhvi Saheb and Sibal Saheb. They were understanding officers, realistic officers who accepted the ground realities. You are told confidently that Gadhvi saheb been there, he would have spoken to a few troublemakers and that would be that. A wise police officer must keep these channels of communication open. Policemen, politicians and government officials whisper how sons of senior politicians have became big names in land deals. One prominent builder is spoken of in awe as the de facto chief minister. He must informally clear all police, appointments in the city. No, he cannot be contacted. He is in Gandhinagar. The assembly session has started the chief minister needs his advice.\textsuperscript{52}

24 April 1993

'Surat Pointers' (editorial)

"And if to this eruption is added the escape of a notorious criminal, Sharief Khan, from police custody only a few days ago, the picture of befuddled administration is complete. The ease with which this dreaded criminal made good his escape is only yet another reminder of the extent to which the police force in the state has been suborned. This sorry development could not have taken place without the political leadership making unwholesome demands on the police force."\textsuperscript{53}
28 April 1993

‘BJP, Police hand behind trouble’

“A close scrutiny of the fresh round of communal violence in Surat last week reveals the political opportunism of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) and some glaring inconsistencies on the part of the city police. The breaking of an idol and the desecration of a temple in the Mugalsaria area on April 18, the removal of the broken idol of ‘Hanuman Dada’ and the quite installation of a new one and the meeting of the Hindus religious leaders where provocative speeches were delivered, led to the trouble in Surat. After the local papers had splashed the news of the breaking of the idol, the role of police in giving a watery burial to the broken idol in the River Tapi and the alleged role of some Muslim youth in urinating in the temple premises, tension was palpable in the city.

Tension was further heightened when religious leaders called a meeting on the following night at the sardar chowk on the varchha Road and gave a call to take out a rally on the next day. The religious leaders led by the young Nautam Swami of the Swaminarayan sect had heightened the tension even before the meeting came to an end late in the evening. But the Gujarat government does not expect it.” We did not anticipate the present bout of violence,” the chief ministry, Mr Chiman Bhai Patel, candidly accepted on his short tour of Surat on Friday. Late on the night of April 21, the city police commissioner, Mr Rajeshwar Sibbal, had issued a notification banning the
proposed rally which was to start from the Lambe Hanuman Road in the Varch area. The rallyists had chosen a route which was passing through "sensitive Muslim pockets" on the station-chowk road. The police commissioner is also understood to have offered an alternative route to the rallyists off the Ring road, which is the main arterial road of the city. The following day the entrance to the Lambe Hanuman Road were sealed and the religious leaders of the Bharatiya Janta Party which had lent support to the rally were detained.

There were specific instructions to the policemen from Sibbal that the police vans should come to the commissionerate from the ring road and after the arrest were made, the entire top brass rushed back to their offices. What happened in reality was that the police vans carrying the arrested leaders were diverted from the Basras Hotel turning on the "sensitive Station chowk Road" instead of taking the vehicle on the ring road. Why were the police commissioner strict instructions violated? Was it due to the connivance of the lower cadres of the men in uniform with those being frisked away in the van? Or did some middle level managers order the route diversion? Or was everything pre-planned? These are the questions which will require a thorough probe. Once the van was diverted without the knowledge of the police top brass and as the vehicle approached the Lal Gate area scores of BJP workers waiting on the road blocked the route and the leaders who were being whisked away jumped out. As the rallyist approached the Chaga Talao area shouting abusive slogans the apprehensions turned into reality. The area which has a considerably big pocket of Muslim population and has been described as"
dragon" by the BJP city unit president, Mr Fakir Chauhan witnessed a blood confrontation. There was stone throwing. An attack on rallyists by a sword wielding youth and two rounds of private firing which resulted in one causality and the rally going haywire. This development sparked off a series of incidents of stabbings, looting and stone-pelting in the entire city.

The BJP which had lent “moral” and “ideological” support to the rally and not to the religious leaders had anticipated trouble in the area. But the party had expected minor skirmish by which it could politically benefit but it had not anticipated that the rally would be greeted by swords and firearms. The Muslims of the Bhaga Talao area mainly belonging to the mercantile community were nursing their wounds since the December riots when a large number of Muslim men, women and children were butchered in different parts of the city. It was expected that the rally with rallyists shouting abusive slogans would attract retaliation.

However, both Mr Narottam Patel and the BJP city mayor, Mr Ajit Desai, stoutly deny any abusive slogans being raised. They later added that even if this had occurred then it must be workers of the political parties who had infiltrated the rally. The incidents of the breaking of the idol and the desecration of the temple have also raised some questions. According to reliable sources, the incident was a sequel to a tussle between the caretakers of the temple. Ramesh laxaman Patel and some anti-social Muslim youths with whom Patel shares a good rapport.
Apart from Surat there was also riots and violence in the Ahmedabad but not so severe as compared to Surat. The Muslims of one area Shahpur had given a memorandum to the state as well as central Govt which points out certain points which are the cause of the violence.

The memorandum reads like the Muslims citizens of Shahpur, Ahmedabad (Gujarat) presented a memorandum to the authorities at the center as well as at the state and local level demanding strong action against those ghastly crimes perpetrated against Muslims. The text of the memo is as follows:

The following anti-Muslim policy was adopted by the police not only in different parts of Ahmedabad but also throughout Gujarat:

(1). To allow free for all to Hindu communal vandals, (2) to kill innocent Muslims including children, women and old persons brutally by unprovoked reckless firing against Muslim, (3) to arrest large number of innocent Muslims from their houses and even from the mosques, and involve them in false cases.

Muslims doubt, some sinister design of Gujarat Government headed by Mr Chimam Bhai Patel, behind this barbarous and atrocious attitude of Police force against entire Muslim minority of Gujarat, without which police cannot dare to behave like this against entire Muslim minority.

Due to this anti Muslim attitude of police Muslim minority of Ahmedabad has suffered heavy loss of life property and religious places as under: (1) Killed by police firing: about 42, (2) Burnt alive including children
and women: 13, (3) Injured: more than 200, (4) Arrested under other offences: more than 600, (6) Mosques and Dargahs damaged: worth lakhs of Rupees.

Role of Gujarat press is communal and anti-Muslim, which is evident from the following facts:

(a). Most of the Gujarati newspaper as daily full of communal venom against Muslim minority. They highlighted:

(1). Communal activities, Speeches and statements of the leaders and activists of Hindu communal organizations, like RSS, BJP, VHP, Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal and Durga vahini etc in such a glorifying way so as to create incitement and hatred against Muslim minority.

(2). Articles and Feature insulting and disgracing Muslim minority and provoking Hindu mind against Muslim minority;

(3). Above ghasty incident in a way to create the impression that Harijan were burnt alive;

(4). False news of Muslims attacking police;

(5). News of Demolition of Mosques and Dargahs in a way to create impression that Mandir is demolished.

(6). Stabbing of Muslims in a way to create the impression that Hindus are stabbed;

(7). Attack on the property of Muslims in a way to create the impression that property of Hindu is attacked.
(8). Reports and articles justifying ghasty acts of Hindu Communalist of burning alive innocent Muslims, children, Women including pregnant ones and old persons, as well as the lynching of these innocents Muslims and

(9). Hue and Cry of appeasement of Muslim by the government. In fact, there is appeasement of Hindu communalist by the Government.

(b). Gujarat Samachar Daily is No.1 in publishing anti-Muslim materials and provoking communalism against Muslim minority. This daily has even dared not to publish joint peace appeal by the editors of newspapers, as requested by Chief Minister Chiman Bhai Patel on 13-12-1992.55

So it appears that the role of Gujarat Police in the Surat and elsewhere in the post-Ayodhya Gujarat is far from satisfactory the causes and reasons can be many like Surat expanded to more than 1.5 times Baroda’s size, its police force remained smaller than that of Baroda. In contrast to Ahmedabad and Baroda, only a handful of anti-social elements were nabbed in Surat on December 6 under PASA and TADA. Bootlegging and the spread of underground activities and the parallel economy had made the city haven for the police another most important factor of riot P.K Dutta Commissioner of Police (CP) about two months before the outbreak of the communal violence had taken charge of Surat. Mr Datta who is considered as an honest and efficient officer. He had cracked down on the bootleggers and other antisocial elements which was resented by the police in general in Surat as it seriously affected their income from regular ‘Haftas’ (weekly bribe money). Datta could
not control the riots as the policemen, out of resentment, did not obey his orders and also in Surat too, as in other places, the police has been communalised. Looting, killing and burning went on openly and went unchallenged. No victim of violence could rely on the police for his/her safety and security. In fact there was so much resentment among the police against Datta that some people even thought that the riots were engineered to remove Datta from Surat. Though Datta was transferred as result of these riots, there is not much substance in this theory.57

To conclude that the police apparatus has miserably failed in its public duty does not do justice to the manifold sins of omission and commission that induced the strong arm of the state to define Muslims as a category outside the public arena, outlaw s whose life and property was free for all. Victims who managed to reach a police-post begged in vain for help to rescue their family members who were at that moment being attacked. They were sent away with the single message that no men were available who could be spared for that purpose. A man who came to make a statement about the gang rape of his sister was told that his complaint could not be written down because it had happen three days ago. Why had he not come on the day it happened? His protest that the locality had been sealed off by the mob was brushed aside. The non-performance of police during the worst hour crises is the consequence of both the communalisation as well as criminalisation of the corps from top to bottom. In addition to the fact that BJP enjoys a high degree of popularity in this branch of the government personnel of all ranks seems to be more interested in making
money cut of their public function than in the maintenance of law and order. Both officer and constable are known to work in collusion with, rather than in opposition to, their underworld counterparts; smugglers, bootleggers, slumlords, gamblers, dealers in male and female flesh and other goonda parasites. Nowhere in Gujarat a sub-inspector has to pay as high an amount (Rs 3 lakh) for his appointment as in Surat. This ‘donation’ to superiors and politicians is an investment, which will flow back into his pockets in the form of kickbacks, tip and hush money already within one year. What he collect in ‘hafta’ afterwards is for the duration of his posting, pure profit.

When P.K. Datta had been cracking down on bootlegging and criminal activities liquor was not available in the slums, which had infuriated many criminals, lower ranks of police, and the politicians. The latter because of the whole nexus that existed between them and the former. Also some police officials were also involved in octroi evasion racket. The Commissioner of Police (CP) has started inquiring octroi evasion scandal involving a police inspector. The lower level officers were unhappy with the CP. A top level intelligence officer, who wielded a lot of influence on the entire police force was also unhappy with the CP it is highly probable that the intelligence officers manipulated the intelligence reports and connived with lower level officers.
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