

Religions and Development Research Programme

Elusive Peace: Seeking a 'New Normal' in Post-conflict Ahmedabad and Mumbai

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Centre for the Study of Social Systems
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Research Programme

The Religions and Development Research Programme Consortium is an international research partnership that is exploring the relationships between several major world religions, development in low-income countries and poverty reduction. The programme is comprised of a series of comparative research projects that are addressing the following questions:

- How do religious values and beliefs drive the actions and interactions of individuals and faith-based organisations?
- How do religious values and beliefs and religious organisations influence the relationships between states and societies?
- In what ways do faith communities interact with development actors and what are the outcomes with respect to the achievement of development goals?

The research aims to provide knowledge and tools to enable dialogue between development partners and contribute to the achievement of development goals. We believe that our role as researchers is not to make judgements about the truth or desirability of particular values or beliefs, nor is it to urge a greater or lesser role for religion in achieving development objectives. Instead, our aim is to produce systematic and reliable knowledge and better understanding of the social world.

The research focuses on four countries (India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Tanzania), enabling the research team to study most of the major world religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and African traditional belief systems. The research projects will compare two or more of the focus countries, regions within the countries, different religious traditions and selected development activities and policies.

The consortium consists of six research partner organisations, each of which is working with other researchers in the four focus countries:

- University of Birmingham, UK: International Development Department, Department of Theology and Religion, Centre for West African Studies, Centre for the Study of Global Ethics.
- University of Bath, UK: Centre for Development Studies.
- Indian Institute of Dalit Studies, New Delhi.
- Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ibadan.
- University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan.

In addition to the research partners, links have been forged with non-academic and non-government bodies, including Islamic Relief.

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Summary

Hindu-Muslim violence occurred in the Indian cities of Mumbai in 1993 and Ahmedabad in 2002. Hindu violence against Muslims has roots in the Partition of India and Pakistan but also, more recently, in the emergence of a Hindu nationalist agenda. This study aimed to develop a better understanding of the role of religion in violence and its aftermath in India by examining the dynamics and aftermath of the violence, focusing on the roles of the state and Muslim religious organizations in post-conflict resolution, assisting those affected and rebuilding social relations.

The study draws on research undertaken by the author in Gujarat at the time of the violence in 2002 and a recent follow up qualitative study based on secondary sources and extensive semi-structured interviews with Muslim victims, activists, government officials, politicians and others. There were much larger numbers of Muslim victims of the more recent riots in Ahmedabad and they have been much less able to cope in the short term and recover in the longer term, so most attention is given to this city, using the case of Mumbai for comparative purposes.

- Anti-Muslim violence is driven not by 'religious' differences or economic motivations, but by a Hindu nationalist agenda - riots happen in some places and not others because they are deliberately engineered for political purposes.
- The larger scale and more longlasting effects of the anti-Muslim violence in Ahmedabad can be attributed to the backing provided to anti-Muslim sentiments and the violence itself by the government of the State of Gujarat, then and now under the control of the Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, whereas in Mumbai the government and security forces did their best to end the violence, supported by secular citizens, upright officials and concerned politicians.
- The Muslim community in Ahmedabad is mostly poor, and so the political and economic support provided to victims in Mumbai by affluent Muslim businesspeople was rarely available to them. Generally employed in the informal sector, once the violence itself had died down, most Muslims were able to access the same or similar occupations, with similar low incomes, although sometimes in a different part of the city. Some but not all of those with businesses were able to raise the funds to repair or replace lost property, stock and equipment.
- Muslims seek education for their children that will best provide them with access to work opportunities, choosing schools, the medium and the content of education with this goal in mind.
- Because of the absence of a sizable and prosperous Muslim business community in Ahmedabad, Muslim victims had to rely on short-term relief and assistance from Muslim religious organizations (and a few secular non-governmental organizations). The same organizations assisted those who felt unable to return to their original neighbourhoods to relocate to resettlement colonies.

- In the longer term in both cities, the violence has led to increased segregation of residential areas along religious lines, as Muslims have sought security in Muslim-dominated areas.
- Those Muslim organizations that aimed to recruit Muslims to a radical Islamist agenda by providing relief and resettlement areas in Ahmedabad do not seem to have made much progress.
- The priorities of Muslim victims are first to seek safety, second to obtain the government compensation to which they are entitled, and then for children to return to school, livelihoods to be resumed and houses to be repaired or built. However, the inadequacy and difficulty of obtaining compensation and the failure of the state to bring the perpetrators of the violence to justice remain lingering sores, hindering the restoration of their trust in the state to safeguard their rights as citizens.

To prevent future inter-religious conflict and ensure long term improvements to the lives of minority religious groups:

- The main priority is for the citizenship rights of all to be recognized and protected by the law and the courts, and for the perpetrators of past violence to be brought to justice.
- The state and security forces must operate in line with the national constitution; they can play a positive role in establishing mechanisms that establish links between different religious groups and can be activated when necessary, but their accountability can only ultimately be secured through the democratic political process.
- The limited access of Muslims to public and formal private sector jobs must be addressed, in particular through schooling.
- The creation of segregated residential areas cannot be prevented, but appropriate policy responses are needed to prevent them resulting in even greater economic marginalization of Muslims and worsening the social divide between religious communities.

Acknowledgements

In 2007 Surinder Singh Jodhka and Gurharpal Singh, old friends, convinced me to work on how victims of ethnic violence cope with their tragedies over the long term. I had written about several 'riots' in the past, but had never systematically enquired into the long term effects of such violent episodes. I am, therefore, grateful to them for giving me the opportunity to conduct this research, which I found both enriching and humbling. I am painfully aware that many of our academic aspirations are built on the tragedies of others. I hope this effort, by joining with many more profound interventions by scholars and activists, will contribute somewhat to raising awareness of the collective shame that we must all bear because many of our fellow citizens have been denied their basic rights and dignities.

Carole Rakodi has been a source of constant encouragement and advice throughout this period. She was meticulous in her scrutiny of earlier drafts and offered helpful suggestions and bibliographical advice. Without her support this work would have been much poorer. Both Surinder Singh Jodhka and Gurharpal Singh kept up their pressure to make sure I delivered on time and met all their stated objectives. In addition, Surinder Jodhka took special care to make my task easier by attending to many administrative details.

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Acronyms

ANHAD	Act Now for Harmony and Democracy
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
GSRC	Gujarat Sarvajanik Relief Committee
IDEA	International Institute for Development and Electoral Assistance
IRC	Islamic Relief Committee
Jl	Jamaat i-Islami-i-Hind
JU	Jamaat-i-Ulema
RSS	Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
TJ	Tablighi Jamaat
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad

1 Between 'citizens' and the 'people': majoritarian politics in India

1.1 Introduction

The immediate aftermath of ethnic carnage is ruin and devastation, both moral and physical. It demands immediate attention for people who have died, homes destroyed, jobs lost, children scared and out of school and women threatened in every possible way. The victims need first security, second shelter, then jobs. Schools and psychological rehabilitation come later, the last probably never quite accomplished.

Naturally, most studies of inter-faith violence, both in India and elsewhere, focus on the most urgent requirements. The state, voluntary organizations, activists and intellectuals are justifiably involved with these pressing issues, but as peace returns, their attention gradually moves away. It is then assumed that 'normalcy' has been restored and the vigil can be called off; or that the situation is unchanged and waiting to explode again. The state is usually the first agency that proclaims that the status quo ante has been achieved; the activists and voluntary organizations are not convinced that easily. Yet in most cases the victims do not face the same kind of violence again: sometimes never in their life times. Why don't they then forget and bury the past? Or do they?

To pay heed to these issues necessarily demands an examination of what happens to those who face sectarian violence well after the worst is over and the incident almost forgotten in the popular mind. How do they cope once the support goes away, as it must? What still lingers as unfinished? (See also Das and Kleinman, 2001; Robinson, 2005, Mander, 2009, Chandhoke et al, 2007)

This study looks at the long term effects of ethnic (inter-religious¹) violence in two settings: Mumbai post-1993 and the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya², and Ahmedabad post-Godhra³ in 2002. Of the two, more attention is paid to Ahmedabad because the Muslims in this city faced far greater one-sided destruction than did Muslims in Mumbai, and also because the Gujarat government was much less helpful in providing relief to the affected Muslim population. In Mumbai the situation was not as horrendous, though it was bloody enough. As we shall try and show later, the context within which ethnic bloodshed takes place has a lot to do with how victims cope with their tragedies over the long term. In other words, to paraphrase Tolstoy rather liberally, each tragedy is unique in itself.

In this section, the scene is set by examining ideas about the ways in which violent episodes occur during apparently stable periods and their effects in creating a 'new normalcy', in which social relations and residential patterns have taken on new colouring. Features of Indian history and the state at both central and State levels that have given rise to the minoritization of certain religious groups are identified, and three major incidents in which religious minorities were the victims of violence described: Hindu violence against Sikhs in Delhi and Muslims in Mumbai and Gujarat. In order to understand the dynamics of inter-religious conflict, a distinction between nationalist sentiments and Hindu identity as 'a people' and citizenship as conceived in the Indian constitution is made. Although the focus of this study will be on the cities of Ahmedabad and Mumbai, inter-religious violence is not confined to the urban areas; thus the chapter concludes by setting the discussion within a wider context of urban and rural change.

1.2 The powder-keg of normalcy

The popular view that ethnic violence periodically erupts as if by the forces of nature is patently false. However, it continues to have many votaries. That people live in impermanent negotiated arrangements is true, but that does not mean that differences spill out into the streets of their own accord without a limpid political motive among a set of actors. Ethnic violence in India feeds on the vast symbolic reserve of the Partition and the 60 year long border conflagrations with Pakistan. Ernest Renan has said very presciently that all nation-states are built on a grief (Renan, 1990). India's grief has for long been Pakistan, and this has been played to full advantage by generations of ethnicists who exploit nation-state sentiments to minoritize a given population within the country.

Thus, for a successful ethnic operation, innocent insiders must be convincingly cast against seditious 'outsiders' who are out to undermine the sovereignty of the nation-state. These outsiders are like fifth columnists; they look like the rest, even pretend loyalty to the country, but have a deep, dark and devious motive that must be exposed. There is considered to be no reason, therefore, to yield any quarter to them in terms of legal redress and constitutional propriety because these 'outsiders' do not deserve such privileges. In India, from the time of the Partition in 1947, Hindu ethnicists have portrayed the Muslims who remained in India as agents of Pakistan and, therefore, suspect from the start.

There are a number of such Hindu organizations, but the one with the widest base and the most cogent ideological apparatus is the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS began in pre-Partition India, but for a long time attracted only the urban propertied and commercial classes. In recent years it has grown in strength and is now active in parts of rural and tribal India as well. The way violence erupted in Gujarat villages in 2002 would have been inexplicable but for the reach of the RSS in the countryside and its new found ideological appeal amongst a section of the traditionally deprived. Since Independence the number of such Hindu sectarian organizations has grown, the most prominent being the Shiv Sena, the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Though they have their internal differences, they are widely believed to belong to one 'saffron family' or the *Sangh Parivar*. There are more than three family members, all having in common their hatred towards Pakistan, and by extension, Muslims who have made India their home (see for example Golwalkar, 1966, pp 123-4).

Such political tendencies towards ethnicity occur the world over - one can find them in advanced democracies as well. Sectarian and ascription-based identities do not just erupt, spewing lava on calm arcadian slopes. Nevertheless, the origins of such sentiments can only be plotted after the fact. Until the eruption, the assumption that the normal can be interrupted is hard to imagine, but once it happens, it is difficult to believe that the normal persisted for so long. Although it is recognized that there might be dangers lurking down the road, it is assumed that trust and goodwill will persist. In this world view, boundaries between social groups are amicably patrolled, manners calibrated and expectations more or less taken for granted. Habermas and Bourdieu are the foremost among the contemporary thinkers who have put forward this position with great success.

Convincing though their argument might seem, the long term effects of ethnic violence raise issues that cannot be easily incorporated within this view. The enormity of a religious clash, such as the ones in Gujarat or Mumbai (or the Sikh killings of 1984), leaves little doubt that social relations do not return to an untheorized lifeworld of the status quo ante, and nor do they establish a tension-free new status quo. There is always a remainder of doubt and misrecognition in all interactions, however repetitive they may become. Most of the time they feed harmless prejudices that lack a future. This is why communities like the Hindus and Muslims can live side by side for long periods of time without actually resorting to violence. However, when political craft successfully manipulates such social distances, an ethnic carnage of the kind that happened in Gujarat in 2002 may occur.

Talcott Parsons once said that the most intriguing aspect of society is its ability to sit tight on a powder keg without obvious signs of nervousness. This awareness of internalized tension is missing in Jurgen Habermas's concept of 'lifeworld' (Habermas, 1987) or Pierre Bourdieu's 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977). In both these views, it appears as if the 'normal' is pre-negotiated, determined and unproblematically lived through. However, social relations are never like that: one state of normalcy succeeds another with greater or gentler rapidity, but in all cases there are underlying tensions.

It is only when the break with the once 'normal' happens suddenly that attention turns to these built-in conflict predisposing factors. When, in more fortunate circumstances, the normal shifts ground in a more stately fashion, this transition is remarked upon much later, sometimes after generations, by historians of the 'longue duree'. However, what needs to be acknowledged is that the 'untheorized' probably seems that way because any attempt to make matters explicit might let the dogs out. This is why everyday actions tiptoe around these 'untheorized' regions (in the Habermasian sense), such as those that involve relations between communities, genders, generations and classes. Contrary to Habermas's lifeworld, the untheorized includes potentially disruptive elements which remain quiet for want of political attention.

The 'working normal' of everyday life, unlike Habermas's 'lifeworld', (Habermas, 1987) is replete with discontinuities and discord. Yet because these have been so sequestered in routine practice, social relations can proceed without frequent interruptions by contrary interpretations of meaning. Roberto Toscano refers to this aspect by recalling Xavier Bougarel's work on ethnicity and traditions in Bosnia. The "idyllic image of inter-ethnic co-existence" needs to be replaced by "the awareness of the recurrent conflictuality that is historically inherent in the cohabitation of different groups on the same territory" (Toscano, 1998, p 68). In other words, the "good neighbour policy" between groups works only after the limits of transgression are mutually recognized, so that "familiarity and appeasement" can proceed side by side (ibid).

This is why it is necessary to understand the internalization of strained conditions under which communities learn to live next to each other in a 'new normal'. As in the past, this 'new normal' too is mindful of distances, differences and tensions between groups, but bears the signs of fresh historical circumstances. Social relations that have been recently disrupted by political philippics may exhibit an overt sense of peace, but everybody is careful about keeping it that way. As Jackie Assayag observes,

the much talked of 'co-existence' between Hindus and Muslims is really an outcome of "antagonistic tolerance" rather than warm feelings of brotherhood (Assayag, 2004, p 41). Violence is under the surface and socialization is all about how to live with the presence of this violence. Obviously, there is violence by the perpetrator and violence suffered by the victim - the two are not the same; both perpetrators and victims negotiate with violence from different vantage points. In a clinical sense, they are both implicated in violence, although only one side suffers much more than the other. At the end of the day, a new normal emerges and, with it, a new negotiated boundary between communities that may differ in significant ways from the earlier one that has been disrupted.

The history of human relations is thus the movement from one tense, negotiated contract to another, from one contested normal to the next. This seems to be the fate of all hitherto existing societies and holds true at every level, from the domestic to the community to the state. The periods in between are taken to be normal, as the old negotiated boundaries are being more or less carefully, but not unselfconsciously, observed. When this normal is broken in a sudden, cataclysmic fashion then it is always because a group of social actors see a clear interest in doing so. This interest could spring from reasons of class, status, or even primordial honour, as in religion, clan or caste. These are not unrelated sentiments, for while one of them may be the principal factor, the others might well play supporting roles.

India has seen two kinds of sectarian violence: one based on caste and language, and the other on religious hatred. Sectarians of the first kind leverage mass bigotry by using the arguments of inegalitarian distribution and even moral economy. On the other hand, ethnicists, such as those who were active in Mumbai in 1993 or Gujarat in 2002, find it politically rewarding to fuse religion with the nation-state. The nation-state is susceptible to such pressures, as it builds on traditions, homogeneities, soil and blood. It is because ethnic activists see an immediate advantage in political terms that they choose to upset the existing normal and hope that a new 'normalcy' will emerge under a fresh set of terms, conditions and negotiating spaces that are greatly to their advantage (see Freitag, 1996).

A clear snap with the past, or attempts to make such a break, must therefore depend upon political mobilization. Otherwise, the slow grinding of structures does its job without taxing the generosity of the

existing normal beyond the breaking point. Like class wars, ethnic wars do not just happen. They are made to happen when, at a minimum, one side finds it politically rewarding to turn the knife (see Brass, 1997). Otherwise, communities live next to each other in a negotiated and carefully observed peace, where neither party takes too much liberty with the other, knowing full well that violence is but a skin scratch away. Sikh survivors in Delhi after the 1984 killings retrospectively came to the conclusion that the violence against them had not been fortuitous. Instead, they argued, it “was part of the larger vengeance that had been plotted against them to check their growing social, political and economic pre-eminence” (Srinivasan, 1990, p 314). Right or wrong, that is how many victims tried to make sense of what happened to them.

Democracy, which, at one level, is a great arbiter of differences and a sentinel of liberal values, can also foster longstanding popular prejudices; the many perennial peeves of everyday life. By insisting on legal equality between communities, such as Hindus and Muslims, room is given to both sides to constantly bicker over rights and claims (see Tambiah, 1997, p 335). That this can happen under normal conditions with a reasonable degree of success is because the dyadic units are symmetrically positioned by law as equal partners in tension. But when the law itself is undermined, as it has been when there are clear political interests in doing so (for example, Punjab 1984 and Gujarat 2002), then Lacan’s limitless carnival (or *jouissance*) of violence takes over (Lacan, 1977). Democracy is that delicately positioned!

1.3 Inter-faith relations: alternative scenarios

Multiple religious identities are perfectly capable of co-existing with one another so long as the power asymmetries between adherents of different faiths are so vast that there is no room for contest. After all, only equals fight - unequals may resent, but can go no further. In a Hindu fiefdom, no Muslim would dare raise the issue of cow slaughter; likewise, in a Muslim kingdom the spire of the Hindu temple cannot be taller than that of the mosque (Pandey, 1990). In such cases, religious boundaries are meant specifically to cordon off people of different faiths so that they can perform their rituals without interference (see Barth, 1969). In British India, for example, those who worked in colonial establishments came home to ‘purity’ after the day’s work in ‘ritually neutralized’ office spaces (Singer, 1972).

Though there have been years of peace, traditionally there have also been periods of great religious violence and intolerance. However, once the victor and the vanquished were clearly demarcated, the same communities could live together in apparent harmony for centuries. In pre-modern times, once the victor had decisively conquered the vanquished, there was no room for community debates. The norms of the rulers held, and if any concession was made to the vanquished, it was only after superior power was obsequiously acknowledged.

Medieval India is saturated with such instances. When Akbar captured Chittor in 1557-8, he cold-bloodedly killed 30,000 Hindu soldiers on the day the fort fell (Kolff, 1990, p 10). After that, there was no Hindu-Muslim conflict for centuries in Rajasthan, and indeed in much of the Mughal Empire. After having demonstrated his power, Akbar then had Hindu texts translated into Persian and inaugurated the *Deen I Ilahi*, which was a combination of Hindu and Islamic theology. Likewise, the Turks took about a hundred years to capture Bengal, but after that there was peace between the communities. This can also be seen in the relationships between Genghiz Khan and the Confucians/Budhists of China, between Muslims and Christians in Cordoba, and, indeed, between Hindus and Muslims in large parts of India. At such historical moments, it is not surprising that the vanquished were able to adroitly adjust their secular interests to that of the ruling power, and how magnanimously the rulers were often able to guarantee their subjects freedom of religious observances, provided there was no threat to their rule from below. In the medieval world, to be able to survive without religious persecution was a matter of privilege, but not of right (see Kolff, 1990; Pandey, 1990; Bayly, 1985).

Modern-day democracy and the universal franchise has obviously made a big difference to all of this. To be able to practice one's tradition has now become a matter of *right*, as all faiths and communities have been granted equal legal status. In the past, tolerance may have been shown to other religions, but this was a species of noblesse oblige. The religion of the ruling power was always considered to be the best and had the greatest temporal authority. Paradoxically, it is when religious equality is established in law that religious identities tend to get sharper, are more frequently employed, and cause tensions almost on a quotidian basis (Oberoi, 1994; Pandey, 1990). Multicultural politics in many democratic states are examples of this phenomenon: there are lingering disputes regarding what kinds of clothes are appropriate for schoolgoing children, which days should be declared as mandatory public holidays, or which holy book should be used for taking oaths for judicial purposes.

But all of these are less egregious manifestations of religious politics and can be resolved constitutionally if handled with sensitivity. Instances of such disputes are frequent in America and Europe and are too well known to be repeated here.

Despite the fact that all the major world religions are present in India, a large number of potentially volatile religious issues and differences have never been raised to the level of political disputes. Holidays, school and army uniforms, public holidays, the civil code, etc., bear the imprint of legality and constitutional correctness (see Shiva Rao (Ed), 1966). This cannot take our attention away from the fact that India has all too often been seized by political campaigns that are based on religious hatred. It is with this kind of sectarian political passion that this work is concerned.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah's advocacy of the two nation theory gives the impression that Hindus and Muslims are culturally unsuited to live together; it is as if cow worshippers cannot get along with cow eaters (Robinson, 1979). Their cultures were, it was said, programmed on what W.H.Auden once called 'incompatible diets', and were hence incapable of reconciliation. It is true that there is an inbuilt tension between cow eaters and cow worshippers, but that need not grow into ethnic killings. Lives can be routine so long as there are no obvious transgressions of the agreed upon boundaries. As mentioned earlier, these zones are consciously in place and their relevance is observed in cautious habit. Christians too are beef eaters, but there is no political advantage in pitting Hindus against them on this count. There is, however, perceived to be power and pelf waiting if Muslims can be targeted successfully at the right time, or if it can be credibly stated that a certain community is siding with Pakistan or, as was the case with the killing of Sikhs in 1984, that it wanted another Partition along the lines of 1947.

1.4 Contemporary religious majoritarianism: marginalizing tradition

Ethnic politics, when sponsored by the majority community may be called 'majoritarianism'.

Majoritarianism refers to the kind of political activism in which the majority community in a nation-state attacks a minority community in the name of protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. In India, majoritarianism is expressed primarily in religious terms, for the Hindus enjoy a clear numerical preponderance (81 per cent of the population). Muslims account for about 13 per cent and the rest is made up of Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, etc. Majoritarianism does not work on linguistic

lines on a national scale in India because there are as many as 18 major languages that are constitutionally recognized. However, anti-migrant linguistic majoritarianism can feature within states, as it did with the Shiv Sena in Mumbai. These animosities remain localized and do not spread across the country. In 1961, the Indian Census recognized as many as 1,652 spoken languages nationwide, making any attempt at linguistic majoritarianism difficult to cobble together. Nor can caste mobilize majoritarian sentiments without uneasy coalitions, as there are more than 3,000 castes, and nobody can tell the exact number. This is why majoritarianism in India is best expressed along religious lines.

The distinctions on which religious majoritarianism plays are not necessarily sanctioned by a hoary and ancient past. Once an issue emerges, then a retrospective history of antagonism is not difficult to manufacture. Even though such antagonisms happen much too frequently, they have little to do with religious doctrines. In other words, religious activists do not necessarily draw from the scriptural aspects of their faith, but depend heavily on certain ostensible practices that clearly separate the faiths at the most obvious level. Once this is done, then the observances of other communities become ideological points for political mobilization. Hindu majoritarians, for example, would identify certain practices first as anti-Hindu and then, by extension, anti-national. The issues of cow worship or militant *jihad* receive very little space, if any, in Hindu or Islamic sacerdotal texts respectively. Yet they can become the sole motivating factor for many ethnicists. In everyday expressions of religious identity, dependence on politico-religious virtuosos is a necessary feature. It is they who exaggerate the distance between Hindus and Muslims to their political advantage. For Hindu majoritarians, what is best in India can be attributed to Hinduism, and, as a corollary, whatever is evil is on account of Pakistan. Without the involvement of such virtuosos, it would be difficult to work up the required stridency for mass activism. At this point it is worth recalling what Lord Acton had to say on the subject:

Fanaticism displays itself in the masses, but the masses were rarely fanatised, and the crimes ascribed to them were commonly due to the calculations of dispassionate politicians. When the king of France undertook to kill all the Protestants... (i)t was nowhere the spontaneous act of the population.... (Acton, 1985).

This implies that when majoritarianism erupts in the form of a 'riot', this does not happen in the heat of the moment. This is not only valid for contemporary times but also, as the quote above indicates, when the king of France set out to exterminate Protestants from his domain. Before a riot takes place,

rioters must be confident that the power equation between them and their intended victims remains asymmetrically in their favour from start to finish. Rioters are not ready to risk themselves, for they seek gratification only in 'self-indulgent violence'. Most rioters are ready to *kill* for a cause, but not to *die* for one. This is why both Brass and Horowitz believe that without administrative support, ethnic rioters rarely take to the streets (Brass, 1991, 1997; Horowitz, 2002)

Rioters, therefore, use tradition very superficially. What really prompts them to activism is not so much the defence of tradition as an assurance that they can expect self-indulgent violence to be gratified. Loot is one reward, but, in addition, the attraction of asserting masculinity in a risk-free situation is also very tempting. This aspect of ethnic mobilization should not be lost sight of. It has been clearly evident in the Gujarat carnage, Shiv Sena's excesses and the attacks against Sikhs following Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination.

Majoritarian movements have often been misunderstood because of the belief that tradition has complete sway over the minds of most people, particularly in less advanced societies (see Dirks, 2001 for an extensive treatment). The closer one looks at these mass mobilizations and acts of violence, the clearer it becomes that tradition has very little to do with them. Neither Mumbai's Shiv Sena nor Sikh extremism in Punjab drew on tradition in any significant sense. There is no trace of traditional rivalry between Maharashtrians and South Indians, neither in Mumbai, nor elsewhere in India. Yet the Shiv Sena used this cleavage effectively in the 1960s and 1970s to assert Maharashtrian culture over the rest in Mumbai. Likewise, the Sikhs had been considered for the previous three centuries to be the sword arm of Hinduism when suddenly, in a few short years, they were transformed into killers of Hindus and wreckers of the Indian nation-state. Hindu-Muslim antagonisms seem to have a historic pedigree, but here again the situation is highly variable. In Kashmir, for example, the Hindus and Muslims were opposed to each other not as religious communities but rather on class lines. When the Kashmir valley was under princely rule, large landlords and officials of the court were usually Hindus. In fact, the Muslims of Kashmir, until recently, were extremely suspicious of Sunni orthodoxy, as found across the border in Pakistan. That all this has changed significantly in Kashmir has more to do with the politics of territorial aggrandisement on the part of both India and Pakistan than with religion (see Akbar, 1985).

If ethnicists were to be genuinely influenced by their traditional texts and sacred lore, they would find greater areas of agreement between themselves and their hated other than elements of hostility and discord. Contrary to Barth, I believe that most religions have identical value standards. To believe that a wide discrepancy in these standards causes alienation and distance between communities as Barth claims (1969, p 19) is clearly misplaced. When ascriptive political mobilizations get off the ground, they give the superficial impression of being charged by tradition, but very often such movements are fired by prejudices of recent vintage, which popular memory has selectively highlighted and has thereby “created something new” (Juergensmeyer, 1994, p 201). In fact, in the most climactic phase of mobilization, the demonizing of the other takes place on a very parsimonious principle: it is not the wealth of tradition that is recalled, but a sharp and angular diacritic that seems to make all the difference. It is, therefore, not surprising that leaders of these movements are usually not recognized religious virtuosos - they are instead professional politicians who use religious orthodoxy for political gain.

Bal Thackeray, the head of the Shiv Sena, makes no bones about the fact that Hindu tradition must answer the Muslim challenge. He stridently calls for retaliation as a way of reasserting Hindu pride (Gupta, 1982, pp 138-9). He does not think it is necessary for Shiv Sainiks to be familiar with the sacerdotal texts. Indeed, this is the case with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) members too. Though many RSS activists take a degree of pride in knowing smatterings of Sanskrit, they are really very poorly versed in Hindu tradition and philosophy. In pre-Partition Punjab, the activists of Arya Samaj (another neo-Hindu organization) often shied away from public debates with more orthodox Sanatani Hindus, for the latter insisted that such verbal duels be conducted in Sanskrit. The fact that the RSS uniform is a white shirt and a pair of khaki shorts with canvas running shoes reveals their distance from traditional Hinduism. If anything, their outfit is a caricatured imitation of what the Baden-Powell inspired western boy scouts wear.

Sikh secessionism in the 1980s was another case: its ideological leader, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, never managed to get elected as the head of the Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (the legally recognized organizing authority for Sikh religious shrines, and thus also for Sikh orthodoxy). Although in the late 1970s, the Congress Party strongly supported his candidature, he just did not make the grade. Thus when I met the ‘moderate’ Sikh leader, Sant Harcharan Singh Longowal, in early 1985, he

categorically asserted that until Bhindranwale was killed during Operation Bluestar in 1984 (when the army entered the Golden Temple to flush out the Sikh militants), making him a martyr, the man's claim to religious leadership was very questionable.

1.5 The challenges of liberal democracy: going beyond the nation-state

Democratic politics requires the careful nurturing of the principle of fraternity, but this does not spring to life easily. It is constantly undermined by the principle of majoritarianism, which speaks in the name of the 'people' but not for the cause of 'citizens'. Fraternity has to toil hard against the universal anthropological failing to spontaneously differentiate between communities and cultures. This is what allows majoritarianism to strike out, ostensibly to protect the nation-state's sovereignty. In such renditions of democracy, it is said to be the 'people', bound by culture and tradition, who must be vigilant against minorities, on the basis that they are the people's 'natural' enemies. The notions of fraternity and citizenship are given a wide berth. Unfortunately, the anthropological failing just alluded to survives, even after a liberal constitution is established by law. This is why democracies have to be perpetually on their guard. Practising democracy is not easy, and has never been. It is far from being a 'natural' social arrangement, yet its gains are enormous, which is why safeguarding and extending democracy constitutes one of the most important challenges of our time.

In majoritarian attacks on minorities, the nation-state, along with its territory and sovereignty, become critical variables. Majoritarian activists claim that no legality or niceties of democracy should prevent them from setting right the targeted minorities who are not considered to be authentically of the soil and are therefore regarded as enemies of the nation-state. Such minorities are believed to be incapable of being true citizens - they are either already traitors, or are traitors in the making.

Let me exemplify this with the Indian case. Independence from British colonialism in 1947 became a bloody affair because of the Partition and the emergence of Pakistan. The trauma of leaving what was always home and becoming a refugee, over and above the frenzy of killings that took place at the same time, aided Hindu nationalists in post-Independence India. Hindu organizations like the RSS, the Jana Sangh and, after 1980, the Bharatiya Janata Party (or BJP) found it convenient to portray the Muslims who stayed behind in India as agents of Pakistan. To this day, the memory of the Partition is

invoked in the many riots that have targeted Muslims in India. In order to comprehend the overall appeal of Hindu majoritarianism, it is necessary to factor in Pakistan and the significance of territory in any imagination of the nation-state.

The majoritarian alternative advocates a return to the original condition of the nation-state and keeps reviving fears and prejudices of the past that are part of the country's collective memory. Ancient enemies are recalled and memories of grief and purported injustices kept alive. In contemporary nation-states, this is best done by portraying the religious other as those who owe loyalty to enemies in other lands. Their supposed extra-territorial loyalties justify the suspension of their democratic and legal rights, as they are not considered to be full members of the nation-state in any case. As noted earlier, such an ethnic conflict might occur where the nation-state is thematized by a majority population acting in the name of the 'people' – in this case, the 'authentic' Indians. It should be borne in mind that Hindu chauvinists consider Muslims and Christians as less Indian because their religions originated outside India. However, this distinction cannot be pushed too hard, for when Hindu ethnicists attacked Sikhs in 1984, such a distinction could not be upheld. In such cases, not all religious minorities are threatened, but only those against whom, at a particular juncture, a case can be made that they have extra-territorial loyalties. It is in the interest of such ethnicists to minoritize sections within the nation-state by pillorying them as traitors. The task of building a nation-state project on the ideal of citizenship may be delayed because such ethnicists gain the upper hand by playing on memory and anxiety.

For majoritarians it is the nation-state and memories linked to the nation-state that constitute 'first order recall'. Everything else must serve this cause or be silent. It is, therefore, necessary to appreciate how ethnic movements thematize the blood, soil and history-powered versions of the nation-state and thereby subvert the cause of citizenship that is intersubjective in character. India provides many examples of this, Gujarat 2002 being the latest, although one might also recall the violence in Mumbai in 1993 and the anti-Sikh carnages nationwide in 1984. Religious conflict that arraigns the antagonists as majority and minority in a democratic society necessarily impoverishes the notion of citizenship and valorizes that of the 'people'.

Religions that symbolically flag up national unity believe that 'ethnic cleansing' is the best way of eradicating the impurities that are perceived to have entered the body politic of a nation-state. Most if not all nation-states are prone to this kind of politics and India is certainly no exception. Majoritarians in India allow limited room for compromise and negotiations for, in their view, any space given to minorities literally takes away from the territorial grandeur of the nation-state. Such religiously inclined ethnic movements are, in the final analysis, an indicator of nervousness regarding the durability of the nation-state and its territorial possessions.

The tension clearly is between *citizens* and *people*. In a pure nationalist route, then the gross aggregate of being a people means more than citizenship. In a liberal democracy, it is not the people but citizens who take precedence. A nation-state is, therefore, faced with two options - to be liberal democratic or to be plain nationalist: either it delves into memories of blood and soil, or it moves on to a different plane and constructs a national identity based on citizenship. However, concepts of citizenship are outcomes of deliberate reflective justice and do not emerge spontaneously. Citizenship requires consideration and care; it cannot be left to spontaneous tendencies within nationalist streams. For citizenship to realize itself, it is necessary to move beyond mere passion and sentiments, despite their usefulness in setting up the nation-state and dismantling the *ancien regime*. After this job is done, it is necessary to deliberately embrace reflexive justice: that is how the transition to liberal democratic structures of governance can be effected, in which the citizen, as an individual, has inviolable rights that are culture blind (Rawls, 1971, pp 42-8; see also Gupta, 2000, pp 160-185).

The tempting alternative for which ethnicists easily opt is to harp on about the nation-state and the passions that brought it about, and to relegate issues of citizenship from active consideration. This allows them to plot out the dividing lines between 'us' and 'them' with great ease when ethnic attacks are launched. History and myth, in equal measure, bolster popular imaginations of who are the true and rightful people of the nation-state, and who are the pretenders waiting to stab the country in the back. While there is no doubt that the Partition had a dominant role to play in all of this, others argue that the Partition itself was an outcome of the colonial policy to divide and rule India.

One of the reasons why the nation-state does not figure significantly in studies of ethnicity is because of the general opinion that political unities in countries like India are highly forced and artificial. If,

however, the formation of nation-states was to be examined in a comparative perspective, it would immediately become apparent that there is no privileged route to their formation - there is no 'yellow brick road'. Each nation-state is a unique combination and has come into being in its own special way. As Renan characteristically demonstrated, every defeat that Italy suffered contributed to the making of Italy, while every victory that Turkey accomplished "spelled doom for Turkey" (Renan, 1990, p 11). Nor was Italy united by language. Therefore, instead of asking how a nation-state comes into being, it is much better to be clear on what a nation-state does once it has emerged. Thus, like the philosophers of the Indian *Samkhya* tradition, it is often wise to understand a phenomenon in terms of its effects rather than its causes.

What every durable nation-state has succeeded in doing is to make its territory inviolable and almost sacred. In the case of India, this sacralizing sentiment was an outcome of the bloodshed that accompanied the Partition of 1947. Before India became Independent, leaders of the national movement were rather unclear about what India's territorial lineaments were going to be. Many of them even argued that the right to secession should not be taken away, even after India became Independent. But once Partition happened, any further talk on the right to secession was tabooed. The indescribable brutalities of the Partition seared the territorial holdings of India in popular consciousness like nothing else. From then on, phrases like 'not an inch of ground' and 'not a blade of grass' will we ever cede to the enemy became quite common in nationalist discourses. Once again, Renan's belief that it is grief more than joy that binds nationalist sentiments is relevant (Renan, 1990, p 19). Every nation-state, it follows, would be blessed if it had a grief of its own. India's grief is Pakistan and Pakistan's grief is India, but a grief of this sort thrives on memory and, I would argue, pushes back demands for secular citizenship. The next three sections illustrate this argument by reference to three instances: Sikh extremism in Punjab, Shiv Sena in Mumbai and the 2003 carnage in Gujarat. These examples provide a many-sided view of what constitutes the politics of majoritarianism in India.

1.6 From sword arm to ethnic enemies: the minoritization of Sikhs

It is not as if any one religious community is a natural target for majoritarians. The manner in which the Sikhs were minoritized after Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination demonstrates that religious identities and enemies are constantly constructed and no community can really be beyond the reach of majoritarian prejudice. As mentioned earlier, it was often argued that cow worshippers and beef eaters

are bound to clash, in order to explain Hindu-Muslim antagonisms in India (see Robinson, 1979). Further, as Islam is not an Indic religion, it could easily be portrayed in negative colours. Many anti-Christian activists in India also refer to the fact that missionaries have come from other countries bringing a faith that was not born on Indian soil and should therefore be treated with the utmost suspicion.

This line of reasoning does not hold in the case of the Sikhs. Sikhs do not eat beef, and Sikhism emerged from the heart of India. Indeed, before 1982, it was almost inconceivable that Sikhs could be seen as enemies of the nation-state, and as Hindu killers and bloodthirsty terrorists. Yet, this is the way they were imaged in the minds of a large number of people throughout the country, particularly after Mrs. Indira Gandhi was shot dead by her Sikh body guards in 1984, despite the fact that, from the time of the ninth Sikh Guru in the 16th century for over 300 uninterrupted years, the Sikhs were seen as the sword arm of Hinduism (see Oberoi, 1994). This position was consolidated during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule in the late 18th century - the high water mark of Sikh dominance in pre-modern India - when he included a number of Hindu rituals in Sikhism (McLeod, 1989, pp 30-40, 68). Sikh valour too has been immortalized in numerous accounts in various vernacular texts, not to mention the stirring poem on the Gurus (particularly Guru Gobind Singh) by India's most famous poet and nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Further, the Sikh was in many ways held up as a kind of role model: to be a Sikh was to be economically prosperous, independent and enterprising (Fox, 1984, pp 480-4).

The sociological question then is: how did the demonization of Sikhs take place so swiftly in the 1980s?

The career graph of the Sikh-dominated Akali Dal party of Punjab was not uniform between 1969 and 1980, nor can we say that this party represented Sikhs in general. Although Sikhs in Punjab did nurse some common grievances, for example with regard to water distribution with neighbouring states and also on the question of drawing Punjab's territorial boundaries with Haryana, an immediately contiguous state, their principal grievance was the fact that Punjab had to share its capital with Haryana. This was certainly an anomaly. When the unilingual province of Bombay was bifurcated to form Maharashtra and Gujarat, Gujarat got a separate capital and Maharashtra got to keep Mumbai. This was justified on the grounds that Mumbai has always been a Maharashtrian speaking area, and

hence Maharashtra has a rightful claim over it. In which case, said the Akali leaders, Chandigarh, by the same logic, should be the capital of Punjab and Haryana should seek its own capital elsewhere (see the *Anandpur Sahib Resolution*, reproduced in Gupta, 1997, pp 212-218).

Sikhs in general believe even today that their case for Chandigarh as the capital of Punjab is clearly just. That this demand has been repeatedly rebuffed by the Congress Party at the centre has been the cause of much resentment in the Punjab. Instead of addressing the issue, the Congress took a different tack. In 1980, when it returned to power at the all-India level, and even in Punjab, Congress' strategy was to divide the Sikhs and make inroads into the Sikh Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC), which runs the Sikh religious establishments all over Punjab and has chapters in different parts of the country. The SGPC has enormously well endowed coffers, which naturally attract the attention of all political parties. The Congress deeply resented the uninterrupted control the Akalis had over the SGPC and decided to end this monopoly. In pursuance of this policy, they picked up a hitherto unknown, but belligerent, Sikh virtuoso from an obscure hermitage and propped him up as their candidate - this man was Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale (Juergensmeyer, 2000, pp 88-9; see also Jeffrey, 1986).

At around the same time, the Congress also started proclaiming that the Anandpur Sahib resolution was a secessionist document. This characterization did not really make any ripples across the country. For that to happen, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale needed to assume the persona of the genie out of the bottle. With the help he received from the Congress from the late 1970s (until he turned against his masters in 1983), he managed to put the established and moderate Akali Dal on the back foot. Bhindranwale demanded that Sikhs return to their pristine ways, observe the various injunctions placed on them by their holy books, abjure from drinking and smoking, pray regularly and, above all, uphold Sikh dignity. His single most remarkable diacritic, however, was that in a highly suggestive fashion, which was both contumely and convoluted, he made the claim for a Sikh homeland.

While doing all this, Bhindranwale also portrayed the Akalis as soft and ineffective Sikhs (shades of Thackeray's characterization of the RSS, see Gupta, 1982, p 134, 139). That the Akalis had not yet been able to wrest Chandigarh for Punjab was easily the best evidence Bhindranwale had to prove the

impotence of the moderate Sikh leader, Sant Longowal, and the traditional Akali leadership. This prompted a good deal of infighting among Akalis, which got worse as Khalistani militants began to roam the Punjab countryside, killing people at will and at random. Forced into a corner, the Akalis failed to call Bhindranwale's bluff, and remained pinned and wriggling in an awkwardly angular position, while Bhindranwale kept growing in stature, feeding off Akali ineptitude.

Hindus in the Punjab were getting restive with the militancy that was gaining prominence in both the countryside and the cities of this prosperous northwestern state. The Congress argument that Sikhs in general, moderate and militants alike, wanted another partition was slowly beginning to gain credibility. The Congress portrayal of the Anandpur Sahib resolution as a secessionist document gradually gained ground. Interestingly enough, very few had in fact read the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, even as they condemned it. In fact, this resolution was far from seditious or secessionist: it begins by saying that Punjab is an integral part of India. Nevertheless, in the context of growing militancy on the part of Bhindranwale and his followers, as well as the inability of the moderate Akalis to take on the secessionists frontally, the Congress interpretation of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution gained credibility. Arms began to flow into the Golden Temple and there were occasional shootouts both inside and immediately outside the holy precincts. Bhindranwale established his headquarters in the Akal Takht (which adjoins the sanctum sanctorum) and the control of the militants was plainly visible to everybody (see Amrik Singh (Ed), 1985 for more details).

It must also be said that the administration was very ineffective in reining in this militancy. There were police and service personnel everywhere, as well as armed men in unmarked police vehicles, but they had very little actual impact. In fact, many Sikhs have argued quite convincingly that it was often difficult to separate policemen from terrorists. My own experience in Punjab during those years leads me to believe that the law enforcement machinery was acting politically and not administratively. However, from the outside, the inability of the moderate Sikh leadership to counter Bhindranwale and the spiralling militancy in Punjab made the Congress position on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution very plausible to millions in the country.

All of this came to a climax when the army attacked the Golden Temple to flush out Bhindranwale in the burning summer of 1984 (Chakravarti and Haksar, 1987; see also Madan, 1991, pp 621-2). This

operation certainly succeeded in killing Bhindranwale, but it also created deep resentment in the Sikh community. A large majority felt that there had been other ways of apprehending Bhindranwale. Many of them argued, including some retired service officers, that a siege of the temple would have been a much better option than running tanks into the premises, demolishing important structures such as the Akal Takht and pock marking the Golden Temple with bullets. This angry Sikh response was seen to confirm their support of Bhindranwale, and misperceptions played upon misperceptions to create the image that Sikhs were essentially in favour of another partition. Once Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated, this fear of Sikh secessionism grew rapidly nationwide, and Rajiv Gandhi, Mrs. Gandhi's successor, capitalized on it to win a huge electoral victory in 1985 (see Kapur, 1987, p 226-242).

My field work in the Punjab during those years convinced me that only a small number of Sikhs actually supported Bhindranwale. A large majority, on the other hand, were deeply hurt at the way the Golden Temple had been ransacked in 1984, and were even more bitter about the fact that so many Sikhs were killed after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination yet not a single person was brought to book on this account. The complicity of several key Congress figures in orchestrating the violence against Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere in 1984 has been compellingly documented in the 1984 booklet entitled *Who are the Guilty?* issued by the Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights and the Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties. These facts became widely known in all of Punjab within a few weeks of the publication of this document.

1.7 Shiv Sena: the minoritization of Muslims

Ethnic mobilizations that use religion to thematize the nation-state find it much easier to survive than when they call on issues that are more localized in character. When the Shiv Sena came into existence in 1966, its animus was principally directed at those South Indians who had migrated to Mumbai. At that point, Shiv Sena argued that Maharashtrian 'sons of the soil' were being robbed of their jobs by South Indians. In 1967, Shiv Sena found itself somewhat isolated from mainstream politics, as no national party would align with it for fear of losing support in South India. Sensing this, in 1967 Bal Thackeray quickly changed his position. He declared that South Indians were still Indians, but communists and Muslims were not to be trusted, because they owed allegiance to Russia and Pakistan, respectively. In his characteristic style, he derided left wing parties in India by saying that, when it rains in Moscow, they open their umbrellas in Mumbai (see for detailed analysis Gupta, 1982).

When the Shiv Sena changed tack from targeting the South Indians and moved on to Muslims, it gave itself a kind of national legitimacy it had previously lacked. Had it stuck to its original plan of attacking just the South Indians, it would have had some residual influence in Mumbai, but would not be the major political player on the national stage that it is today. By taking on a majoritarian religious identity, Shiv Sena has benefited enormously. Interestingly, its single minded *Hindutva* started at a time when the traditional Congress party, which had ruled India for decades, was beginning to renege on its secular agenda by inciting religious tensions among Sikhs and Hindus in Punjab and caste wars in Karnataka and Gujarat. Without taking into account this larger national context, the Shiv Sena's success as a Hindu party cannot be fully comprehended.

The Mumbai violence of 1993 gave Shiv Sena yet another opportunity to strike. The Mumbai riots began on December 6, 1992, on the day the Babri Masjid was demolished in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh (UP). The dispute over this Masjid (or mosque) had begun over a hundred years previously, but had lost much of its vigour over the decades. It was raised again by the RSS and BJP in the late 1980s, during the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi, which argued that it had been built by the Mughal Emperor Babar on the birthplace of the Hindu god, Lord Rama. Hindu sectarians wanted the mosque destroyed and the Muslim population was naturally opposed to this. When activists of the 'saffron family' destroyed the mosque in December 1992, Muslims in large parts of India were incensed. In Mumbai, their reaction was perhaps the most violent. In an expression of pure anger and a search for revenge, Muslims in Mumbai went on the rampage, attacking Hindu homes, temples and places of business. Where Hindus were in a minority, they took refuge by going to the homes of relations and friends living in 'safe' areas. Police action was almost immediate and soon Hindus found it possible to return to their homes, with some exceptions. No camps were set up anywhere to accommodate those Hindus who had fled their homes in the first week of December 1992. I still do not have a clear idea as to which organizations prompted the Muslims of Mumbai to come out as they did, but it is unlikely that this was a purely spontaneous act. Nevertheless, as the attacks against Hindus found no supporters in the state apparatus, they were halted quickly and soon things began to return to their previous state. Or so it seemed!

Within a month, the Shiv Sena and other Hindu activists had grouped into killer squads and a fresh round of killings began, with the victims this time being Muslims. The pretext in this case was that

Muslims had killed two Hindu head loaders, whose deaths had to be avenged. There were also rumours of Hindu and Jain temples being attacked. The attacks were aimed primarily at Muslims who lived among Hindus and were therefore a minority in those localities. Only very rarely were any forays made into the large areas of Mumbai where Muslims were in a majority. Muslims who were attacked or felt threatened that an attack was imminent took refuge in Muslim majority areas. In Behrampada, Muslims slums were subjected to bombs and inflammable missiles thrown by Hindus who lived in adjoining apartment buildings. Soon the reaction to the December riots started by the Muslims became a blood bath: Hindu rioters knew that they had the tacit support of the police and went on a rampage (see Ansari, 1997, p XV; Tripathi, 1997, p 22).

The Srikrishna Enquiry Committee that was set up after the riots estimated that in all about 900 people lost their lives during this period, of which the majority, that is 575, was Muslim. All of this prompted the migration of Muslims from mixed neighbourhoods and drove up property prices in Muslim-dominated areas - there was a clear, if perverse, correlation between real estate prices and the severity of the tragedy.

1.8 Gujarat 2002: state-sponsored ethnicity

The involvement of the government machinery in the 1984 killing of Sikhs (see Chakravarti and Haksar, 1987) has been a most embarrassing chapter in the history of the Congress, and returns to haunt it every time it claims its secular credentials. Even so, it must be acknowledged that the administrative support the rioters had in the killings of Muslims in Ahmedabad, Godhra, Baroda and other northern districts of Gujarat was truly unprecedented. The bloodshed continued unabated for nearly a month, and even after it gradually subsided, the ruling Hindu BJP government in Gujarat saw fit to call an election in order to capitalize on the hate sentiment that had been generated against the Muslims.

In the last week of February 2002, it is alleged that Muslim hotheads set fire to a railway compartment in Godhra, killing about 59 activists of RSS and other related organizations who were returning from Ayodhya after performing voluntary labour (or *kar seva*) for the erection of a Ram Temple at the site of the destroyed Babri Masjid. It needs also to be mentioned that the charge that some Muslims set fire to the compartment has not been conclusively established. The Banerjee Commission set up to

investigate this matter concluded that the fire in the train compartment was “an accident” (see Mander, 2009, pp 114-6). However, capitalizing on emotions in the aftermath of the Godhra incident, Hindu organizations in Gujarat were let loose to retaliate. The State’s Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, justified the attacks against Muslims, saying that “for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.” Rioting was widespread in many regions of Gujarat, though the carnage was worst in the triangular conurbation of Ahmedabad, Baroda and Godhra. Muslim homes and establishments were carefully picked out for destruction. The targets were carefully selected, their homes were torched and in many instances the victims were pulled out and killed (see also Breman’s account of earlier riots in Gujarat in Breman, 1999, pp 267-8). The State police stood by and did nothing to help. Naroda Patiya in Ahmedabad in fact adjoins the State Reserve Police camp. Many Muslims ran there for help, but the police shut the gates on them. Most of the dreadful killings in Naroda Patiya happened in the open fields just in front of the police camp and in despite a full police presence. It is difficult to convey in words the extent of the brutality that was unleashed on Muslims in Gujarat during these weeks (see *Communalism Combat*, 2002; HRW, 2002).

Modi justified the killings not simply by paraphrasing Newton, but added in his election speeches that if he lost the battle of the ballot in Gujarat there would be celebrations in Pakistan. The Muslims, according to Modi’s demonology, were not just agents of Pakistan, but were also rapidly multiplying in numbers, so that the family planning-oriented Hindus would ultimately be numerically overwhelmed. Soon, Modi argued, Muslims would no longer be a minority in India. This would be the ultimate victory for Pakistan, a common Hindutva complaint widely shared by the RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Shiv Sena (Gupta, 1982, p 139).

In the 2002 Gujarat carnage, Ahmedabad’s Naroda Patiya saw the worst brutalization of Muslims. The systematic nature of the attacks made the horror hard to imagine. The carnage was carefully and cold bloodedly planned: Hindu homes standing next to Muslim ones remained untouched. This presented a kind of hideous gap-toothed smouldering scene when I went to this area soon after the 2002 riots. The Muslim residents of Naroda Patiya were surrounded on all sides: on one side were the Sindhis, on the other the equally hostile members of the Thakore community, a little further down the road were the even more militant Patels. The Muslims in this area were thus isolated by Hindus all around them; they found no help from these quarters, not even, as mentioned above, from the camp of the State Reserve

Police. That not a single person from this camp came out to save the Muslims indicates the level of State connivance with the massacres.

The Gujarat killings had just about stopped when, in September, Narendra Modi made an inflammatory speech in which he made no attempt to conceal where the heart of his government lay. He began by condemning the Muslims for producing babies recklessly.

What should we do, [he asked] Run relief camps for them? Do we want to open baby producing centres? The Muslims say we are five [alluding to the Muslim code that allows men to take up to four wives] and we will produce 25 children.They [he Muslims] can line up a large number of children who fix tyre punctures. In order to progress, every child in Gujarat needs education, good manner and employment. That is the economy we need. For this, we have to teach a lesson to those who are increasing the population at an alarming rate (*Communalism Combat*, 2002).

Mounting evidence of state sponsorship of minority killings in India has now sedimented into an indisputable fact in the academic literature (see for example Brass, 1997; Horowitz, 2002).

In Gujarat, the violence against Muslims raged for nearly three months. This would have been impossible without administrative encouragement. Praveen Togadia, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader, Gordhan Zadaphia, Home Minister of Gujarat, and Mayaben Kodnani, a BJP Member of the Legislative Assembly, have been repeatedly named for encouraging the killers from their high positions of office. Mayaben Kodnani has recently (April 2009) been charged by the Special Investigation Team set up by the Supreme Court to investigate the 2002 Gujarat massacres for her activities during the violence in Naroda Patiya, in particular. One of the items of evidence that has been produced against her is a record of all the phone calls she made on that day from the vicinity of Naroda Patiya to Hindu activists who were involved in the lootings and killings.

As described above, the violence in Delhi against Sikhs went on for nearly a week, although civil rights activists made repeated requests to the government to declare martial law (see Chakravarti and Haksar, 1987; also *Who are the Guilty?*). In Gujarat too, prominent social figures, NGOs, faith based organizations and even important political figures begged both the BJP-led Central and State governments to intervene. But intervention did not happen for nearly three months. This was probably the longest drawn out carnage in India since the Partition.

There is, then, little mystery as to why ethnic riots take place. The timing and ferocity of their occurrence and staging may vary, but without political support, violent attacks on minorities are hard to indulge in and even more difficult to sustain.⁴ Sadly, the lasting outcome of such attacks by the majority Hindu community in effect de-recognizes the claims to citizenship by the minority Muslim population in the country, as will be discussed in the next section.

1.9 Citizenship de-recognized: the validation of a self-fulfilling prophecy

When I visited the villages of Punjab along the border areas in Amritsar and Taran Taran in the late 1980s, I came across some curious incidents that held up my work for a fairly long period of time. I just could not make sense of why there was such a vast discrepancy between what the Sikhs said they did, what they did and what I observed around me. That an overwhelming number of Sikhs were deeply hurt and disappointed by the Congress party was clear. They resented the manner in which the country as a whole now suspected them of harbouring anti-national sentiments and they blamed the ruling party for this popular misrepresentation. It was also clear that, while they did not support the secessionist cause of the militants, they admired them for upholding Sikh pride. This last aspect was quite confusing.

What was even more confusing was when several Sikhs in Taran Taran district told me quite categorically that at five in the afternoon, everybody goes home, for that is when the police and the militants start firing at each other. However, they showed no signs of panic and were wandering around quite calmly after that dreaded hour. Similarly, it was not possible to substantiate the widespread belief across the length and breadth of Punjab that there were hardly any Sikh youth left in the villages of Punjab, because most of them had been killed or gone underground. Most of those who made such statements in the remote districts of Punjab were happily surrounded by their sons and nephews. It is true that many Sikh families, especially in villages, had suffered deeply during those years: many of their young had gone missing, and had perhaps been killed in fake 'encounter deaths'⁵. However, this had not occurred on the scale on which it was being talked about in most places in the Punjab.

Nevertheless, Sikhs were also keen that the Indian state accepted the injustices that had been done to them and were very receptive when elections were announced in Punjab in 1984. They defied the call of the terrorists to boycott the elections and there was a 66.5 per cent turnout, even though it was only a little more than a year after the fateful Operation Blue Star in the Golden Temple and the mass killing of Sikhs following Mrs Gandhi's assassination. This impressive turnout under very tense conditions clearly demonstrated that Sikhs wanted to be re-integrated as citizens. If extremism struck a sympathetic cord with Sikhs after these elections, it was primarily because of a lack of a sympathetic healing touch from the government in the centre. As the militants stepped up their pressure, the lawlessness in Punjab hurt Sikhs more than any other community. By the early 1990s, most Sikhs were willing to forget the past and move on, provided they were given a helping hand from the centre, as indicated by the way they welcomed V.P.Singh when he toured Punjab after he was elected as Prime Minister in 1989.

Between 1984 and 1992, it was not uncommon to hear Sikhs who were themselves not secessionists speak in admiring tones of the militant secessionists. While this can be quite confusing, it is worth placing on record that most had experienced thieving and murderous gunmen who thrived in Punjab during those very troublesome lawless years, although they had not necessarily come across a real militant. In popular parlance the bad sorts were separated from the militants, with the former called *looterias* and *kharkoos* and the latter, affectionately, *mundas* or 'boys'. The *looterias* were depicted as shabby scoundrels who brandished clumsy muskets, but the proud *mundas* were elegant figures with AK 47 automatic weapons.⁶ However, this confident distinction notwithstanding, they were only really familiar with *kharkoos* - the gun wielders of the wrong sort.

From a distance, it appeared that Sikhs had turned irrevocably secessionist. However, such a view does not take into account that their overt sympathy with the terrorists was vicarious and 'hands-off' in nature: it was primarily an outcome of Sikh hurt at being spurned by the centre that made them stand up as a minority in the Indian nation-state. Had the Punjab problem not been resolved when it was, secessionism could well have become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Fortunately, the state acted after long years of dithering and came down hard on the terrorists without yielding any quarter to them (see Gupta, 1997). That this was accomplished so swiftly was ultimately because the majority of Sikhs never actually sought secession and also, by 1992, the general Sikh population had begun to grow

tired of and frightened by the mercurial character of the Sikh militants and their excessive ways (Jodhka, 2005, p 227). At the same time, there are many, particularly among Sikhs outside Punjab, who still want justice for the violence they faced after Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination. This demand continues to harbour ill will, although it is very different in nature from the sentiments that arise from secessionism denied.

In my view, Punjab is a convincing instance not just of how conspiracy can go wrong, but also how, on account of a majoritarian plot to gain political advantage, a minority community can be pushed into playing the role that is being thrust upon them. Sikhs in Punjab did not want secession, but the manner in which the government (and the popular press) kept insisting that they did gave rise to a body of opinion in Punjab that sympathized with the Sikh extremists. Although people did not accept the politics of separatism, they did admire the 'heroics' of those who did and, had the tension continued, perhaps a large number of Sikhs would have sought secession. When citizenship is substantively denied over a period of time, then the deprived minority population may well begin to spurn the status of citizenship and seek an alternate identity and another nation-state. Such a feeling may fade away after passions have cooled, but it may also return should the violence resume. Repeated violations will, I would suggest, eventually lead to a deep estrangement, which may not be recognized in law, but would become a reality in hearts and minds.

1.10 Citizens versus people: a liberal constitution against popular memory

During majoritarian-led ethnic riots, the first instinct of the minoritized community is to insist on the tenets of citizenship - they are not interested in going back into the fold of their community or into the pristine ways of the past as much as asking for their rights as citizens. Both in the aftermath of the Sikh killings in 1984 and the Gujarat bloodbath of Muslims in 2002, the aggrieved minorities wanted the law to be upheld and the guilty punished. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, I was told very often during my interviews with Sikhs and Muslims who were affected during these gory episodes that nothing would make them feel more Indian than the guilty being punished according to the law of the land. *They did not want retribution but justice.*

Hindus, on both these occasions, predictably argued that the minorities, in each case, deserved no consideration, because they were viewed as being determined to undermine the integrity of India. What upset and angered Sikhs most after the 1984 killings, as is widely recognized, was that not a single killer was brought to book, despite there being much evidence against many of them. This is sadly true of Gujarat as well, with the Chief Minister not just absolving the killers but launching a campaign to assert Gujarati pride.

The majoritarians clearly believe that the constitution and the law are not enough to contain enemies of the nation-state, which is why their activism is in the name of 'the people'. It is also to be noted that when the law fails to perform its role, then it is very likely that the marginalized become an encysted population and refer back to their respective cultural spokespersons (see Demerath, 2001, pp 122-4; 167-9). This is how majoritarians give credibility to religious virtuosos among minorities. It is almost as if virtuosos of one community need the other to give resonance to their voices. In the Indian case, on account of the Partition, as mentioned earlier, religion is the major divisive factor in majoritarian mobilizations.

Democracy has to always be on guard, because it is constantly threatened by impulses that predate it. It does its best to contain such tendencies by putting in place a constitution that protects the individual as a citizen, because no other identity is a safe guarantor against whimsical prejudice. Democracy very self-consciously distances itself from community and religious affiliations, because these have been the sources of major civic discord in the past. Nation-states are not always democratic by temperament, though there cannot be democracy without a nation-state. However, because nation-states begin as nations, the history of blood and soil and the primeval grief that gave birth to the nation are always on recall. This facilitates the lapse from citizen to 'people' status, which logically entails the marginalization of targeted minority communities. Under these circumstances, in the Indian case particularly, minorities respond by demanding that the state respects their citizenship status and protects them from majoritarian passions.

Liberal democracy is thus constantly challenged by memory that it does its best to forget in order to move ahead. However, as popular constructions of reality tend to naturalize cultural differences, democracy can never quite rest. John Rawls persuasively argued that liberal democracy works best in

a situation of moderate scarcity (Rawls, 1971, p 127), which has implications beyond the issue of economic wellbeing. When the middle class is weak and has a shallow history, as in India, then the machinery for law enforcement is constantly impeded by considerations of patron-client relationships, in which the individual does not really count as a significant social and political marker. When Rawls argued that the veil of difference should compel people to think of policies as if they were the worst off (ibid, pp 60, 124, 199), I think that we can easily include within this frame of reference those who are vulnerable to cultural marginalization. Nevertheless, while such an approach might well work in a hypothetical situation, as Rawls himself acknowledged, liberal democracy and citizenship become viable only when law enforcement that makes no concession to 'people' sentiments takes place.

1.11 Agency versus structure: the how and why of an ethnic carnage

In India, majoritarian Hindu politics has never been roused into action because of economic grievances or simply on account of anger boiling over (Breman, 1999, p 268). Ethnicity thrives when it successfully portrays the insider as an outsider. In India, Hindu ethnicists have cast the Muslims as Pakistanis, although they opted to live in India. Class factors may make their presence felt once an ethnic movement takes off, but they do not initiate these rites of violence. Stanley Tambiah suggested that ethnicists want to claim a larger slice of the state's resources. Writing in the second half of the 1990s, he argued that the "present plethora of ethnic conflicts...coincides with an increasing shrinking of economic horizons..." (Tambiah, 1997, p 340). Others have been more specific and linked ethnic hostilities to "business rivalries" (Banu, 1989, p128), overcrowding and urbanization (Ghosh, 1987, p 31), as well as the real estate-underworld nexus (Tripathi, 1997, p 20).

This is not to say that these other factors are not insignificant, but they do not cause ethnic carnage in most cases. Economic interests usually come into play once ethnic wars begin. For example, Veena Das's study of Sikh victims in Delhi shows how those in block A/4 of Sultanpuri faced the wrath of Chamars from an adjoining block who wanted to settle old scores (Das, 1990, p 14; Srinivasan, 1990, p 317). But, in all fairness, the Chamars did not start the fire. Also, it needs to be acknowledged that, even if the absence of trade unionism in Gujarat probably allowed communal ideologies to grow unchecked and unchallenged (Shah, 1970), this does not actually amount to a 'penny envy' argument. This also holds true for the Shiv Sena, which grew in the heart of Mumbai - for long the trade union capital of India. The absence of left wing activism in such instances is more an outcome of ideological

impoverishment than economics: the minority community was not threatening the majority community in the job market.

The element of class warfare, or class hatred, therefore, was clearly not the motivating factor behind ethnic killings of Muslims in Gujarat and Mumbai, or of Sikhs in Delhi. Though several members of the land mafia may have benefited in Mumbai after the riots of 1993, it was not as if the Hindu mobs were responding to a class, or economic, imperative. Rather, they were seized by an ethnic passion to teach the enemies of their nation-state a lesson: in their eyes, the fifth columnists in the country were enjoying their generosity and had to be told where to get off.

It is necessary to pay attention to a few aspects specific to Gujarat (Gujarati exceptionalism?). Reading Ghanshyam Shah (1970) and Jan Breman (1999) on Gujarat encourages the opinion that Gandhi's advocacy of trusteeship and his systematic decimation of left wing trade unions in the cotton textile mills (see Patel, 1988) was largely responsible for the entrenchment of Hindu and other community identities in Ahmedabad. Without a strong left wing trade union, it was argued that there was very little chance of an alternative secular identity emerging among the underclass of Gujarat. In Mumbai, though the Shiv Sena came out swinging against left wing unions in the late 1960s, it must be admitted that the communists gave them a stiff fight for over ten years. No such resistance could be plotted in Gujarat.

Secondly, Gujarat is probably the only place in India where the dominant agrarian class characterizes itself as a member of a Baniya, or merchant, caste (Shah and Shroff, 1975). The Patidars of Northern Gujarat initially considered themselves to be Kshatriyas, or members of the warrior castes, but have since changed their minds and now prefer to be called Baniyas. They have also found obliging genealogists to back up this claim with mythical connections (ibid). Since at least the 1920s, these Patidars have always had one foot in the village and one in the city. The Maharaja of Baroda encouraged education among the landed people of his state and the Patidars took full advantage of it. The northern Patidars (or Kadva Patels) are today to be found all over the world, in Africa, America and in the United Kingdom. They are a prosperous class of merchants and professionals, but they continue to keep their ties in the villages active. If Hindu passions are strong in rural Gujarat, it is

possible that this class of semi-urban and semi-rural Patels is the conduit through which RSS and other majoritarian ideologies gain a foothold in rural Gujarat.

As mentioned earlier, ethnic conflicts are not inspired by considerations of economic advantage. Even so, because of the vulnerability of victims, this aspect may work its way in once spaces open up. In Mumbai, places like Dongri or Pratiksha Nagar in the Antop Hill area are mixed neighbourhoods. Unfortunately for the Muslims, the Shiv Sena is also strong in these localities, with the result that their Muslim residents were helpless against majoritarian attacks in 1993 (Punwani, 2003, p 239; Sebastian, 1993, p 2256). This forced many Muslims to look for homes where members of their community were in a majority, which is said to have doubled the price of property in Milatnagar and Andheri from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2,500 per square foot (Tripathi, 1997, p 8). Nevertheless, property interests took advantage of the effects of violence rather than causing it.

What gets ethnic violence going, if timed properly, is political, or to be more specific, electoral advantage.⁷ After the Mumbai riots of 1993, the Shiv Sena and BJP coalition romped home in Maharashtra. Likewise, Narendra Modi capitalized on the post-Godhra massacres of Muslims in 2002. After the 1984 killings of Sikhs, the Congress came to power with a massive majority in the parliamentary elections. The relationship between ethnic carnage and electoral success is too close to be overlooked.

Generally, the identity of the perpetrators is clear. I examined the Sikh killings in Punjab (Gupta, 1997) and the massacre of Muslims in Gujarat (Gupta, 2002) and it was quite clear that these were instances where social forensic and not social science were called for. Little skill in the social sciences was needed to figure out who were the killers. Instead, what was required was a close criminal investigation of who did what, to whom and for how much (see PUDR and PUCL, 1984; Gupta, 2002; Ray and Chakravarti, 1968). What was also abundantly clear is that the perpetrators of these massacres were happy to kill but not die for a cause. These killers and looters had nothing to fear - their lives and property were not at risk, because the government and the administration of the day stood by and protected them (Mander, 2004, p 101-3).

For example, Mr. S.K. Bapat, who was Police Commissioner of Mumbai at the time of the riots, presented a 70-page affidavit to the Srikrishna Commission that was set up to enquire into the riots. In this document there was no mention of Shiv Sena's active participation in the killings of Muslims in Mumbai. Instead, Mr. Bapat implied that Pakistan's ISI (Inter- Service Intelligence) was busy fomenting disaffection among Muslims in the country. Whenever proof was presented to him of a Shiv Sainik's involvement, he argued his way out by saying that this was no reason to suspect the organization as a whole merely because of a few wayward individuals (Punwani, 2003, p 246). This, however, did not convince Judge Srikrishna and he indicted the police for their inefficiency and failure to help Muslim victims.

In contrast, in Gujarat the role of the police and the state in aiding and abetting Hindu sectarians was never in doubt. The National Human Rights Commission and the Citizens of Justice and Peace have kept up the campaign to nail Gujarat state officials for their complicity in the 2002 violence. The Supreme Court in Delhi too has taken serious cognizance of the matter and a Special Investigation Team has been set up that is to report to it directly (see *Mail Today* 2 May, 2009). During those dreadful days of 2002, there were a few outstanding police officers in Gujarat, like Himanshu Bhatt and Rahul Sharma. Although they proved ineffective beyond a point, they expressed some satisfaction that they had accomplished their duties well, for example, Rahul Sharma has reportedly said: "I don't think any other job would have allowed me to save so many lives" (Dugger, 2002).

1.12 Poor but pure: the myth of rural India

Gujarat also exposes the hollowness of the claim that riots are purely an urban affair. What Gujarat brought into sharp focus was that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes could easily be mobilized to kill for the Hindu cause: being poor does not necessarily make one pure. Gujarat also disproved the romantic belief that the countryside is riot proof. The villages of Gujarat saw widespread killings, and it did not matter how many generations had lived cheek by jowl when it came to expressing strong ethnic loyalty with the Hindu majoritarian version of the nation-state. Rich and poor Muslims died at the hands of Hindus, of high and low castes, and, in many instances, tribal Bhils also joined the Hindutva hate brigades. Many villages in Gujarat bore the suffix 'Hindu Rashtra' before their names, particularly between the districts of Bharauch and Vadodara. In some predominantly Hindu villages, such as Nidral (taluka Sanand, near Ahmedabad), one may even be asked to prove that one is not a Muslim in order to gain entry.

India's villages have never been isolated republics, as many anthropologists have noted. Yet, the extent of urban influences in rural India has not yet been fully appreciated. Today, according to official census figures, about 30 per cent of India lives in urban surroundings. But if one were to add to this all those who live in villages but work outside them, then the percentage would go up very significantly. According to the National Sample Survey, between 1987-88 and 1993-94 the number of rural people working in urban India has doubled. At the same time, agricultural growth in value terms is not very buoyant: in 1999-2000 it was only 1.3 per cent, and in 2000-1 it fell as low as -0.2 per cent, rising to a little above 1 per cent in 2008-9. Further, about 80 per cent of landholdings are below five acres and roughly 63 per cent are below 2.5 acres (Mujumdar, 2002; Pradhan et al, 2000). Most farms are now family farms and there is, therefore, very little scope for sustained employment in villages for the landless. Even those who have land find the going very difficult. This is why the need to have a foothold in the city is pressing in rural households in India today.

All of this encourages one to believe that what happened in Gujarat villages could easily happen in other rural regions of India. Villages today have become even less self-sustaining than in the past. The terms of trade have consistently gone against agriculture over the past several decades, and the rate of growth in agriculture is the lowest among all the sectors of the Indian economy. This forces villagers to look to cities and towns as alternatives to their dead-end lives in agriculture. Consequently, country dwellers come into touch with urban ideologies, such as those of Hindutva. Hindutva creates an alternative community and a sense of belonging that uprooted and alienated villagers can find extremely attractive, especially since the secular project of building citizenship has been let down by the Congress since the mid-1970s.

If villages were tranquil in the past, it was because there was hardly ever any scope for the underprivileged to dispute their position of inferiority and subjugation - a medieval peace characterized the countryside. However, this peace was based not so much on tolerance or natural goodwill as the fact that the ruling castes and classes held undisputed power in the villages. This is now changing. Not only are villages less and less viable as economic units, villagers move in and out of their rural surroundings and bring back other points of view from the city with much greater frequency than ever before. Further, the anthropological truism that human beings want to belong has not been met successfully by alternative secular identities. When villagers look beyond their villages, as they are frequently compelled to do today, there is very little by way of an alternative secular and

developmentalist ethos. For this, the Congress party holds considerable responsibility. It withdrew the Nehruvian agenda of secularism, self-reliance and non-alignment without putting another in its place. In such times, it is likely that religious and other ascriptive identities will have an advantage.

The tribals of north Gujarat, particularly the Bhils, constitute no more than 5-6 per cent of the population of this state. From my interviews with experts, the general opinion seems to be that since the 1980s, the Bhils have steadily come under the influence of the RSS and its allied organizations. The 'Ramayana Bhils', as they are derisively called by many secularists in Gujarat, have been moving closer to Hindu forces since the mid-1980s. In 1987, many of them were reported to have attacked Muslims in Virpur village. Interestingly, the tribals of south Gujarat, such as the Chaudhuries, Gamits, and Dhodiyas, are not known for any special links with the RSS or other Hindu parties. Why the northern Bhils should be so prone to Hindutva persuasions is something that I do not fully understand. Nevertheless, in the 2002 violence in Gujarat, violence against Muslims was very high in Bhil areas of the state, such as Sabarkantha and Panchmahals - too high to be overlooked as freak occurrences. Neither could it be said that only rich Muslims were attacked by Bhil tribals. It is true that there are prosperous Muslim Bohras and Memons, but it was mostly poor Muslims who lost their lives, mostly small cultivators, petty shopkeepers, day labourers, and the like. That some well to do Muslims were also killed does not give these killings a class character.

Gujarat also lays to rest another romantic assumption. This concerns the supposed heroic qualities of the working class and of the 'lower' castes. Even though Jan Breman carefully skirts around the class character of the Hindu mobs, it is clear even from his essay that those who attacked poor Muslims came from poor neighbourhoods themselves and many of them were dalits (Breman, 1999, pp 268-9). A large number of these Hindu sectarians had a working class past, but were by that time not fully employed, as nearly all the old mills of Ahmedabad had closed down (ibid, p 265). It is generally believed that the urban underclass, particularly if not gainfully employed, is seriously tempted by the lucre and lust that majoritarian politicians find easy to satisfy (ibid).

This chapter has concentrated on exploring the nature of ethnic tension in India, in preparation for an examination of what happens in the aftermath of the violent episodes that punctuate such periods of apparent equilibrium. The next three chapters draw on new research that examines the period since the killings in Mumbai in 1993 and Ahmedabad in 2002.

2 A contested normal: what happens afterwards?

In examining what happens in the aftermath of violent episodes, the big questions are:

1. What happens after the killings?
2. How is a 'new normalcy' restored?
3. Through which agencies is this established?
4. What are the practices that herald the coming of another 'normal' with its own set of negotiated boundaries and concealed tensions?

In the following pages, an attempt will be made to answer some of these questions, through analysing the aftermath of the killings in Gujarat in 2002 and in Mumbai, nearly a decade earlier, in 1993. There is an important caveat to which attention must be paid before proceeding.

Any depiction of the 'new' normal is like the unfolding of a story that is not yet complete. This is particularly true of Gujarat, where the wounds are still very fresh and victims continue to feel vulnerable. The actually existing 'new' normal may still be awkwardly positioned, which is why, in any attempt to depict it, it is necessary to stay within the framework of liberal democracy, for then at least a measuring rod is available. This allows us to weigh the effect of contrary tendencies in, and their possible impact on, the emergent 'new' normal as it strives to realize substantive citizenship, which might provide minorities with a better chance of survival than they had in the earlier rounds of conflict. Alternatively, a medieval peace can emerge, in which the winner takes all and the vanquished wait for many years to avenge the defeat. Nevertheless, repairing the lives of citizens can never mean a return to the past or to an unproblematized status quo ante. Nor can ethnic carnage be dismissed as a bad dream and the assumption made that nothing has changed.

Without taking such considerations into account, it is difficult to establish a perspective on how rehabilitation can be realistically achieved so that the new normal, even if contested, can be a live and, on the whole, peaceful and just reality. It is from this perspective that we shall view how victims began repositioning themselves once the dust settled on the killings of Gujarat and Maharashtra: or, in other words, when the phase of relief is over and that of rehabilitation and repair are under way. More attention will be paid to Gujarat, for three reasons that are outlined in the next section.

2.1 Why Mumbai and Ahmedabad?

First, in Gujarat the ethnic violence was clearly encouraged, if not sponsored, by the state. This left little room for Muslims to manoeuvre, as they had to contend against the might of the entire administrative apparatus. We have already shown how Modi, Chief Minister of the State government, himself issued inflammatory statements during the killings. This is why nearly all of Gujarat saw ethnic violence in 2002. In contrast, when Mumbai went up in flames in 1993, the rest of Maharashtra did not burn.

Second, Muslims in Gujarat are much more vulnerable than their co-religionists in Mumbai. As we shall show later, in Mumbai there are a large number of affluent Muslims, secular citizens, upright officials and concerned politicians who acted as buffers between the killers and their victims. Over time, Mumbai's Muslims have been able to reassert themselves, economically and politically. They are much more confident of their surroundings than their hapless and unprotected co-religionists in Gujarat.

This leads us to the third reason. Faith based organizations (FBOs) played a much smaller role in providing succour to victims in Mumbai compared to Gujarat. In Mumbai help came from several quarters, but in Gujarat it was the FBOs that bore the brunt of the relief and rehabilitation effort. Undoubtedly, the Muslims in Gujarat were socially more isolated in their grief than the Muslims of Mumbai.

Mumbai is then the backdrop against which the events in Ahmedabad can be placed to bring out the following issues with greater clarity.

1. How do victims fare when the state is directly involved in the violence?
2. What difference does it make to the victims when there is a significant elite which shares their identity in the city?
3. When civic organizations, political parties and officials are not directed by the state to commit violence, then what avenues are open to victims? Conversely what happens if they initiate or are compliant in violence?
4. Finally, under what circumstances are faith based organizations an important resource for relief, repair and rehabilitation?

2.2 Methodology

This study was conducted in 2008-09. All the interview material referred to here was gathered during this period. Most of the interviews were conducted by the author, assisted by a researcher based in Delhi as well as two activists in Ahmedabad and one in Mumbai. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a sample of victims of the ethnic violence, activists and key informants, and workers with key organizations, especially Faith Based Organizations (FBOs).

The research assistants in Ahmedabad and Mumbai did a lot of the preparatory work and also interviewed 70 Muslims each in Mumbai and Ahmedabad respectively to elicit responses on how they had coped economically after the violence. These used an interview schedule that also included some open-ended questions. Besides the respondent's name and address, which were important for avoiding repetition, the questions they were asked related to matters pertaining to their economic situation after the violence: how long had it taken them to find a job once the killings stopped? Were they better off or worse off after the riots? Is their place of work nearer or further from what used to be the case before the carnage? In addition, some general information was solicited about their aims, ambitions, fears, etc., in a more conversational mode. The original intention was to talk to the head of the household, or the main bread earner, but on several occasions (23 instances in Mumbai and 18 in Ahmedabad) this was not possible, for a number of reasons. In such cases there was no alternative but to address the questions to the senior adult present in the house.

The 70 respondents were chosen by any single method. In Mumbai visits were made to a number of newly established homes in the suburbs of Mumbra and Oshiwara, to which many Muslims moved after the carnage, although not all those who have moved to these largely Muslim areas are victims of ethnic violence. An attempt was made to meet people living in different neighbourhoods in these areas, to get a sense of economic differences, but this could not be done very systematically. In addition, a smattering of households from amongst slum residents in places like Tulsiwadi, Dharavi, Khoja Chawl and Beherampada were interviewed. In Ahmedabad, settlement townships built by Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) were the main focus of the study, and most of the interviews were with residents in these camps. In a study of this kind, where victims of the violence often moved to another neighbourhood, background information on households is impossible to obtain in advance, and people's willingness to talk varies, it was not possible to select a stratified random sample. Our

interviews and interactions were largely with whoever was most readily available, especially in Ahmedabad. Most of the time, our respondents were not alone. While we did not do any organized focus group discussions, we had many freewheeling conversations, during the course of which certain issues emerged and gained salience. In addition, during the group discussions, while people often contradict each other, if they are in agreement on any issue, that sentiment is also roundly expressed.

Interestingly, none of the respondents felt the need to keep their names confidential. As so many live identical lives and probably bear the same names, the respondents did not demand anonymity. In addition, it is impossible to trace a person solely from a name. In other cases, the personalities are so well known and their intentions so widely publicized that to conceal their names would detract from the value of the report. For the record, they did not ask for anonymity.

There was little hesitation on the part of officials of the FBOs when they were approached. In all instances they gave a lot of their time, but were unwilling to disclose financial details of their organizations. This may not always be on account of wanting to keep things secret; the possibility that their books were not in order must also be entertained.

In both Mumbai and Ahmedabad it was difficult to get people to talk about the past and how they have coped with their tragedies. Often the questions that were posed brought tears to their eyes and some women wept inconsolably. This made us, as a team, wonder why we were inflicting this pain on them? Was it just for ourselves? Did this study justify the opening of old wounds? There were also times when we felt as if we were imposters. When victims spoke to us, they sometimes thought that we were from some government agency that would deliver them some tangible benefits. We found it difficult to tell them that we had no such powers and then the way they looked at us made us feel a little shaken and small. In the course of time, we were reassured on at least one front: we were not *opening* wounds, because they were already open. By talking to us various informants said that they felt better, and by talking to them we felt that we could give greater depth to received knowledge on what it is to be a victim of an ethnic carnage. Hopefully, this effort will go some way in strengthening the resolve of those who are in the frontline fighting for justice and help increase support for their cause. If this work can help in some measure to salve the wounds of the victims and achieve justice, then our research will be legitimized.

2.3 Refuge first: Mumbai and Ahmedabad

In Mumbai, during the early days of the killings of Muslims, many of those affected congregated in various mosques. According to Akhmal Hussein, a riot survivor from Parel, his and other places like Lalbaug, Delail Road, Bawla Nagar Compound and Shivaji Nagar Basti were practically emptied of Muslims when the violence started. Musafirkhana, where Haj pilgrims congregate before they leave for Mecca, became a spontaneous camp, housing up to 7,000 people. A few other camps also emerged, such as one in a school in Umar Razab Road, while a few Muslim victims went to stay with friends and relations in 'safe' areas. For example, in the Tulsiwadi slum, a mixed Hindu and Muslim neighbourhood, a large number of people were reported to have left their homes and run to Muslim-majority areas of Mumbai, or even to their ancestral villages in far away Uttar Pradesh. Naseem detailed to me how she made her escape with her children, though her elder son was beaten badly by mobs as he tried to return home:

With my children I jumped over the wall which opens out in the field past where there are some Hindu homes. They let me escape for they were trying to help. I somehow got to the railway station, but then I left my children there and came back for my son was badly hurt and I heard he was lying near our house. I did not get to see him. Somehow he was taken to a hospital and saved. I could not go home to Muzaffarnagar without knowing where my oldest boy was. He is alright now but cannot work well with his hands.

However, as far as can be ascertained, no official camp for the long term stay of those who had to abandon their homes was established anywhere in the city. Gradually, as confirmed by Akhmal Hussein, most of the displaced people went back to their old homes, although some eventually sold their properties and moved to live in Muslim majority neighbourhoods. Naseema, for example, returned to Tulsiwadi. Her home has been repaired. The slum continues to house both Hindus and Muslims, though they are usually segregated in different lanes. Naseema avers that she does not fear Muslims' presence much, but when she recalls the bad days her eyes go moist. One way or the other, the refugee camps in Mumbai were quickly wound up.

Respondents in some places, especially Jogeshwari, Andheri, and even Lower Parel, reported that they had begun to feel unsafe before the outbreak of violence, as they had noticed that their homes had been marked by Hindu activists. These are low income group areas, not elite by any standards. In these parts of the city, white collar employees and petty businessmen live in close proximity to slums and chawls (tenement houses with individual rooms but a common bathroom and water facilities).

However, respondents also noted that those who had been living in Muslim majority areas, such as Borivilli and Kandivili, felt safer and more confident of being able to protect themselves. These respondents did not leave their homes during the violence of 1993. For example, Altaf Tyrewalla, who lives in the predominantly Muslim area of Byculla, reported that he is happy to live in that area because he feels safe. This is not to say that dislocations did not take place, they did, but the scale was not sufficient to warrant long stays in refugee camps, as was the case in Gujarat.

The recollections of many respondents indicate the conviction with which many Muslims blame the administration. Even after such a long passage of time they still hold the administration responsible for not taking proper action to quell the violent mobs, which, they believe, were well orchestrated, although it is difficult to confirm this 15 years after the violence. Despite the civil and official help they received in the aftermath, when the violence broke out, many Muslims feared for their lives.

In total, it was estimated that over 75,000 people were affected, with much damage and destruction of property. The Public Works Department built about 862 houses, clearly not enough (Tripathi, 1997, p 29). Grants for reconstruction were meagre: a paltry Rs. 15,000 if an entire property was lost, and Rs. 4,000 for damages, both of which had to be meticulously accounted for. In addition, three agencies were involved in filing the *panchanammas* (official claims) for losses, viz. revenue, the police and the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Errors were made, with each recording different figures (ibid, p 67).

Though the carnage in Mumbai was nowhere near as bad as in Gujarat, even in this metropolis Muslims needed help to process claims for compensation and get their damaged homes repaired or rebuilt. In this process, several NGOs and concerned citizens were reported to have played a very positive role and their contributions are remembered by Muslims more than 15 years later. In particular, I heard praises for Jayant Diwan (a Gandhian and head of Savodaya Mandal in Mumbai); Dr. Usha Mehta, a renowned freedom fighter and a prominent political personality; Dr. G.G. Parikh, also a freedom fighter and active today in tribal areas; and Susobha Barve, one of the founders of the Aman Committee in Mumbai. Certain NGOs were also reported to have worked very hard for the victims. Nirmala Niketan in particular was repeatedly mentioned in our discussions. A few government officers, like Satish Tripathi, Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.), then Labour Commissioner in Mumbai, and Sanjay Pandey, Indian Police Service (I.P.S.), who was posted in many of the riot areas of Mumbai in

1992-93, also received commendations from Muslim victims for making relief supplies promptly available.

In Gujarat the situation was much worse, as the violence raged for almost three months and was aided and abetted by the state. There were at least 174,000 refugees in camps and if those who went elsewhere are included, then the total number of people seeking shelter was estimated to have been about 250,000 (see PUDR, 2002 in Vardarajan, 2002, p 309). The Shah Alam relief camp in Ahmedabad alone gave refuge to about 2,200 families, or roughly 10,000 people, for about three months (ibid, p 308). A full week after the killings, on 6th March, 2002, the government came out with a policy resolution that gave the intended impression to administrators that the state did not need to set up any relief camps (ibid, p 310).

The Government of Gujarat also made it clear both that those FBO camps that had been established existence had to be wound up by 31st May, and that only those camps that fulfilled certain quite stringent conditions would receive relief. To qualify, camps had to be organized by a registered society or trust, accommodate at least 100 inmates, have clean lavatories and kitchens, have drinking water and provide medical care (ibid, p 311). One wonders why a camp should need any relief at all if all these conditions were fulfilled in advance. Once the camps passed the eligibility test, they were entitled to 500 grams of cereal, 50 grams of pulses, some edible oil, sugar, milk and a dole of Rs. five per person, per day for each occupant (ibid, p 312).

2.4 Relief work in Mumbai and Ahmedabad: Islamic organizations and NGOs

In Mumbai, the role of Islamic organizations in providing relief to the victims of the ethnic violence of 1993 was not very significant. Aslam Ghazi, senior Jamaat-I-Islami official in Mumbai said that they did help people in several areas in the city, such as Tulsiwadi, but could not do it openly as, at that time, the government had banned the organization, fearing that it would foment violence in the wake of the Babri Mosque episode the previous year. He showed me a few photographs of people, largely from Tulsiwadi, holding up a board with their home address on it against the backdrop of a ruined dwelling. In Khoja Chawl we met two residents who said that the Jamaat-i-Islami had given them some cooking utensils, but, by their own admission, this was of little solace, as they had lost so much in the violence.

Many of those from Pratikshanagar who sought refuge and had managed to move to Byculla said that, if they are alive today it is only because of the courage and dedication of Maulana Ziauddin Bukhari. According to Murtaza Khairul, earlier a resident of Pratiksha Nagar and now of Khoja Chawl:

Maulana Bukhari came again and again to us to where we were hiding in Pratikshanagar with an army truck. He had influenced an army personnel to come to our rescue, and it is his efforts that saved so many of us or we would surely have been dead.

Residents of Behramapada slum recall the help given to them by Sheikh Jilani, a simple cleric from the neighbourhood mosque, who acted on his own and not as a member of any FBO. Other than such occasional reports and individual efforts, there is no evidence that Islamic organizations came to the aid of Muslim victims of the violence in Mumbai in any sustained fashion.

The Gujarat story is very different. The single greatest contribution to relief and rehabilitation in Gujarat came from Islamic FBOs. Some non-faith based NGOs also contributed, but not as much by comparison. However, very little has been written about the enormous amount of work done by these FBOs in Ahmedabad, and indeed, in many other parts of Gujarat. When I visited Gujarat in 2002, I saw a few volunteers from Gujarat Sarvajanic Relief Committee who looked very Islamic. When I enquired about them from the NGO activists I met, they brushed them aside and called them "Mullah types". Punwani writes about a similar reaction in Mumbai when Muslims took up relief work (Punwani, 2003, p 254). There too they were branded as fundamentalists, but those like Fazal Sha'd of Mumbai's Aman Committee (which was set up by citizens after the violence began) or the prominent businessman Faridbhai Battatawala can hardly be categorized in this way (ibid, p 246, 256), and nor can people like Shakeel Ahmed who led the Nirbhay Bandh in Mumbai (Robinson, 2005, p 214).

When the killings began in Gujarat on February 28, 2002, Muslims in places like Naroda Patiya and Gomtipur in Ahmedabad reported that they had nowhere to go but to relief camps, which were almost immediately set up by a number of FBOs.⁸ These organizations established camps wherever there were a large number of Muslim inhabitants, or around mosques, dargahs and even Muslim graveyards. The Jamaat i-Islami sponsored Islamic Relief Committee (IRC) and the Gujarat Sarvajanic Relief Committee (GSRC), an arm of the Jamaat i-Ulema, shouldered much of the burden. These organizations had emerged after the devastating earthquake in Bhuj, Gujarat, in 2001. We also heard of the work done by another Muslim front organization called United Economic Forum, which was

based in Hyderabad and sent a large number of volunteers to help Muslim victims in Gujarat. The Shah Alam Mosque was the site for the largest camp, housing over 10,000 people. It was open for six months or so, and throughout this period, its maintenance and upkeep were almost entirely the responsibility of a few Islamic FBOs. Second in size was probably the camp in Daryakhan Gummat. In all, about 110 camps were started across the state of Gujarat, nearly all of them by organizations or trusts that were Islamic in terms of membership, though they may not have had a specifically religious charter. Although NGOs also helped in the relief camps, the bulk of the funds and human resources for food, housing and water came from FBOs.

In addition, some of the Muslims we met said that they felt safe only in those areas dominated by Muslims, because they felt threatened not only by outsiders but in many cases by their Hindu neighbours as well, so that Muslim majority localities like Juhapura, Babu Nagar, Gomtipur and Navrangpura naturally attracted thousands of refugees and became Muslim citadels.

Interestingly, there is a vast discrepancy between the field data we collected and published/ internet information, something about which future scholars should be warned. If one were to rely on information available on the internet, or in published books, pamphlets and easily available NGO annual reports, one would think that most of the relief work had been done by NGOs and other voluntary organizations. There is practically no information on the contribution of Islamic organizations from these sources, including the internet, in contrast to that on, for example, unity marches that have subsequently been held with the intention of shoring up minority confidence and creating greater inter-faith amity. Although the NGOs that led such marches were tiny NGOs, and often very evanescent, a lot of information is available about them. Even a procession that was held by some NGOs as late as 27 September, 2002, which had a catchy slogan: *Mil ke Chalo* (Let us walk together) and was led by well known public figures, received press coverage. Another march that had been conceived by a group of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), but attracted only 30 delegates and did not actually happen on the ground, also found internet space.⁹ It is only when one visits Gujarat and meets victims that the role of faith based organizations comes to light. Fortunately, I had some premonitions of this during my first trip to Gujarat in 2002, and with a lot of help from my friends, was able to get some 'corrective' data on who helped whom and how.

When I went to Ahmedabad soon after the killings of 2002, I met a large number of NGO activists who were already busy making out attractive reports detailing the work they had done to provide relief and rehabilitation to the Muslim victims of the carnage. On reading these reports closely, I found that the NGO contribution had not in practice been very substantial: they had set up a tent here, distributed some milk powder there, done some hand holding somewhere else, and so on. When I brought this to the notice of some NGOs, they really had no answer. One of the activists, however, braved a response and said that, as the ethnic killings had occurred towards the end of the financial year, the NGOs had had little money left for relief work.

Informants in 2008 confirmed that many NGOs had helped in the relief camps, but their assistance was directed towards providing psychological and social support, rather than housing, shelter or running a commissariat for food and rations. Some reportedly made feeble attempts to start schools. They ran classes for little children, provided trauma counselling, helped find ancillary jobs, and so on. In this connection, contributions were made by Geet Sethi of Jan Vikas Trust, Palomi Mistry of Disha (which was active in North Gujarat), ANHAD, SEWA, CARE, Action Aid, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (for legal assistance) and Prashant (a Jesuit organization run by Father Cedric Prakash). However, victims interviewed during this study recalled the activities of few NGOs other than Jan Vikas and sometimes Prashant and ANHAD, probably because the scale of the devastation was so great that the best that most NGOs could contribute was but a small fraction of what was required. For example, SEWA, by their own account, provided economic opportunities in terms of rolling bidis (crude rolled tobacco for smoking), and making incense sticks, paper bags or mattresses, to only about 1,238 women (SEWA Relief Team, 2002). Many of the NGOs provided small amounts of material relief, although organizations like ANHAD concentrated on providing legal help to victims by assisting them in filing cases and compensation claims. As Mr. Madni, the Ameer-e-Halqa of the Islamic Relief Committee, said when I met him in 2008:

The other NGOs contributed about 10 -15 per cent of the relief work. But they were of greater assistance in the legal arena where there were hundreds of problems. It was important to help the camp refugees with processing their claims for compensation as Modi's government did not relent and kept up its hostile and unfriendly attitude towards the Muslim victims.

At the time of the violence, the Government of Gujarat did not set up a single camp. The central government gave Rs. 150 crore for relief, but Modi's administration sent back as much as Rs. 19.1 crore, saying that it was unused (*Indian Express*, 27th January, 2007). Given the number of victims and the dire straits in which many found themselves, the fact that Modi found even the paltry sum of Rs. 150 excessive demonstrates his brazen disregard for the plight of the Muslims in Gujarat. It is, therefore, not surprising that, after observing the work of the Gujarat Government for several years, the National Commission for Minorities had no option but to publicly express deep disappointment with its performance on Christmas Day of 2006 (<http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1071202>; see also HRW, 2003). After 31st May, 2002, the Government of Gujarat insisted on shutting down all the camps, arguing that the situation had by then returned to normal. While the camps lingered on for a few more days, they soon were all forced to close down.

2.5 Rehabilitation next: the role of FBOs in finding a home

According to the information we received, when the camps closed down many Muslims were afraid to return to their previous homes. This was true across the affected areas of Gujarat, although it was in the villages that Muslims felt most acutely threatened. It was in the villages that they had most experienced the brutalities of their neighbours, both caste Hindus and tribals. For example in Delol village, Muslims were warned by other villagers not to return. Those who returned to their homes in Palana village of Kheda district were told that they would be denied access to water for irrigation, and that no one would employ them as agricultural labourers (see also PUDR, 2002 in Vardarajan, 2002, pp 327, 334-5). In 2002, I saw in Bamangaon (on the road from Vadodara to Bharuch) and in Nidral (Taluka Sanand, Ahmedabad District) signs saying that the village was part of the "Hindu Rashtra." These signs were intended to keep Muslims from entering the villages, and it had the desired effect. A number of Muslim refugees in Ahmedabad claim that when some of their relations returned from the relief camps in Ahmedabad to their villages in Mehsana, Gandhinagar, Panchmahals and Dahod districts, they faced economic sanctions from the Hindu villagers. In the light of my experience in Bamangaon and Nidra, I find statements of this kind very credible, although they cannot be confirmed. Apart from these livelihood deprivations, Muslims also had to promise that they would lower the volume of the muezzin's call to prayer, which had been a longstanding complaint of Hindu activists in Mumbai and elsewhere in India.

In Gujarat villages, the attacks against Muslims were also conducted by tribals, particularly the Bhils (Kannabiran, 2002). It is said that these Bhils usually worked for small Muslim traders and owed money to Muslim moneylenders, which apparently provided the justification for their attacks. These so-called 'Ramayana Bhils' have a fairly long association with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).¹⁰ This can be gauged from the fact that as far back as 1987 a group of Bhils along with VHP activists had attacked Muslims in Virpur village. Muslims from villages where there was a sizable Bhil presence, as in the areas around Chotta Udaipur, were very reluctant to go back to their homes, as they too felt more isolated than their counterparts in the cities. In all, the ANHAD study suggests that in the first year after the violence only about 20 per cent of Muslim refugees from rural areas in Ahmedabad went back to their village homes (Raza and Singh, 2008).

A survey conducted in Ahmedabad's relief camps in 2002 very tellingly showed that as many as 99 per cent of the refugees did not want to return to their former homes. Among the reasons given, about 80 per cent said that they were scared of facing their killers again, and nearly 18 per cent said that they had no confidence that the police would give them protection. Only about 2 per cent gave as their reason that they did not have the wherewithal to build another home. (Raza and Singh, 2008, p 26 and ff; see also Lakshminarayana et al, 2002, pp 22, 24). The fear of returning to areas where they are in a minority was also felt by many Muslims in Mumbai, particularly those from Ghatkopar (Punwani, 2003, p 248), but it was not nearly as intense.

There was a clear tendency towards Muslim ghettoization in Mumbai after 1993: there are now areas where there are sizable numbers of Muslims, such as Mumbra, Meera Road, Masjid Bandar or sections in Dharavi. From my conversations with the residents of these areas, it is clear that much of the initiative for this was taken by individual Muslims, with practically no support either from the state or from FBOs. For example, since about 1977 there have been *pucca* (brick) houses in the Muslim majority slum of Beherempada, but as an elderly resident said with a smile: "No Jamaat organization helped us in making our houses *pucca*. If anyone did it was the actor Sunil Dutt", also a Congress MP. The one Muslim cleric who is mentioned repeatedly is Maulana Bukhari, who saved dozens of lives in Pratiksha Nagar. Otherwise, there is no trace of JI, JU or TJ in the contemporary memories of Mumbai Muslims.

In Gujarat, it is not clear how many new homes were constructed with the help of government grants, how many through individual effort and how many with the assistance of Muslim FBOs. However, it is clear that Muslim FBOs played a significant role. They did not always agree on the best strategy for displaced Muslims: some felt that return to their previous area of residence rather than resettlement in another area was the best option. For example, the Islamic Relief Committee (IRC) felt that, as far as possible, the victims should return to their old neighbourhoods. Although according to Mr. Madni of IRC, the Gujarat Sarvajanik Relief Committee (GSRC) of the Jamaat-i-Ulema-i-Hind did not agree with them on this issue, the Gujarat Relief Committee refutes this charge. Both the Jamat-i-Hind (JH) and Jamat-i-Ulema (JU) argued that the best option for the victims was to summon up the courage and return home. However, each organization claims that the other suggests just the opposite. Mohammad Shafi Madni, who heads the JI, said that the JU were wrong in asking people to leave and go elsewhere, such as to resettlement colonies. On the contrary, claims Professor Ansari, General Secretary of JU: according to him it was in fact the JI that was handing out such advice.

Despite these disagreements, it is clear that, unlike in Mumbai, in Gujarat, FBOs contributed not just to relief but also to rehabilitation, from providing money and materials to building new and repairing many homes. They continued to interact with Muslim victims of the 2002 carnage well after the violence ceased. This is particularly true in the case of the many refugee colonies (resettlement areas) that were constructed by FBOs, particularly the Islamic Relief Committee (IRC) and Gujarat Sarvanjanik Relief Committee (GSRC). GSRC, for example, built water tanks in places like Madni Nagar, where the Muslim population increased phenomenally after the carnage (see Ohn, 2007, p 29-30). Elsewhere, Muslim organizations built homes and conducted surveys for future construction work. From our interviews with members of the Islamic Relief Committee we were given to understand that this organization constructed about 600 houses in all of Gujarat for affected Muslim families. They also said that, along with homes for the Muslims, they also built some for those Hindus whose property had been accidentally destroyed during the carnage. This, argued Mr. Madni, was a way of buying peace and goodwill for those Muslims who had to return to mixed neighbourhoods. In one of the villages, for example, he reported that they had begun their reconstruction work by first repairing or rebuilding the homes of eight Hindu *sutars* (weavers) whose homes had been destroyed during the killings.

From what I could tell from my visits to Ahmedabad, the resettlement colonies are usually situated in very inhospitable places. For example, the Vatva Rehabilitation Camp becomes an island when it rains, as it is in a low lying area. Another camp, tellingly named Citizen Nagar, is located at the base of the largest rubbish dump/landfill in Ahmedabad. This landfill site is about 200 feet high and two miles long, if not more. When it rains all the filth affects the homes below, making a residential environment that is already bad, intolerably ugly. Residents reported that the sub-soil water is so highly polluted that occasionally the rice they boil turns red in colour. The stench, flies and flying pieces of garbage make it even difficult to open one's mouth to talk (see for a detailed analysis Chandhoke et al, 2007).

Without a doubt, faith based organizations played the most important role in financing the construction of these refugee, or resettlement colonies. The IRC set up at least 11 such colonies, with nearly a thousand housing units, and the GRSC constructed six such projects, benefiting over 700 families. In Naroda Petiya alone they claim to have rebuilt over 550 homes. During the construction period, the victims were still in camps or staying with relations and friends. Surely, all of this is highly commendable, especially in the light of the hostile atmosphere in Gujarat and the antagonistic attitude of the state government.

The process of selecting who would get a place in the colonies founded by JI or JU or TJ is not very clear. Obviously, Muslim refugees applied and the selection was based on an evaluation of need and perceived fear. For both new construction and house repair, the FBO took the amount that the refugees had received as compensation from the government for the damage done to their homes. It is hard to say whether or not the FBOs supplemented this amount with additional funds. While some residents complained that they were not given their money's worth, the FBOs claim that they subsidized the homes to a significant extent.

In resettlement colonies such as Citizen Nagar, Yes Complex or Faizal Park, which were set up by the Islamic Relief Committee, single room apartments roughly 10' by 12' with a small kitchen space tucked in and common toilet and bath facilities were built, similar to the Mumbai chawls described earlier. The occupants were charged Rs. 10,000 per unit before they could move in, to be covered from the compensation they had received. They have separate electricity meters which they pay for on their own and also a monthly charge for drawing water from a bore well dug in the area by the

respective faith based organization. These standards were also used for the units built by GSRC in Ramola. In 2009, residents in Citizen Nagar benefitted from the activism of students and faculty of the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad and now there are daily tankers delivering water to the area. Residents reported that the structures in these areas still belong to the relevant trust. The residents complained that they have not received any ownership papers, nor can they transfer their occupancy rights to anybody else, although they have been assured that they will never be displaced from where they are now. In contrast, the ownership rights of the 30 houses in the part of Citizen Nagar constructed by the Dorabji Yatimkhana Trust have been handed over without strings to the occupants of the units. Those living in the resettlement colonies were keen to state that the promise of security is a huge consolation, because all those who have chosen to live in a resettlement colony have done so out of fear of returning to their old neighbourhoods where they were so victimized.

The management of the faith based organizations has a different point of view on house ownership. They believe that it is essential to keep a check on how the units they have constructed in the residential colonies are used. They do not want them to be sold later to the highest bidder by the original occupants or rented out. They consider that the homes are intended for those who have suffered huge losses and were not built for monetary gain, either for the organization or for those who live in them. This is why they argue that the ownership rights should vest in the FBOs that made the units possible.

Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) is not quite as active as other organizations in establishing resettlement colonies, though they have founded a few, such as one we visited in Modassa. The organization is more interested in making sure that Muslims follow the right path and focus on continuous exhortation among the faithful to adhere to the true spirit of Islam. There is no overt rivalry, or hostility, between the JI, JU and TJ, but there is no question of any merger between them either. Each FBO constructs and manages its own refugee colonies separately because their parent organizations, the JI, the JU and the TJ, have differing views on a number of themes, including relationships with political parties. Overall, it is not clear how many new homes were constructed with the help of government grants, how many through individual effort and how many with the assistance of Muslim FBOs.

Though FBOs helped those victims they resettled in new housing areas, paradoxically, the relations between the two seem to have soured somewhat over the years. Informants living in houses that had

been repaired by FBOs found fault with the construction and darkly hinted at the possibility that the organizations had made money out of the process. In the refugee colonies there was evidence of even more strained relationships. For example, the residents of the resettlement colony of Ramola said that they were forced to act like specimens so that money could be extracted by the local clerics from Muslims visiting from other countries. But more of that later.

2.6 Staking claims on the state: handling the administrative machinery

After the camps were closed down, the pressure of getting back on one's feet and beginning a routine life again became a paramount concern for those affected, but proved very difficult to achieve. The quotidian world had to be recreated and new alignments and equations had to be arrived at. An important starting point in this process was their interaction with the official administrative machinery, with which the victims had had little to do in the immediate aftermath of the killings.

Rehabilitation efforts were of greater significance in Gujarat than in Mumbai for the reasons already explained. But like Maharashtra, here too the rules and regulations for obtaining relief were cumbersome. Apart from the ex-gratia payment of Rs. 200,000 to the next of kin of those killed in both Gujarat and Maharashtra, the Gujarat government fixed a small amount, ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000, as an ex-gratia payment for those with a permanent disability. Later government notifications decreased the payments to which people were entitled by fixing a scale of disability: for 10 per cent disability, the amount was Rs. 2,000, between 10 and 30 per cent, the amount was fixed at Rs. 3,000, slowly sliding up to permanent disability, when the victim was entitled to Rs. 50,000 (PUDR, 2002, quoted in Vardarajan, 2002). Not only was the amount niggardly, it was also very difficult for a person to certify the extent of his or her disability. In the absence of standard rules, it became very hard for victims to get any compensation at all. In addition, victims living in camps found it extremely trying to file FIRs (First Information Reports), as they had to be lodged in the police station under whose jurisdiction the crime was said to have been committed. This affected the legal status of practically every FIR.

In the onerous job of filing claims from the government, the Muslim organizations were once again in the forefront. But here one could see the presence of other NGOs too. ANHAD, Antarik Vishtapith Heet

Rakshah Samiti, Prashant, Unnati, CARE (Ahmad, 2004), and Oxfam (Multi-Disciplinary Team, 2002), as well as several other such organizations, worked with the victims on this issue. In some instances, a number of NGOs also came together under one umbrella, such as the Citizens' Initiative, to ease, to the extent possible, the situation in the camps. The work of the volunteers from the Ahmedabad-based NGO, Aman Pathik, was also commended by many survivors, as well as by members of the Jamaat-i-Islami-i-Hind (JI). In addition, there many non-Muslims without any formal organizational links came in substantial numbers to help victims get compensation and redressal from state authorities (see Mander, 2004, p 58-62). Together, these stories make for a very stirring account of humanity and courage.

2.7 Winning trust: the case of the Mohalla Committee

In Mumbai the first Mohalla (neighbourhood) Committee was set up by F.T. Khorakiwala (a noted local Muslim businessman, once Sheriff of the metropolis and whose name is associated with the iconic department store Akbarally in Mumbai's prestigious Fort area), with the assistance of Nirmala Niketan. This committee helped victims to get the compensation due to them from the government (Tripathi, 1997, p 57). It was soon supported by Mr. Julius Ribeiro, who in turn said that he had been encouraged by the then Director General of Police in Mumbai, Mr. Satish Sahani.

This idea grew over time and several such Mohalla Committees were formed in different parts of Mumbai. Gradually many folded because they did not have the organizational basis to sustain themselves and the ones that continue are not very active. As a result, this aspect of rehabilitation has received scant attention, but the Mohalla Committees are reported to have played an important role in making it easier for victims to interact with the state bureaucracy in the early days when the trauma of the riots was fresh in their memory and the wounds were still wide open, as well as with neighbours, friends, well-wishers and secular organizations. Together, it is asserted, they helped instill a greater sense of confidence in the victims and assisted them in fashioning a new normal around which their everyday lives could be plotted. These latter outcomes were secondary benefits arising from working to help victims get their legitimate dues from the state.

Winning the trust of the victims is not an easy matter.¹¹ Even as victims work with volunteers and other activists to file their claims, they are always wary, for they have been so terribly brutalized. The story of

Altaf Tyrewalla, as related by Rowena Robinson, is illustrative in this context. Altaf was an ordinary citizen of Mumbai. He was lucky not to have been physically hurt during the riots, nor was his property damaged, yet he was very moved by the happenings in Mumbai and reached out to help the victims of the riots. The first time he went to the homes of the deceased, he was turned back. Next time he went with the District Collector and helped to process applications for scholarships. This helped. He then followed this up by assisting victims with compensation cases, filling in forms for ration cards, and so on (Robinson, 2005, p 195). As Robinson concludes, “it was trust constructed gradually on the basis of these myriad tiny actions that alone could build the larger projects of political discernment across communities” (ibid, p 195). Altaf, it must be added, did not see his work as a kind of religious engagement. For him, he asserted, it was something he would do happily for victims regardless of the community from which they came (ibid, p 197). Once again we must guard ourselves from assuming if anyone from a certain faith helps a co-religionist, then this sympathy is entirely for community reasons.

Julius Ribeiro, a previous police chief in Mumbai, had a similar story to tell. According to him, initially Muslims did not want to participate in the Mohalla Committees because they had no faith in them. Ribeiro and his colleagues repeatedly met affected families, and he noted that it was after a number of such interactions that the Mohalla Committees got off the ground. He said that

The affected Muslim families were first of all very angry that they were attacked and exposed the way they were; but in addition they had also lost faith in the civic administration of Mumbai and in the civility of the people. Can you blame them?

Amin Khandwani, an influential Muslim from Mahim, for example, initially refused to endorse the Mohalla Committee because he had lost faith in the secular character of Mumbai society. He told Ribeiro that before he would come to any of the Mohalla Committee meetings, he would have to convince the women in his family and neighbourhood, because they were so incensed by the way they had been attacked during the Mumbai riots. This is where Sushobha Barve did a marvellous job, according to Ribeiro, in convincing the women to come forward and help the Mohalla Committees.

The Mohalla Committees were set up police station (*thana*) wise in about 23 sensitive areas of Mumbai, like Nagpada, Dindaushi, Nirmal Nagar and Jogeshwari. The idea was that the committee would meet in the police station and the Station House Officer (SHO) would be the presiding authority,

with the intention of bringing about greater rapport between the police and Muslims in each *thana* and establishing cordial relations between them. This, Ribeiro believed, was important, as there was a widespread belief among Muslims that policemen by and large had behaved in a partisan fashion during the violence in Mumbai and had favoured Hindu organizations like the Shiv Sena. Indeed it was often remarked in those days that once a policeman stepped out of his uniform he became a Shiv Sainik.

To make the Mohalla Committees relevant to the daily lives of residents, issues such as water, electricity and other civic amenities were also taken up. Sadly, it was reported that not many Hindus attended meetings regularly, but Muslims did because they wanted to establish rapport with the police. According to Ribeiro:

Once Muslims realized the worth of Mohalla Committees they were quite keen to make them a success. Quite rightly, they realized that this was an effective way to keep in touch with the police who they need from time to time for a variety of reasons. It need not always be riots and looting. We too thought that interactions with Muslims would change the mind-set of the ordinary policeman in the thana. Sadly, the Hindus were not equally enthusiastic.

Credit for the establishment of the Committees can be given to Satish Sahani, the Director General of Police at the time, although he believes that it was because of people like Ribeiro and Susobha Barve that the Mohalla Committees became legitimate in Mumbai.

When one compares Mumbai with Gujarat on the question of providing help to the victims to deal with the administrative machinery, a few interesting points of contrast emerge. First, in Mumbai, as we mentioned earlier, there were many agencies within the government that were sympathetic to the victims. In Gujarat, on the other hand, not only was there no administrative support, there was downright hostility. The state machinery was self-consciously, by design and dictat, unhelpful to those victims who made claims on the government for relief. This can be easily judged from the way Chief Minister Modi undermined the setting up of camps for the riot victims, as described above. Even administrative officials who tried to help were undermined by the state authorities. According to Gagan Sethi of Jan Sangharsh Manch, when P.G.J. Namboodir, the retired Director General of Police of Gujarat, offered to assist civil rights activists in delivering justice to Bilkis Bano, who was raped and treated brutally in the 2002 carnage, "he was shunned by his fellow officers and eventually left

Ahmedabad and moved to Kerala in disgust.” This case was eventually resolved in favour of Bilkis Bano and it is to the credit of NGOs that the matter was successfully accomplished in a Mumbai court in 2005. But as Gagan Sethi observed, it cost about Rs. 30 lakhs to cover court fees and travel charges to get justice. Hence, his rueful remark: “How can poor people afford the due process of the law?”

While many NGOs did what they could to assist in this regard, the major work in this field too was done by Muslim organizations. While the VHP went to the jails to feed those few Hindus who had been picked up for rioting, it was the Jamaats that fed imprisoned Muslims (Mander, 2004, p 62). Both the Jamaat-i-Islam-i-Hind (JI) and Jamaat-i-Ulema-i-Hind (JU), through their front organizations, did the best they could in the face of such obvious hostility from the state. In the process all the organizations involved had to overcome many obstacles placed in their way by the government, eventually compelling them to rely primarily on their own resources. This indeed was very heavy going, and the burden was so great that it forced most NGOs out of the struggle, leaving mainly the FBOs to pick up the pieces.

A number of Muslim youth, not attached to any particular organization, also showed great resolve and came out to lend a hand and support the victims. Though very few of them have kept up relations with those they once helped, they are gratefully remembered by a number of victims, especially in Mumbai. Several residents of Tulsiwadi in Mumbai reported that they had been the beneficiaries of such assistance from people unknown to them. They said that they knew that the people concerned were Muslims from their names, but not much more. In Gujarat such accounts are fewer, but it was interesting that some were recounted by residents of Naroda Patiya, the worst affected neighbourhood in Ahmedabad. Given the hostility of the Gujarat state, it required courage on the part of these young volunteers, for they were without any organizational support. Both the IRC and GSRC representatives in Gujarat accepted that several Muslim youth, not formally linked with them, nevertheless freely offered their services during those difficult days.

2.8 Routinizing lives: seeking a 'new' quotidian normal

It is widely acknowledged by all the organizations working in Gujarat and elsewhere that it is very important to get children back to school, women to feel secure and able-bodied people back to work as quickly as possible after ethnic displacements. Muslim organizations again helped the most in

finding work for those who had become unemployed. This task was enormously difficult, as many were refused jobs by their earlier employers. In some cases, victims had to start all over again, because they had moved to a new locality. Many Muslims who were self-employed and ran stores had to be funded so that they could start their businesses again. From push carts to tools and implements to small loans, Islamic organizations did as much as they could to help the victims of the carnage, as did a number of NGOs (some of which have already been mentioned). Fortunately, after a period of time, it was reported that many contractors began hiring their old Muslim hands once again. As a Muslim artisan told me:

The job had to be done, a lot of time had passed since the killings, their passionate hatred of us had also dimmed, so it was all right now to put me back in their employ again.

This is the story of many who were in a similar predicament, about whom more will be said later

The situation of children also needed urgent attention. Their schooling suffered not only because of the disturbances, but later because of the fear that would not leave them. In many of the relief camps, informal schools were run by the management or trust, but the number of school places was insufficient and many parents feared to send their children outside the camps. In one case at least, the Islamic Relief Committee helped set up a coaching class in Patalvada, with the help of an educated youth, in order to retain the interest in education of those who were missing school during the camp days. Later, when the camps closed down, it was found that some Muslim children were afraid to go back to their regular schools. In a few instances, the Islamic Relief Fund was able to establish schools in affected areas of Ahmedabad, although clearly not on a large scale. I went to one such school in Naroda Patiya. It was housed in a small two-storied structure in the very heart of the neighbourhood that had seen the maximum devastation of Muslim lives and property. Obviously, neither Islamic organizations nor NGOs could set up enough schools to meet the demand for school places close to their homes. I was told by an official of IRC that there was no point in setting up schools that were not going to be recognized by the government. The organizations needed government permission to build schools and he complained that this permission took a long time in coming, and in some cases never came. I was told by many residents of Citizen Nagar that in the early years of its formation, SEWA offered to pay the school fees of some of the children in the locality and these were now going to a new school.

In answer to my persistent questioning on how the school problem had been resolved for the many who had no choice but to go to their old schools, including those who did not live in Muslim areas, the answer I generally got was that over a period of time, children slowly mustered up enough courage to shuffle their way back to their old schools. Obviously, this process of going to school began with those places where Muslims were in a majority. In these neighbourhoods it was easier for parents to send their children out to school, as they would remain within a Muslim majority area and would, therefore, be more secure. Later, much later, sometimes after more than a year, the children of Muslims in other localities also resumed going to school. In Naroda Patiya, the organizers of the Ekra (to learn) School set up by the Islamic Relief Committee believe that they helped to break the psychology of fear somewhat.

In Mumbai getting back to schools was not really a problem for Muslim children. As the scale on which violence occurred was much lower than was the case in Ahmedabad, and as Mumbai is a vast sprawling metropolis that prizes anonymity, Muslims reported that children had taken public transport to school not too long after the violence ceased. This was in stark contrast to the situation in Ahmedabad, where even today many parents reported that they are often scared to send their children to a school any distance away from their homes. It is true that in the weeks after the carnage in Mumbai, children stayed home, the girls for longer than the boys, but that period was soon over. Immediately after the killings it seemed as if girls, at least, remained cloistered at home. But now even a cursory visit to Mumbai's Muslim-dominated localities shows that girls have returned to school, and according to census figures, their numbers seem to be increasing.

Women victims of the carnage were the worst affected, for a number of reasons. Those who were raped often denied the fact for fear of being further ostracized by their communities (Kannabiran, 2002; Lakshminarayan et al, 2002, p 4), although they accepted every other form of humiliation and deprivation to which they were subjected during the Mumbai riots. It is probably because of the severe effects on women that IDEA believes that a concern for women should be built into the rehabilitation process (IDEA, 1998, p 24). Olakh, an NGO, goes so far as to make it a policy not to employ men in the organization (see Ahmad, 2004, p 97). Most of the NGOs and faith based organizations felt that an important way in which they could assist women to get back some of their confidence was to work

with them on a number of everyday issues, from health, to psychological counseling, to training them in certain crafts, and so on (ibid, p 100).

Women felt more betrayed than the men at the treachery of those neighbours who had come out to kill them and loot their belongings, probably because women spend a lot of time at home and hence their interactions with those who live around them is more intense (see also Lakshminaryana, et al, 2002, p 3). In the Gujarat carnage, about 500 women became widows and some of them were subsequently forced to head their households - a job they were not traditionally accustomed to. Widows, as Ramphela argues, are always in a "liminal stage" (Ramphela, 2000, p 99) and they are monitored closely in a way that widowers never are (ibid, p 100). In addition, widows face a lot of opposition from their dead husband's relations on a number of issues, including why a widow should not get all the compensation for her husband's death (Robinson, 2005, p 147). It is for all these reasons that women survivors are the most prone to "post-traumatic disorders" (Lakshminarayan, et al, 2002, p 2), and more young girl survivors than boys stay home and drop out of school (ibid, p 4). The normal world of a woman is disturbed on every front, including the most intimate interactions at home. Many men divorce their wives if they have been sexually attacked and the family ceases to act any longer as a unit and a cementing force for many of them (ibid, p 18). Such women fear that there is no safe place for them any more (ibid, p 22)

Such traumatized women can be helped by sensitive counselling that appreciates the many changes that they are experiencing, both physical and mental. A woman needs support on all fronts, from housing, to education, to health, security, and legal help (ibid, p 19). This is why Gagan Sethi argues that the judgment on the Bilkis Bano case was so important. Group activities, such as prayer meetings, recreational activities, cooking classes, and livelihood assistance, all add up to gradually repair a ravaged woman's life. These exercises should, it is believed, begin in the refugee camp itself and should not wait until women are moved to their homes, new or old (ibid, p 33-38). These little things of life are very significant and one should not lose sight of them even as efforts for compensation, building homes, getting compensation claims filed and, most of all, justice, continue.

3 By-passing development: the livelihood responses of riot-affected Muslims

Ethnic tensions give rise to considerations of development for two reasons. First, it is often assumed that the victims of ethnic violence are attacked for economic advantage. The only way to counter this, it is asserted, is to raise the living standards of the victimizers so that they would no longer be attracted by this economic drive. The second is a little more complex. As ethnic killings hurt normal economic activity, those who are economically the most vulnerable suffer the most. In Ahmedabad, for example, Muslims face not just the wrath of Hindu activists, but also tremendous insecurity on the job and livelihood front. They are the weakest, from every point of view.

In order to examine this issue closely, it must first be noted that the victims of ethnic riots are not always an economically disadvantaged community (the Sikhs, for example). Second, when ethnic violence erupts, it does not happen for economic reasons. Although, once tension and killings grip an area, there are clear economic consequences, it is not clear who the winners are. The losers are, of course, the victims. How do they cope with their economic losses?

In this chapter these two concerns, viz. the question of the economic drivers behind ethnic riots and how victims cope with their economic downturn, will be examined. Of the two, more space will be devoted to the second issue, as it has greater relevance for understanding both rehabilitation and the search for a new normal, which are central queries in this study.

Concerns about development conjure up multiple images: there are the 'hard' issues of economic growth and industrial infrastructure, but there are also 'soft' issues that are equally, if not more, important. The most important of these is the need to enhance citizenship bonds irrespective of ascriptive differences. When discussing development in the context of ethnicity, especially in the Indian context, such soft issues gain salience. We are compelled to ask how the rights of minority citizens can be both protected and promoted, and what threatens them the most. To get a measure of this, it is necessary to examine how the affected minority community, in this case, the Muslims of Mumbai and Ahmedabad, have coped with the economic losses they suffered during the ethnic carnages against them in the recent past. Once we have an understanding of this, it is possible to think in terms of setting in place policies that address the soft issues of development, particularly in relation to minority uplift and betterment. While at this point, we might also recall the plight of the Sikhs, who were also once an embattled minority, our emphasis in this paper is primarily on the Muslim victims of Mumbai 1993 and Ahmedabad 2002.

First, the suggestion that Hindu onslaughts against Muslims are driven by economic competition will be discussed in greater depth and dismissed as a convincing explanation of ethnic carnage, because Muslims are disproportionately represented in the insecure and badly paid sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, there are well-to-do Muslims, especially in Mumbai. Their roles in assisting poorer victims and the ways in which they re-established their own businesses are explored in Section 3.2, followed by more in-depth exploration of how the occupations of the majority of victims were affected by the violence and its aftermath. While the economic situation of some Muslims deteriorated as a result of the violence, for most, especially the poor, their livelihoods, poverty and vulnerability were little altered. Finally, attitudes to education as a means of addressing these persistent problems are explored.

3.1 Economic rivalry: do Muslims compete?

To set the stage for this discussion, we need to be clear if ‘soft’ development issues, such as citizenship and minority rights, are threatened in India by the ‘hard’ issues related to the allocation of scarce economic resources and competition for investments designed to achieve growth. Such an exercise does not presume that only economic issues matter, but as they are an important aspect of development, they must be examined closely.

It is often believed that developmental blockages cause ethnic riots, but is this really the case in India? Stanley Tambiah argued that ethnic wars occur because of disputes over claims to the state’s resources. In his opinion “the present plethora of ethnic conflicts...coincides with an increasing shrinking of economic horizons...” (Tambiah, 1997, p 340). Horowitz’s depiction of the rivalry between communities in Burma, or between Sinhalese and Tamils, or the Afro-Guyanese and East Indians (Horowitz, 2002, p 145) perhaps exemplifies this argument and some Indian scholars have made claims of this sort. Some have cited conflicting business interests (Banu, 1989, p 128), others settling old professional rivalries (Das, 1990, p 14; Srinivasan, 1990, p 317), not to mention urban overcrowding leading to real estate speculation (Ghosh, 1987, p 31) and a builder-underworld nexus (Tripathi, 1997, p 20). But none of these carry conviction and India does not afford any convincing evidence in this regard. Why? For the simple reason that the majority community has never coveted the jobs or businesses of the minority communities they have looted and destroyed. In no major ethnic violence in post-Independence India have Muslims or Sikhs been attacked because Hindus want their

jobs, or feel economically threatened by them. Not in Ahmedabad, not in Mumbai, not in Assam and not even in Delhi.

At one level it sounds very persuasive that as aspirations rise, competition becomes fierce and what better way of meeting this challenge than to cast one's opponents in religious/ethnic terms and then slaughter them? In different ways this point of view has a large number of subscribers. Toft (2003) and Carment (2007) believe that material benefits are essential to attract participation in ethnic violence. Brass spells out this position by arguing that elite mobilization and conflict build on a sense of relative deprivation to heighten antagonism between warring ethnic groups led by their respective elites (Brass, 1991, pp 15, 42, 47). Sergenti and Thomas (2005) hold that economic imbalances surcharge ethnic prejudices and cumulatively lead to sectarian violence.

Plausible though these arguments may sound, the Muslim victims of ethnic riots in India are nowhere near the economic equals of Hindus. Nor are Hindu interests in any way diminished by Muslim campaigns for a larger share of the development cake. Nor can we sustain Juergensmeyer's claim that the opposition between the rural interests of Sikhs and the urban interests of Hindu Khatri stoked the fires of secessionism in Punjab in the 1980s (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p 193). While rural Sinhalese may resent urban Tamil affluence (Horowitz, 2002, p 145), leading to violent tensions in Sri Lanka, the Indian case is different. It was not as if in Punjab the demands of irrigation versus industry pitted Sikhs against Hindus: a large number of Sikhs live in cities, and that is where they were hurt most by Hindu mobs. Rural Punjab was relatively tranquil.

There is no doubt that Hindu activists object to free mixing between the sexes and are votaries of traditional rituals and beliefs, yet they are not against the fruits of modernization or industrialization, as Juergensmeyer seems to suggest (Juergensmeyer, 2000, p 228). Interestingly, Muslims have never been attacked because their women are 'forward', 'bold' or job seeking, nor because they are more adept at leveraging modernity. The Hindus of Gujarat were prosperous in 2002 when ethnic attacks against Muslims took place, and they continue to be so even today. This also puts paid to any straight correlation between economic collapse and ethnic violence in India, though it might make sense in other places (Testas, 2002, pp 161-183; Horowitz, 2002, p 133). This also leads us to be sceptical of Saideman and Steinberg (2008) when they assert that the greater the government interference, the

higher the chances of identity politics. By 2002, Gujarat and India had economically liberalized and all the available statistics suggest that the state, nationally and regionally, was seriously 'rolling back'.

We should at this point be careful to separate ethnicity from nationalism and return to matters of definition, but this time in the context of economic interests and motivations. Ethnicity draws its ideological strength from the conviction that there are specific communities within, which are intent on partitioning and seceding from the nation-state (see, for example, Toft, 2003, pp 39-42). This is why in no mainstream ethnic charter do the sectarians have a clear economic axe to grind. Nationalism historically precedes ethnicity, for the claims it makes are on the basis of a defined territory from which aliens have to be expelled, nearly always for economic reasons. Nationalism is when the hitherto dominated hit back at the dominants who come from a different cultural and historical stock and who are economically more powerful. On the other hand, in ethnic clashes in India, it is the strong attacking the weak. People from the Hindu majority kill, bludgeon and loot the weak minorities, spurred on by the belief that they are protecting the nation-state and its territories from outsiders who are masquerading as insiders. In the case of the Indian nationalist movement, it is possible to say that rural and urban middle class interests provided the leadership and ideology (Chandra, 1984, pp 39, 43, 319). But when it comes to ethnic clashes, such material interests cannot be discerned, not even in a 'surrogate' fashion (Demerath, 2001, p 176-7).

India does not provide the necessary evidence to sustain the argument that material interests instigate ethnic wars. As noted earlier, Muslims victims are nearly always the very poor. Nobody wants their jobs and nobody gains economically by chasing them out of the neighbourhoods where they live. It is another matter that real estate speculators and commercial operators, some probably functioning in the underworld, take advantage of ethnic unrest. For example, Majid Khan, ironically a Mumbai-based Muslim builder and also a politically influential person, is said to have links with veteran Shiv Sena leader, Madhukar Sarpotdar of Shiv Sena, and the two are alleged to have had ambitions of taking over parts of Beherempada slum in Mumbai for real estate purposes. I was told by many Muslim residents in Beherempada how hard they had to work to keep Majid Khan and his M.K.Builders out. The matter went to court and they were able to keep these builders at bay, but for how long? The threat apparently has not gone away completely and may surface again. But these builders do not *cause* the bloodshed, they merely feed off it, adding to the hardship of the Muslim community.

To get a better understanding of the underclass status of most (but not all) Indian Muslims, a glance at some macro-level figures might help.

Muslims are generally self-employed, merchants and traders, or very poor labourers and craftsmen. At the All India level, 92.1 per cent of Muslims work in the informal sector, as against 76.9 per cent of Hindus (Sachar Committee, 2006, table 5.5, p 113; see also table 5.9, p 117). Generally, skill levels are very low, and what is basically being sold is cheap labour. In keeping with this, a greater percentage of Muslims than Hindus lack a fixed place of work (ibid, p 115). Also, while 39.4 per cent of Muslims are to be found in the category 'own account worker in household enterprises', the proportion for the general population is only 30.7 per cent and for other minorities 31.4 per cent (Sachar Committee, 2006, p tables 5.3 and 5.4, pp 111-112). Linked to these sectoral and occupational employment patterns, the proportion of Muslims in small manufacturing units is almost double that of Hindus (ibid, p 342). For example, 41 per cent of all male workers in the tobacco and more than 30 per cent of those working in the garment industries are Muslims (ibid, p 99). Another way of appreciating this phenomenon is to look at the mode of remuneration. A higher proportion of Muslims than Hindus are paid on a daily or piece rate basis. Only about 81 per cent of Muslims in wage employment get their wages regularly by the month, in comparison to 90.4 per cent for Hindus. Not surprisingly, then, percentage wise more Muslims get paid by the week or by the day than is the case with Hindus (ibid, table 5.13, p 120). In contrast, only 23 per cent of Muslims nationally are salaried employees, as against 35.5 per cent of Hindus (ibid, table 5.2, p 320).

The informal sector includes a whole range of activities, such as rolling *bidis*, weaving carpets, making incense sticks, embroidering cushions, running stores, and so on. If one were to go to Dharavi or Khoja Chawl or Mohammed Ali Road in Mumbai, one would find only Muslim small shopkeepers and petty entrepreneurs. 16.8 per cent of Muslims are in trade and wholesale, as compared to 8.1 per cent of Hindus (ibid, p 117). In large parts of the country, from Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra, many Muslims are loom and carpet weavers. Many of them pursue this line of occupation in Mumbai too - I met several such people in Mumbai's Tulsiwadi area, where a number of Muslims had run away to their villages in north India to escape the violence in their neighbourhood.

Because such a large proportion of Muslims work in small and micro-enterprises and in the informal sector, as small traders, mechanics or artisans, large scale development investments do not benefit them, other than very indirectly. Funds for developmental purposes are never directed to help such people directly and in that sense, they appear to be outside the horizon of most planners and economic experts. Anybody who works in the informal sector is neglected and there is nothing special about being Muslim. Further, there is a larger proportion of Muslims in urban areas than in the villages. Only 40 per cent of Muslims are engaged in agriculture, while the proportion of Hindus is over 58 per cent (ibid, pp 98-99). Muslim farmers do not constitute a special economic category of any significance. If some benefits were to be given to agriculture, Muslim cultivators too would benefit. But Muslims are not big landowners, nor substantial owner cultivators anywhere in Gujarat. If anything, they have economic recognition as traders, and it is par for the course for this occupation to be as inoffensive and undemanding as possible. Thus even in rural India, 94.2 per cent of Muslims work in the informal sector in manufactories or trade and wholesaling (ibid, table 5.5, p 113, see also table 5.9, p 117).

Competition over scarce resources as part of 'development dialectics' is therefore not a very convincing explanation of ethnic violence. When not in business, where most Muslims remain low key, they are mostly unskilled or semi-skilled labourers in the informal sector. One reason why this should be the case is that Indian Muslims are primarily from the poorer socio-economic category, which denies them equal access to education, which in turn disqualifies them from holding regular wage jobs in the organized and formal sectors. Muslims then are not a presence in India's labour aristocracy, which is why there is little economic incentive for the lower Hindu classes to see them as competitors. So, no matter from which end of the economic spectrum one views the Muslims in India, they are passive bystanders, and often victims, of the development discourse, never the ones who set its tone and trend.

This should not be taken to mean that there are no qualified Muslims in India. There are many Muslims who are educated and have been to university, but they are under-represented in the government and organized industry in the country as a whole. Although Muslims make up 13 per cent of the population, only 7.9 per cent of those working in the formal sector are Muslims. Thus a mere 5.8 per cent of Muslims are employed in the formal sector, while in the case of Hindus the figure is much higher at

12.3 per cent. The same holds for government jobs (ibid, table 5.5, p 113). It has been widely reported that there are proportionately fewer Muslims in the police, army and the administrative services; and likewise their proportionate numbers are low in private and public sector limited companies. The National Sample Survey (61st Round) points out that, whereas 35.3 per cent of Hindus are employed in the government sector, only 23.7 per cent of Muslims find jobs there (see also the Sachar Report, 2006, p 320).

Why should Muslims be under-represented in organized sector employment? The answers are not very clear. It has often been suggested that after Partition, the most qualified Muslims left for Pakistan. But this does not explain why those Muslims who are qualified are hard to find in the organized sector. After all, there are Muslims coming out of universities like Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim Universities. Tentatively, it can be suggested that state and administrative authorities, as well as private sector family firms, are biased against Muslims. Even if that may not be completely true, Muslims perceive such a bias, and this stops them from even trying to seek positions in the formal sectors of the economy. I have heard many Muslims say this, but it is hard to ascertain the veracity of such statements.

The All India figures, therefore, suggest that Muslims are better represented than other religious groups in micro to small businesses and in self-employment. Their relative under-representation in large-scale agriculture and business and formal sector wage employment means that they are also largely among the poorer sections of the population. These All-India figures are more or less representative of Gujarat and Maharashtra. This it cannot be said that their privileged access to secure and well-paid employment explains why Muslims have been so ferociously and repeatedly attacked in Mumbai and Ahmedabad. What comes through is that it is not the economy, or the structure of employment, that can account for the vulnerability of Muslims in certain parts of the country. The explanation must, therefore, lie with politics. This is why any attempt to explain such ethnic riots in terms of economic tensions is not just wrong, but perhaps also lends a modicum of respectability to Hindu rioters.

By the same token, as Hindus and Muslims are to be found in nearly the same proportions in different jobs in most parts of the country, economic profiles cannot explain why ethnic tensions are high in one

place and not another. Once again, political considerations and calculations stoke such mobilizations, and it should also be borne in mind that not all conspiracies of this type succeed. However, when one does, it appears as if it was waiting to happen all along. That is why in most post-factum explanations, it is made to appear as if the two communities, viz., the Hindus and the Muslims, are ordained to be locked in eternal and unequal battles.

3.2 Where money matters: safety in numbers and how rich Muslims respond

When discussing the victims of ethnic violence, it is easy to overlook the fact that there are rich Muslims who were also affected. The economies of the cities of Mumbai and Ahmedabad differ considerably. Mumbai is a large, prosperous city with extensive trade and service sectors and significant wealthy classes, including many prosperous Muslim businessmen. There are significant areas in the city where Muslim businesses dominate and the residential populations are predominantly Muslim. In contrast, Ahmedabad is essentially a manufacturing city, but the disappearance of the once prosperous textile mills has taken away the prospects of a regular wage for the many Muslims and Hindus who worked in them (See Breman, 1999; Shah, 1970). Not only are some Muslims rich and others poor, but between the two there is a cultural divide that is generally ignored. Most poor Muslims in Mumbai or Ahmedabad are not native to the place or even the province. The affluent Muslims, on the other hand, are Bohra, Khojas and Memons, who have their business and cultural roots in west India, stretching from Maharashtra to Gujarat (Shani, 2007, p 28-9; Engineer, 1989). They consider themselves to be converts to Islam from the Hindu upper castes (Shani, 2007, p 29), and often address poorer Muslims by the pejorative term *mianbhai* (Yadav, 1999, p190). In the Naroda Patiya area, which saw the worst carnage in Ahmedabad in 2002, the victims were nearly all migrants, the bulk of them from Karnataka.

Despite the socio-economic differences, in Mumbai a large number of rich Muslims extended help to their poorer co-religionists. As mentioned earlier, important Muslim businessmen like Khorakiwala, and also Wahid Ali and Zakulla Siddiqi, played leading roles in initiating the Aman (or peace) committees in Mumbai in after the 1993 unrest in the city. Other prosperous Muslims contributed in a number of ways to the welfare of the riot affected. Among them, mention may also be made of Khairul Islam, Mohammed Ali, Dudhwala and Feroze Mithaiwala. Interestingly, even political leaders like Nawab

Mallik, Gulzar Sheikh and S.R. Jamkhanwala, lent their weight and influence to help, and often rescue, Muslims from their embattled homes. In contrast, as has already been noted, the only religious personality who figured repeatedly in informants' accounts of the horror days of 1993 was Maulana Bukhari who, at tremendous personal risk, rescued many Muslims from Pratiksha Nagar.

Sadly, there are no comparable stories of this kind in Gujarat. At least, they do not readily come to the surface, as they do in Mumbai. Well-to-do Gujarati Muslims in Ahmedabad do not have the presence that the Muslim elite has in Mumbai. There are no significant Muslim political leaders in Gujarat, not even in Ahmedabad. Being a Congress Party member did not help save the life of Ahsan Jaffry, who was burnt to death in his apartment in Ahmedabad's Gulberg Society. Finally, the way in which the state government of Gujarat sponsored the killings and looting left even well-off Muslims numb and fearful. In the absence of wealthy Muslim-dominated business areas, even better off Muslims were quite vulnerable in this city. We met members of some of these larger Muslim establishments who after some hesitation responded to our queries. They reported a variety of strategies for recovery. Some admitted that they had been able to dip into their savings, others pulled out stocks from their godowns and re-started their businesses, some had even got bank loans by using their property as collateral, and in one case, a brother in law had stood as a guarantor. However, others had failed to make a new beginning and their lifestyles had suffered considerably, in a relative sense.

The Muslims who suffered the least were those in working in the government services. Respondents reported that they returned to their work almost immediately the riots were over. They were the ones who were generally unhurt by the killings and lootings. Khalid Quereshi, a government municipal worker in Mumbai, said that his Hindu office colleagues and friends provided him and his family with shelter when the rioting was going on. However, once again, this category of Muslim government employees is fairly sizable only in Mumbai, where one comes across a large number of Muslims employed by the city's Municipality Corporation. In our limited sweep of affected Muslims in Ahmedabad, in contrast, we did not come across a single person who worked in any government office. Obviously, there must be many who do, but the fact that we did not encounter them is indicative.

In the 1993 upheavals in Mumbai, nearly all the well-to-do Muslims successfully protected their lives and property. Many rich Muslims in Ahmedabad worked their way back into business, though, as some of them said, not always at the same level of affluence. According to the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the total economic loss the state suffered during the 2002 rioting was to the tune of Rs. 2,000 crore (one crore is equal to 10 million), and the bulk of it hurt only Muslims. The Concerned Citizens' Tribunal estimated that over 1,150 restaurants and hotels operated by Muslims in Gujarat had been looted, leading to a loss of Rs. 600 crore. Muslims who had invested in the transportation sector lost over Rs. 800 crore. Likewise, prosperous Muslim merchants who ran expensive showrooms and large factories faced losses of over Rs. 400 crore as their enterprises were burnt and looted (Concerned Citizens' Tribunal, 2002). Many Muslim shop owners and restaurateurs had given their establishments Hindu names, or had Hindu sleeping partners, but a large number of them were attacked nevertheless. Obviously, much of the carnage had been well planned.

Naturally, the coping methods that the rich and poor resort to are quite different. Rich Muslims borrow money from friends and relations to get back to business. In most cases, they endeavour to restart the existing business, but in about a quarter of the cases we came across in Mumbai, when a business enterprise was burnt and destroyed, people tried a different business – for example, a bakery shop owner now runs a shoe factory. Many of the relatively small number of Muslim entrepreneurs and merchants in Ahmedabad have recourse to informal sources of credit in areas where they are present in sizable numbers. A fund for this purpose existed, made up of contributions from members of the Muslim commercial classes, which had in the past been used for emergency relief when business plans had gone wrong. After 2002, I have been told that some of this money was used to help those businesspeople whose establishments had suffered during the violence. This is an informal fund, which is not linked to a mosque of any overtly faith-based organization; its management is informal and very little information about it seeps out to the general public. In addition, the very substantial Aga Khan foundation is present in the city, with resources earmarked for Ismailis.

Mumbai Muslims are more assertive than their counterparts in Ahmedabad not only because Maharashtra is not ruled by the BJP or Narendra Modi, but also because of the population demography and commercial topography of the city. In Mumbai, there are areas like Gosht Bazaar and Khoja Chawl in Byculla or Bhendi Bazaar and Mohammad Ali Road where practically every tea vendor, draper,

mechanic and book seller is a Muslim. Their stores were untouched because they were in predominantly Muslim localities. Those who worked in these units as daily, casual or permanent workers found their jobs waiting for them once the rioting subsided. The closest we come to similar areas in Ahmedabad are Relief Road and Sarangpur (attached to Gomtipur). However, these areas are not as Muslim dominated as the parts of Mumbai mentioned above – in both Relief Road and Sarangpur, there are equal numbers of Muslim and non-Muslim (primarily Sindhi) shop owners.

Some businesspeople do not attempt to restart their enterprises in the same location, relocating to other areas within the city, or migrating to other states, as did the Cheliya Muslims of Gujarat (Lakdawala, 2002; Engineer, 2003). And in Mumbai too, despite the strength and geographical concentration of the Muslim business sector, several entrepreneurs and well-to-do merchants left the central city to go to the suburbs, although as far as we know, no Muslim businessman left the state of Maharashtra.

3.3 Any job will do: how the poor cope

Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat, disparagingly characterized Muslims as a class of “tyre puncture repairers.” In his view, this was all that the Muslims were good for, besides, as he put it, “producing children.” He went on to say that Gujarat needed skilled people and high level technicians, if it wanted to develop. Obviously, Modi felt that Muslims did not have the necessary skills that Gujarat could use to press forward (see Punwani, 2003, p 246).

Ironically, it may be their concentration in certain economic sectors and even their relative economic backwardness that allows Muslims to recover economically after ethnic carnages, well before they are on an even keel on other fronts. According to Nawab Malik (now Minister in the Maharashtra cabinet):

After a riot we Muslims may be out of a job for some time. Hindus may frighten us into moving away to some other place. But in the end the same Hindus come to us for our services. We are not that weak. We are the ones who dominate the world of mechanics. From cars to air conditioners to television sets, one has to come to Muslims for repairs. This is why after a while we economically resettle ourselves without anyone's help.

So once a riot is over, with a bit of luck, Muslims can reclaim their backward spots in the economy, even though this means that development bypasses them as usual.

Regardless of what Chief Minister Modi may think of the developmental potential of poor Muslims, members of this community feel that it is their poverty that makes them extra vulnerable when ethnic killings happen. Had they been better educated and better positioned, they believe, they would not have been so brutally attacked; but also, if carnage should happen, they are able to surface afterwards. As has already been discussed, it is clear that in when ethnic carnage occurs in Indian cities, the poorer one is the more helpless one becomes at the hands of ethnicists, with the result that the overwhelming number of victims come from the poorest section of the minoritized community, whether Sikh or Muslim.

While better off people were also attacked (the killings in Gulbarga Housing Society in Ahmedabad being a gruesome case), when one counts the dead and the jobless post-carnage, it is the poor who suffered the most. They lost their jobs, their shanty establishments, and their trade tools, as well as the Hindu networks that linked them commercially to the city. Although the total monetary loss may not be large, when one is poor, every bit counts. The segregated and dispersed manner in which the economic interests of victims were affected makes it difficult to assess the total losses. In these circumstances, how do poor victims cope in the aftermath of violence? How are their livelihood strategies affected?

Surprisingly, it emerged from the accounts of victims that within a year of the violence, nearly all had found work again, with little help from faith based organizations, NGOs, or the state. There were a few exceptions: for example, in Akbar Nagar in Ahmedabad, seven women (out of over 150 families) said that they had received sewing machines from NGOs like Aman Samuday and SEWA, which helped them generate a second income for the household, however marginal. However, on the whole, the role of such NGOs was marginal, and to expect any more would be unrealistic.

We asked about 70 families in each city what kind of work they had found after the violence was over. Nearly three quarters of the families interviewed in Mumbai said that they were worse off after the riots, although about half of those working had actually retained the same job. The other half, however, had had to change their jobs, because they moved far away from their earlier place of work, or because their employer did not want them any more. While nearly three quarters of the respondents complained that they were economically worse off than before, this cannot always be attributed to the need to change their sources of income.

In Ahmedabad close to 80 per cent of affected families that we met complained that they are economically worse off since the 2002 carnage. A Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) pamphlet of 2002 admonished Hindus not to employ Muslims (see Oxfam and Bangalore Initiative for Peace, 2002; see also Press Release of Oxfam and Bangalore Initiative for Peace and Relief Press, dated 28 February 2002)). The percentage who retained their previous job was lower than in Mumbai (about 40 per cent), but still much higher than I had anticipated. The remainder had to look elsewhere for employment – the gravity of the situation is demonstrated by the fact that, of the 16 families we interviewed in the Gomtipur area of Ahmedabad, in the shadow of the Shah Alam Mosque where Gujarat's largest refugee camp was situated, ten reported that they had had to search for a new employer. Nevertheless, even here most of those wishing to work reported that they had found work within about four months of the riots, an outcome that they had not expected in the very difficult days and weeks following the violence, even if the work was not always to their satisfaction. As Mohammad Shafi Madni, Ameer-e-Halqa of Islamic Relief Committee (a wing of Jammata-i-Islam) said:

Our brothers found jobs in other places, but more or less doing the same thing. When their earlier employers did not want them, there was somebody else - perhaps far away. Soon, however, they found new patrons and clients. It can never be the same as before, but we are very hardy people.

In addition, it was reported that in almost two thirds of the families affected in Ahmedabad, women increased their participation in cottage industries (such as making incense sticks), or worked from their homes as embroiderers for more prosperous businesses. On occasions, these women were widows, who were forced to take up some occupation, in most cases, a home based one. We came across families in Ahmedabad's Naroda Patiya, Akbarpur and Citizen Nagar where from one bread earner, there are now two or more - forced into learning sewing or embroidering to make a little money after the riots, women kept this up even when their husbands and sons later found jobs. Respondents in areas such as Naroda Patiya as well as resettlement colonies such as Yes Colony, Citizen Nagar and Faizal Park noted that recent recession has hurt them badly, for a lot of orders have been cancelled. It was not possible to ascertain whether women's work participation rates had also occurred in Mumbai because it has been much longer since the Mumbai violence happened, people's recall is not very clear and often the relevant family members had left, or died a natural death.

In Mumbai, as noted above, there has also been a steady migration of Muslims to distant locations, such as Mumbra and Oshiwara, in search of security. Such residential areas were set up by the private initiatives of real estate developers and house Muslims from different economic backgrounds. Over time, they have become almost exclusively Muslim localities - ghettos, if you will. Many of them, though not all, contain comfortable homes. As is to be expected, when the new residences are miles away from the older ones, jobs are bound to change as well. All the workers in Muslim families we met in Oshiwara had taken on new jobs, although many of them continued to work in the same or an allied occupation: a tailor had remained a tailor and a barber a barber, but a person who had previously run a paint store had become a hardware dealer, a labourer a daily wage worker in a factory, a motor mechanic a scooter rickshaw driver, and so on.

While these altered occupations bore a strong resemblance to the jobs riot-affected Muslims had left behind when they moved to Oshiwara, in about a third of cases the respondent had completely changed his or her occupation. For example, a tailor reported that he had joined a sharebroker's firm as an assistant, a man who ran a cigarette store is now a painter, and a person who earlier worked in clothes fabrication is now in building and construction. In these distant locales, some Muslims took to completely different jobs, requiring different skill sets which they adroitly learnt on the job.

The story in Ahmedabad is decidedly grimmer, even though the new Muslim re-settlement colonies are not as far away from Ahmedabad city as those such as Mumbra or Oshiwara are from Mumbai. In places like Citizen Nagar or Ramola in Ahmedabad, barring a few, an overwhelming number of Muslims had to change jobs for a number of reasons, the most important being that they did not want to return to their old homes. This was particularly true of those who once lived in Naroda Patiya, where the killings were the most brutal. As many have moved to re-settlement colonies (many from Naroda Patiya are now in Citizen Nagar), they reported that they had had to look for new jobs, although almost always in a related field. Some switched from wage employment to micro-enterprise and sometimes back again, or a combination, depending on the availability of work. Women often worked, for example assisting with a micro-enterprise if their husband found wage work. Some figured that the distance to their old jobs was not worth the expense, as they could find similar ones nearer to their new homes, but others had been forced out of their previous jobs because their earlier employers had found replacements in the months they were away from work - hiding with friends, relations and in resettlement camps does not qualify as 'leave of absence'.

3.4 From poverty to poverty: establishing a 'new' economic normalcy

There is little doubt that many of the families affected by the violence are today wretchedly poor, but it is hard to say whether they were much better off prior to the riots. In practice, as noted above, a large percentage returned to their old jobs and businesses and nearly all those who had had to find new employment were the ones who moved house, to a safer area close to their previous residence or another part of the city.

What is very noticeable in Ahmedabad is the number of Muslims who work as casual, unskilled labourers for near starvation wages. They did this before the riots, and are in the same jobs today. They have no skills, no capital and no education. After the riots were quelled, this class of workers reported that they had been able to find jobs quickly. They lost household goods, some lost their homes, but most had been able to find the kind of work they were engaged in prior to the violence with relative ease. The residents of Akbar Road in Bapu Nagar, Ahmedabad fit this description best. Here almost all the men in the slum (for that is what it is) are such casual labourers. They leave in the morning in search of jobs; they wait in the bus stand and in certain designated squares in the hope of being contracted for the day. In addition, a large number of households in the slum are engaged in making bags out of polythene, so that when one enters the slum the first thing that one sees is a field of white polythene. In addition, many families contract to produce incense sticks. Little children, some barely six years old, can be seen labouring at this task. They are paid at the rate of Rs. 10 for thousand sticks and can perhaps make half that amount in a day, or a little more. In many Akbar Nagar shanties, mothers and children sit together working long hours rolling out incense sticks. Even the little ones do this with near mechanical precision.

Despite the brutalities that Muslims faced in Ahmedabad, sometimes from their neighbours, as in Naroda Patiya, many returned timorously to their original homes after several months in refugee camps. Most of them found their belongings burnt to ashes or looted and very little left of what once used to be a roof over their heads. Despite being a minority in these areas, it was the livelihood compulsion that drove them back. If they had a grocery shop, then they unlocked its rickety doors and waited for customers to come. If they found that they could no longer run a fully fledged store, they started to vend nuts, gram, dolls, sunglasses, hair pins, and so on, in push carts. Although such small scale trade only brings in a trickle of income, in the straitened circumstances that they faced, they had

little choice. Such traders had connections with agents who functioned in that part of the city and others re-opened their much damaged shops with help from friends and relations.

Where Muslims lost their petty self-employed businesses, therefore, they usually started another, although not always in the same field or on the same scale. For example, one tailor reported that he had begun another enterprise of the same kind, but another who had lost his shop and sewing machine in Tulsiwadi had switched to repairing watches. A taxi driver had started a motor garage. A cloth merchant described how, with hefty bank loans and assistance from his son, he had gradually set up another shop but on a smaller scale. A leather merchant noted that he had been forced to diversify and sell goods made by others, because he cannot operate on the strength of what he and his son produce. Motor mechanics had found alternative sites to re-open their garages, or start an air-conditioning repair shop.

However, especially in Ahmedabad, we came across many more instances of respondents who had found it difficult to restart their enterprises, and are now working for someone else. In a rather sad case from Paladi (Ahmedabad), for example, a man who once supplied material to a factory is now forced to work in the same establishment as a watchman. Hafiz in Akbar Nagar had a lorry before the riots, but since it was burnt, he is now forced to work as a daily wage lorry loader. In the same locality, Firoz, who once owned a furniture store, today toils for a pittance as a carpenter. A small shop owner in Behrampura, who lost his meagre stock in the carnage and could not pay back his creditors, was forced to become a wage worker. In Ahmedabad, where assistance from the wealthy in the Muslim community in Ahmedabad was rarely available, there were many more cases of steep downward mobility than in Mumbai.

Although instances of losing one's own petty business were also given in Mumbai, in this city, as mentioned earlier, there are several business areas, like Crawford Market, Chor Bazaar and Mohammadali Road, Byculla, that are rich, shiny and nearly all Muslim and in which Muslims suffered no losses. While in mixed neighbourhoods like Tulsiwadi, Dharavi and Govindip, small Muslim entrepreneurs were economically hurt (as were some Hindu shop keepers in Muslim-dominated parts of Dharavi), many were able to find economic refuge in the wealthier Muslim-dominated areas, as well as loans to start over again. This allowed Muslim shopkeepers, embroiderers, metal workers and so

on to get business, albeit on a smaller scale than before 1993. They were not bereft and without support in the same way Muslim craftspeople and petty entrepreneurs in Ahmedabad were.

Are we saying then that economic dislocation after a riot is not that traumatic for the poor? After all, they do bounce back. As they did not fall from great economic heights, it is not that difficult to climb back to the same spot. After all, many were never highly skilled workers, and unskilled jobs are not difficult to come by. However, such a portrayal would understate the trauma and uncertainty that many affected Muslims had to go through in rebuilding their contacts and finding new jobs, as well as the hunger that is induced by the further reduction of income from an already low one. This is not the intention of the argument that is being put forward here.

What is clear is that most Muslims are poor to begin with, and after a riot remain by and large in the same position. Development had passed them by and it passes by them even now. They complained about their economic status before the riots and still do so today. On the whole, what Javed Malik said of Mumbai's Muslims holds in Ahmedabad too, but perhaps at a lower economic level. In Gujarat the poor Muslims found jobs that were more or less of the same status that they had in the past before the carnage or *toofan* (lit. hurricane). If they were labourers once, they are labourers again; if someone worked for a cloth merchant, he now works for a dry fruit retailer; someone had a bicycle shop and now works in a shoe factory; if they were mechanics before they are mechanics again; if they were push cart vendors once, they are back peddling wares in the same fashion, though the commodity may be different. On a daily, routine basis, in order to keep body and soul together, Muslims are generally able to find some livelihood commensurate with their past occupations and their skill sets. However, in a small number of cases where the affected Muslim families had medium sized businesses, they lost significantly because their goods and property were burnt or damaged. In some cases, as we mentioned, a merchant and trader had become a watchman, a person who had run a tailoring business is now forced to work as an embroiderer, or as a tailor for somebody else. Arguably, it is more difficult for some of those who had lost significant amounts of capital and property to return to the status quo ante, while those who had very little before the riots are in a similar position today. However, they certainly have neither improved their wellbeing nor realized other things like peace, trust and justice.

3.5 Sources of succour: formal and informal ties

Who helped poor Muslims to start earning again? Both in Mumbai and in Ahmedabad, Muslim families were often without a job for several months after a riot - sometimes two, sometimes three, sometimes a little more.

In none of the cases did the state help these victims find employment. The state compensation they received was niggardly, though it helped a few in Ahmedabad to buy a new push cart in place of the older one that was destroyed, or sometimes a sewing machine. If a family member was killed in the carnage, then compensation of Rs. 500,000 was granted to the next of kin. By 2007, most of those affected in this way had received the money. Many in Naroda Patiya and elsewhere used this money to re-start their businesses, and some even used part of it to pay for their sons' education in a boarding school outside Ahmedabad. Almost all of them said that they had spent a portion of the money in repairing their homes. But someone had to die for the next of kin to get a significant sum.

The paltry nature of state assistance is further indicated by the fact that Gujarat government gave only Rs. 4.40 crore to 1,564 persons in urban areas (an average of Rs. 4,165) to compensate for loss of earnings and Rs. 4.73 crore to 6,631 affected individuals in rural areas (an average of Rs. 7,133). Assistance to re-start small business worked out to an average of only Rs. 6,235 and only 2,149 individuals received this help. For those who lost industrial units and restaurants/hotels, the average was higher but still a niggardly Rs. 24,436 for urban establishments and Rs. 21,284 for rural ones. This compensation package did not happen at one go. Initially, the central government announced Rs. 106 crore as relief to the riot victims (*The Hindu*, 6th March 2002). Pressured by Public Interest Litigation (PIL), the Government of Gujarat disclosed a fresh relief package in late March 2007 (*Financial Express*, 22nd March 2007; Government of Gujarat, 2007a). The eventual package agreed upon is an outcome of years of negotiations, grandstanding, backtracking and judicial pressure. Today the Government of Gujarat has to pay compensation of Rs. five lakh to the next of kin of a deceased person (see Nikhat, 2009). As Gagan Sethi, a leading activist on this account said: "We have now established the benchmarks for compensation. This is our achievement." In Akbar Nagar, for example, we were shown an official statement of the Government of Gujarat dated June 2007 saying that 84 families in this locality would get at least Rs. 20,000, 114 families between Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 50,000, and some ten families Rs. 1,00,000. However, at that time, according to residents, 193 people had

received less than Rs. 5,000 (72 got nothing at all), and only three had received more than Rs. 10,000. Government compensation payments, therefore, hardly steadied families that had been economically hurt by the riots.

Most of the help victims received, such as it was, came from informal sources - from friends, neighbours and earlier associates in the trade or craft. Almost all the Muslim families we interviewed initially said that they had received no help from any quarter to start up their livelihoods again. While this was substantially true, on closer questioning we found that in about a fifth of the cases in Ahmedabad, neighbours and relations, and sometimes even NGOs, had provided them with contacts and stop-gap employment.

Unsurprisingly, because most Muslims do not possess suitable collateral for formal financial institutions, very few were able to get bank loans. In fact, many residents of Muslim majority areas, like Gomtipur, allege that banks had blacklisted residents from these areas and refused them loans. Even those who had obtained loans constantly feared that they might default on payments.

In Mumbai it was a lot better because, as mentioned earlier, there were so many independent Muslim entrepreneurs in Muslim dominated areas. Once Muslim riot victims found their way to these areas, like Khoja Chawl, they were able to earn a little money doing odd jobs for the many entrepreneurs in these localities. They worked either as shop assistants or as labourers hauling goods to and from the stores. While it was reported that some had remained in these occupations, we were told that the majority had left after some time to take up employment opportunities elsewhere. Fifteen years after the riots, we did not come across a Muslim family where nobody was earning. The fact that the money they brought back was meagre is another matter. However, the better off Muslims of Ahmedabad had not been in a comfortable enough position to act as patrons of poorer Muslims. Relief Road is no Khoja Chawl.

3.6 Back to school: education and the faith

In one area, the Muslims of Gujarat have taken a decisive step towards development, mostly without state support. This is in the field of education. They want to break the mould in which Chief Minister Modi and many others have cast them. They do not want their children to be poor, vulnerable and

unskilled as they are. This is why, since well before the 2002 carnage, they have emphasized proper education.¹² Barring the very poor, Muslim parents are seeking ways to educate their children, sometimes even sending them to private schools. When they cannot afford this strategy, they hold on to the ambition of doing so one day. It needs to be underlined that after the riots in Gujarat, the number of new attendees in madrasas did not swell by much. In Citizen Nagar, a Muslim resettlement, only one family we met was sending their son to a madrasa. Even the school that had been set up by Jamaat-i-Islami in Naroda Patiya after the riots was not a madrasa: the founders said that they wanted children to go to secular institutions where, in addition to the regular curriculum, they would also be taught about their traditions.

Interestingly, Muslims in Ahmedabad and Mumbai have responded to education differently, and this tells us a great deal about the two cities and the ethnic tensions therein. In Ahmedabad (perhaps in all of Gujarat) there is a strong urge among Muslims to send their children to Gujarati medium schools. This is because they believe that the only way for them to get ahead is if their young can get the skills, technical and linguistic, that the majority community possesses. In their view, it is not possible to get good employment opportunities in the state if they do not speak Gujarati. The sub-text is that they want future generations of Muslims to speak Gujarati so fluently that their Muslim traits will not show.

In an earlier section we mentioned that poor Muslims in both Ahmedabad and Mumbai are migrants from other states. While Mumbai Muslims did not express any concern about their inept Marathi, the ones in Ahmedabad seemed to be acutely conscious of the need to acquire Gujarati linguistic skills. The need to assimilate linguistically is stronger among Muslims of Gujarat, probably because of the religious tensions. Coming from other parts of the country respondents noted how they often trip up in their attempts to speak Gujarati. As a Muslim woman in Ahmedabad mentioned,

Urdu words come out involuntarily. Even before they know our names they can tell we are Muslims.

Knowing Gujarati then appears to be a way of merging into the mainstream and is not just about education for improved prosperity, though that too is a motivation, as Gujarati is the dominant language of commerce in Gujarat. Support for the right to speak and be educated in Urdu amongst Muslims is weak, probably indicating their vulnerability in this city.

However, a major problem Muslims face in accessing Gujarati medium schools is that most of them are in Hindu areas and many Muslims, since the riots, feel threatened by this fact. In Citizen Nagar, for example, the residents complained that there had once been Adarsh, a Gujarati medium school, but it had been closed down for a municipal construction project. Three kilometres away there is a middle school but for senior classes, the school is even further away, five kilometres from their home. The basic fee is about Rs. 120 per month, and the students have to pay more if they want to enrol for special programmes, like computer lessons. In these schools, the medium is Gujarati and emphasis is also placed on English language training. When we went to Citizen Nagar we found a unit of the government-sponsored Sarvyashikhsha Abhiyan (All Round Literacy Drive) in operation in a small room, with children between 5 and 7 years of age. Despite this being a Muslim rehabilitation colony, the instruction was in Gujarati.

Muslim organizations have attempted to fill the gap, but inevitably their efforts are limited. The Jamaat-i-Islami has, as noted earlier, set up a school in Naroda Patiya for Muslim children, and the language of instruction here too is Gujarati. As the Principal of that school emphasized:

Our children must develop and get well connected. They must rise above the insignificant jobs their parents held. They too deserve to be in comfort and have a few luxuries. Urdu alone will not help.

We also visited a very large school called Anjuman Islamic High School, which is run by a Muslim Trust and prominently located on the main street of Gol Limda, Ahmedabad. The teachers were all Muslims, from the Principal downwards, but the medium of instruction was largely Gujarati. From primary to middle school, all the classes were held in Gujarati, but in the Middle School girls were allowed to switch to Urdu medium while in the senior school, the instruction for both boys and girls was Gujarati. On enquiring further into this curious arrangement, the Principal of the school said that girls can afford the indulgence of Urdu for two years, because it is important for them to be able to teach their children the scriptures. However, if boys were to do the same they would lose out in the race with Hindu boys for jobs. Also, as a fairly large number of Muslim girls stop going to school after the middle level, it is, in the Principal's view, all right for them to finish off with Urdu. In practice, boys outnumbered girls in the senior school, but only by about 20 per cent. Therefore, whether we take schools in the Muslim ghettos or outside, there is a very clear preference amongst Muslims that Gujarati be the medium of instruction. In fact, according to Deepa (2007), from 92 Urdu medium

schools before the riots of 2002, the number has fallen to 76, as there is less demand for places in such schools (see also Government of India, 2005-6, pp 132, 331-2). It might also be mentioned in passing that this school wins frequent prizes in competitions held on Independence and Republic Days. Children are arranged in neat formations on these occasions to signify the flag of India, in 2008 the Olympic symbol, or other motifs with popular appeal. The school maintains an album with photographs of these events and they are proudly displayed by the Principal to visitors. The attempt is clearly to make this school a mainstream one: despite its all-Muslim student body, its patriotism and nationalism are in full view.

Contrary to popular impressions, the faith based organizations that I came across in Gujarat were not fomenting militancy or fundamentalism, but greater tolerance between communities, without abandoning the cause of justice or the urgency of rehabilitation. I have already recorded in some detail the sterling contribution of Muslim organizations in relief and rehabilitation. Nowhere did I find any sign of religious intolerance or bigotry among them. This is probably because they realize how important the status of citizenship is for minorities to function in a Hindu majority country, especially in moments of ethnic madness. This is why the Islamic Relief Committee says that it wants government recognition of the schools it has established. They insisted that they do not want to open madrasas that only impart religious instruction, but secular schools that abide by the curriculum of the state's educational board.

Now that the demand for Gujarati medium education has increased, it was reported that there are not enough teachers for the purpose, while there is an excess of Urdu instructors, simply because fewer Muslims now choose to study in that language. Hanif Lakdawala of *Sanchetna* (an NGO devoted to improving reproductive health and education among the poor) and Afzal Memon of Gujarat Sarvajanik Relief Committee made the same point. Because of the lack of demand from Muslims in Gujarat for Urdu medium education, a senior civil servant in Ahmedabad told me that it is difficult to maintain Urdu medium schools, including in Ahmedabad and Baroda. Consequently, the Government of Gujarat has closed down several Urdu medium schools, including several in Ahmedabad.

In Mumbai, in contrast, Muslims are still aggressively pursuing Urdu education and openly claim that they are not Marathi speaking. While the children of rich Muslims study in English medium private

schools, most working class Muslims, including those who had been affected by the riots, claim that their first language is Urdu. A few who came from the coastal regions said that their mother tongue was Konkani, but these were rare exceptions. What is however even more striking is that Mumbai Muslims claim that they cannot speak Marathi and can barely understand it. As one of them told me:

In Mumbai, it is bazaar Hindi that dominates, so why should we speak Marathi? Besides that is not our language. We come from Uttar Pradesh and we speak Urdu like our forefathers did. We cannot give up our language to make some Shiv Sainik [Hindu nationalist] happy. We are Indians and we have the right to send our children to Urdu medium schools.

Mumbai Municipality allows for instruction in its schools in nine languages, which include Marathi and Urdu until at least class seven, and sometimes up to class nine. A majority of Muslims choose the Urdu option if their children go to these schools and if they want to study at the high school level in Urdu, then children are enrolled in private schools. Consequently, Muslim children can grow up in Mumbai and not learn Marathi at all.

Indeed, Ahmedabad is not Mumbai! Education is one development opportunity that the Muslims of Gujarat are eager to grasp, with or without state help - often without. But how far they will be successful in this endeavour is not yet very clear.

3.7 Development as safeguard

It cannot be conclusively maintained that education, economic security and even wealth can safeguard a community such as the Muslims from repeated ethnic depredations. In all riots, it is the poor who face the brunt of physical violence. Therefore, when Muslims exchange old poverty for new, they still remain easy targets. FBOs and NGOs have their limitations, which is why they most of them have they been unable to provide sustenance over a long period. What seemed so exemplary in the days following the carnage has lost a lot of its shine several years down the line. There is no indication from this study that Muslims, in general, want to retreat into orthodoxy and fundamentalism - they want to progress and the only way that can happen on a durable basis is if the 'hard' issues of development come to their aid.

Benign neglect is what they face now. This forces them to make the best of the meagre resources they can summon up. Thus while most Muslims affected by the violence seem to have settled into a 'new normal', they are acutely aware that the *toofan* (lit. hurricane, figuratively the carnage) can happen again. And once again they fear that they will be without support and shelter.

Thus deliberate efforts must be made so that Muslims shed their old demographic and occupational specifics and are able to enter formal sector employment, work in government services, access educational facilities and enjoy substantive citizenship. Their poverty and vulnerability is not an issue that will resolve itself or disappear if we turn away. 'Hard' developmental issues have to be tackled if the trauma of affected Muslims is to be truly addressed. Only then will the 'new normal' forget the 'old normal' and embrace citizens regardless of religious differences.

4 Social rehabilitation: justice or forgiveness?

Psychological healing will take a long time, and if the psychological scars ever heal, there will certainly be scabs around the wounds to remind the victims of what happened to them. Justice seems to be almost impossible to achieve, though that is something all the victims I met, with only one exception, want urgently. In their view, psychological scars can only heal once those who killed, maimed and raped them go to jail and are properly charge sheeted for their crimes. It is only when that happens, they intimated, that they would finally feel secure.

Even as children started going back to school, adults began finding jobs, and women groped for security at home and in the outside world, it was quite clear that the new normal people were trying to construct was not like the old. The old normal was contested, but a certain level of predictability was possible in social intercourse. The contestations and the negotiations that have been worked out since the violence have had to take into account the clear bias of the state structure, particularly in Gujarat. While this may have been suspected in the past, the enormity of it is no longer in dispute for Muslim survivors. It is this perpetual tension that blocks improved inter-community relations. The tendency to distrust the ethnic other, even at the most basic level, is too powerful to be ignored. The status quo ante can never be achieved, and a fond and utopian hope that it might be needs to be buried. Instead, it is necessary to pay attention to the modalities by which one contested normal can give way to another.

The quotidian spaces we have discussed have gradually assumed regularities of their own. But if they are not to be disrupted again, and for a degree of predictability to be attained, the state must abide by the principles of its liberal democratic constitution. The Government of Gujarat lost its legitimacy in the eyes of most Muslims because it allowed the law to be so wantonly flouted. For the minority, the state lost its independent status when the majority community attacked them in the name of the 'people', who are said to have one history, one culture and one holy land. Minority victims, in contrast, respond to these 'people'-inspired attacks as *citizens*: they want compensation and, more than anything else, justice, from the state. The more the state delays or prevaricates on these issues, the less credibility it has with the minoritized victims.

In this section, the views of commentators and victims on the relative roles and importance of reconciliation and justice are reported, followed in Section 4.3 by a brief discussion of how Muslims

were able to respond to and cope with the violence in the two cities under study. The tensions that are negotiated in the process of developing a 'new normal' are discussed in Section 4.4, and some of the assertions made about the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism amongst embattled Muslims and the walls that have reinforced divisions between Hindus and Muslims examined in the light of new research evidence in the last two sub-sections.

4.1 The role of law and the need for justice

In my experience with riot victims in Delhi and Ahmedabad, I found that the issue that concerns them the most is the desire for those who killed and brutalized them to be punished under the law. As a Muslim victim told me in Ahmedabad in 2002:

I want nothing more than seeing those who killed my family to go on trial and be punished. I can wait for a job. I can wait to give away my daughter to a good man in marriage. But I cannot rest till those who tore my life apart are brought to justice.

Islamic relief organizations are painfully aware of this reality and know that unless the law prevails, it will be very difficult for Muslims to regain a modicum of trust in their surroundings. Jamaat-i-Islami has a legal cell that pursues all kinds of court-related issues, including defending those Muslims against whom false charges have been made, although not enough pressure is sustained on this question of false accusations, which allows criminals to get away. As a representative of the Jamaat-i-Islami said:

The lower and higher courts in Gujarat are biased. Can you imagine one High Court magistrate in fact said, 'We have given you Pakistan, now go there.' We need to have justice, otherwise our youth will go astray.

In Ahmedabad one also comes across the term 'belonging to the POTA (Prevention of Terrorist Act) family', because a large number of Muslims have been detained as terrorists, according to Gagan Sethi, almost always without justification. When in 2006 the Supreme Court re-opened 21,000 cases that had been closed by the Gujarat Government, it gave fresh hope to Muslims that justice in some form might still be done.

Even the Srikrishna Committee (set up by the Government of Maharashtra after the Mumbai riots) noted in great detail the identity of the major culprits, although no action has really been taken against them. Some, like Madhukar Saroptdar, Ram Naik, Gopinath Munde, R.D. Tyagi and P.J. Lahane, were

public figures, police officers and politicians (see also Amrik Singh, 1997). In fact, the Srikrishna Committee was suspended briefly after the Shiv Sena-BJP government came to power in 1994 in Maharashtra. Nevertheless, even after a Congress Government was returned in Maharashtra five years later, the Srikrishna Committee's report still remains unimplemented. In Gujarat, many civil rights organizations, including Amnesty International, UN bodies, the National Human Rights Commission and the International People's Human Rights Commission (see also Sebastian, 1993), have provided graphic details of the violations of the rights of minority citizens, but justice has not come yet.

There are two points of view among scholars and NGO activists about the importance of justice in encouraging Muslims to regard the law of the land as fair and the state administration as following the principles of a secular, liberal constitution.

A few of the international NGOs operating in India are wary of frontally addressing the issue of justice and the need for victims to reclaim their 'citizen' space. IDEA, for example, does not want to press this matter because it believes that this would harm the healing process (IDEA, 1998, p 30). Instead of 'positional based negotiations' in which calls for justice are paramount, IDEA advocates 'interest based negotiations', in which I assume that the business of getting jobs and going to school is of uppermost concern (ibid, p 40). Oxfam mentions the need for justice but carefully avoids emphasizing it over other issues, such as the importance of handling mental disorders, children's health and speedy processing of claim forms (see Multi-Disciplinary Team, 2002). With CARE all pretences are dropped and one finds an open espousal of staying away from pursuing the legal path directed at bringing criminals to justice (Ahmad, 2004; Oommen, 2008).

The CARE-led initiative emphasizes peace alliances (Oommen, 2008, p 77), restoration of shelter, livelihoods, access to schools and psychoanalytic care (ibid, p 85), but contains no mention of seeking justice. This is not unacceptable - after all, each NGO has its own zone of relevance and competence. The problem emerges, in my view, when CARE openly undermines the search for justice by arguing that restorative justice is better than retributive justice, because in the former no harm is done to anybody (ibid, p 92). As far as the CARE team is concerned, a society must learn to "live with its violent pasts...by understanding the reasons for transgressions, admitting the brutal loss of humanity

and projecting new meaning to the present” (ibid, p 92; see also Ahmad, 2004, p 97). Only in this way can the past be healed and the victims rehabilitated. Retributive justice appears to have got lost.

The argument in favour of abandoning the pursuit of justice as a means of punishing the guilty is quite clear. It begins by ennobling forgiveness as a virtue and ends by undermining the status of the Indian law by calling it retributive in character. In fact, Oommen argues that one should not alienate the police force, but involve them instead and make them members of the relief team (ibid, p 139). But should not the police, by virtue of their office, be helping the victims in any case? Further, if those policemen who actually aided, abetted and participated in the carnage are embraced, what then happens to justice? At first sight, Harsh Mander seems to be advocating a similar position (Mander, 2009). This is because he extols the Truth and Reconciliation Committees of South Africa and frequently enjoins that “perpetrators and survivors of hate violence come together...[to] seek and offer forgiveness” (ibid, p 10) and so on. However, after all these rather soft and ambiguous statements, he also acknowledges that “justice involves primarily legal justice” (ibid, p 20), and that only when this has been “done and seen to have been done” can we say that reconciliation has finally been achieved. In other words, Mander underlines the need for “justice under the law” (ibid, p 146) and clarifies, for those who believe that the courts should not play a role, that justice should not be confused with retribution (ibid, p 170), as Oommen tends to do.

When Sajjan Kumar (a Congress MP) visited Sikh refugee camps in Delhi after the 1984 killings, the widows there refused to let him in because they recognized him as one of the killers. Under such circumstances, how does one hope that victims will actually invite those policemen who have harboured, encouraged and protected killers, if not actually killed, to be members of a reconciliation team? Undermining the need to punish the guilty has a certain charitable ring about it, but it does not help the victims regain some of the citizen space that was snatched from them during the carnage. Indeed, it may be recalled that one of the colonies that the Islamic Relief Committee helped to set up to house those who did not have a home to go to after the camps were closed down was called Citizen Nagar: that is how strongly the displaced people wished to be considered citizens of the country, even though the state had encouraged terrible brutalities to be unleashed against them. At the end of the day they still want to impress upon the public that Muslims are citizens first.

Harsh Mander argues that compassion is all very good, but without legal justice, reconciliation will never be authentic. In his view, truth commissions are unsuccessful where “political and social realities remain unchanged for the victims” (Mander, n.d.). Without the law being put to work, what we will have is a “counterfeit peace” which will be “divisionary” in character. This is why he calls for *Nyayagraha* (a justice offensive) as an update on Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* (or truth offensive). It is only then, Mander argues, can the multi-fold attempts to rehabilitate victims of ethnic violence be comprehensively realized. As long as there are people out there who can trample with impunity on domestic calm, as long as it is unsafe for some people to step out into the outside world, the call for justice will remain. CARE appears to be unconcerned about these issues: apparently, what is central to the organization is that the boat should not be rocked and powerful oppressors not challenged by law. It is as if by keeping quiet and lying low, the pain will automatically go away.

4.2 How can we forget? Towards a phenomenology of victimhood

It is understandable when the point of view that sidelines the issue of violence is advanced by those who specialize in psychological care (Asthana, 1997; Lakshminaryan, et al, 2002). They can be condoned for their insensitivity to citizen space, because they have a limited specialized interest. But if one were to begin phenomenologically and ask the victims what is the most pressing concern on their minds, then as this research shows, the need for justice is right at the top. When one takes the phenomenological route, then the correct path is not one that is pre-figured in board rooms, but one that takes its cue from what people, in this case Muslim victims, feel. For example, Rowena Robinson writes of Shakeel in Mumbai, who said: “Without *nyaya* (justice), for whom would peace come in society?” (Robinson, 2005, p 215). Shakeel then goes on to say that the Mohalla Committees that were set up in Mumbai after the riots did not “talk of justice. They advocated that we embrace (*gale mil jayen*) with the same police who did wrong” (ibid). Murray Last found a similar sentiment among those who had been victims of ethnic violence in Biafra: the victims saw the policy of reconciliation that was being pushed as one of “exceptional generosity towards a community that had done serious wrong” (Last, 2001, p 316).

As noted above, the advocacy of reconciliation without justice is the route that international NGOs tend to take. CARE states its position clearly on this, but the others, like IDEA and Oxfam, do so by remaining silent on this question (see IDEA, 1998; Multidisciplinary Team, 2002). Understandably such

organizations do not want to offend their local hosts, but it does very little to assuage the feelings of hurt among the victims of violence. Unless that issue is addressed, as Harsh Mander remarks, there is something “counterfeit” about peace. In order to come to a less contested version of the new normal, and on the basis of the evidence collected during this study, I would argue that the pursuit of justice is essential.

As I remarked earlier, a minority community that has been brutalized by ethnic violence looks first towards the state to offer a helping hand. Without this assistance, which should be in warm and generous measure, citizen space remains vacant for most ethnic victims. This may leave the door open for an antagonistic normal to emerge instead of a merely contested one. As mentioned earlier, this is exactly the kind of thing that the legal cell of the Jamaat-i-Islami-i-Hind was worried about.

In the first few frantic hours and days after majoritarian violence strikes, the victims think most of a safe haven. But this is the first stage. After this come questions of rehabilitation, compensation, starting to work again, sending children to school, and so on. After this stage is more or less over, what remains is the issue of justice. It is not as if this question comes up only after the first two stages. It is something that started its career at the time the killings began but grows in significance with each passing day that justice is first delayed, and then denied.

As argued in the opening pages of this paper, the new normalcy does not come about overnight, and like the earlier negotiated normalcy, it too is gradually beaten down and forged over a period of time. It would be incorrect to say that what is freshly negotiated recalls the old world. In fact a new world and a new polity are brought into being. However, the old normalcy acts as a point of departure, as will the new normalcy should it be shattered by another violent episode. There are two ways of answering issues of the sort that we have just raised. One is to take a forgive-and-forget attitude in the hope that wounds will soon heal and status quo ante will return. This is what I call the naïve view, which borders on the dangerous because it encourages the wrongdoers to do the same things again. The Shiv Sena, for example, is an ethnically charged recidivist.

When I went to Gujarat after the riots, I met a large number of victims in the camps that had been set up for them and the one refrain I heard again and again was that they wanted the killers to be tried by the courts.

Those who ran away from the dreaded Naroda Patiya were particularly angry at the Cchara community. There is a large Cchara neighbourhood a little way down the road from Naroda Patiya and it is widely believed that people from that area were the most brutal in their attacks against Muslims. The Ccharas were listed as criminal tribes by the British, but have belonged since Independence to the category of "denotified tribes". To this day, they live on the edge of the law, with many involved in distilling illicit liquor in their homes. However, they get by because the police are ready and willing to be bribed and can be seen in these areas after sunset when liquor is being served. During the days of the killings in Ahmedabad, I had often heard it said, even by liberal intellectuals, that the Ccharas were the main killers, for their recent past is one of crime. As a retired professor said: "The Ccharas have lived up to their reputation. The British were right in classifying them as a criminal tribe." However, I have since met several Ccharas who take exception to this allegation. While admitting that there were Ccharas among those who killed and looted, just as there were non-Ccharas, they also insisted that there were many Ccharas who had saved Muslims, such as Sunil Tamichi and Ajit Indrekar, who are fairly well known Ccharas in this neighbourhood. According to these informants, some people hid Muslims in their homes, and on one occasion dressed them up as members of a Hindu wedding party. However, others did kill brutally and with savage relish. What about them? A new normalcy cannot rest on the old one, for there are too many memories that are difficult to forget.

I remember Sikh victims voicing an identical sentiment in 1984. As late as 2007, when a group of Sikh women widowed in 1984 assembled to push for justice, a seemingly sympathetic member of the audience said that Sikhs should forget what had happened and move on. After all, nearly 25 years had passed and how long were they going to hold on to a grudge? At this point, a Sikh widow stood up and said that she was willing to forget, and she would forget, but the criminals had to be tried first - without that happening, and Sikhs' faith in the system restored, it was impossible for her to forget. Her remarks met with a tremendous ovation.

From my point of view, what this signifies is that it is difficult for a new 'contested normal' to emerge as long as the state does not assume its position as an independent upholder of the law. There is little point in dragging the old normal out, because its many inadequacies are known to both sides and in any case, nothing remains the same. However, for human societies to persist, in the midst of tensions, mistrust and differences, a stable triadic configuration must somehow emerge. Warring

ethnic dyads, left to themselves, are compelled to seek the annihilation of the other as their principal *raison d'être*, unless they are held back by the triadic node of the liberal democratic state (see Lacan, 1977).

4.3 'Coping strategies': Mumbai and Ahmedabad compared

Compared to Mumbai, as described above, the killings in Gujarat lasted longer and involved large parts of the state north of Baroda and in the Panchmahals. Ahmedabad was probably the most ravaged of all the places in Gujarat. In addition, the government's hand in encouraging the killers added incalculably to the plight of the victims (*Communalism Combat*, 2002). Although the scale of the violence was much less in Mumbai, it has been over 25 years since the rioting took place there and memories are not that fresh any longer, it is useful for comparative purposes. As already discussed, Muslims in this metropolis were not as helpless as in Gujarat, primarily because the state government in Mumbai did not 'officially' bless the killings. This does not mean that there were no supporters for the Shiv Sena and other Hindu activists in the police and administration. Police complicity has been pointed out on several occasions by a number of commentators and even by the Srikrishna Enquiry Commission (see Ansari, 1997, p XVIII), which was scathing about the ineptitude of certain officials or their downright encouragement of the rioters. However, the fact remains that the presence of diverse political formations, a divided state assembly and ground level secular activism gave Muslims some room for manoeuvre. They had no such luck in Gujarat!

Mumbai and Gujarat offer other points of contrast too. Mumbai has a history of trade unionism, which created an alternative intellectual and political force that was ready to oppose the Shiv Sena and other Hindu organizations. Gujarat lacked such a background, so did not have an entrenched intellectual-cum-political class that was strong enough to oppose the Hindutva forces (see Breman, 1999; Gupta, 2002; Mehta, 2005; Shah, 1970). Further, and this point should not be elided, the first round of attacks on December 6 in Mumbai was started by Muslims against Hindus. This provided a kind of justification to Hindutva forces that could also have contributed to the sectarian hardening of administrative attitudes towards Muslims.

Further, unlike Gujarat, the Muslims of Mumbai were not willing to take things lying down. The bomb blasts in March 12, 1993 in several parts of Mumbai are generally considered to have been an

expression of a Muslim vendetta. The casualties were the highest in the Mumbai Stock Exchange Area, but a bomb also went off outside the Shiv Sena office in Central Mumbai. This kind of capacity to hit back is non-existent among the Gujarati Muslims. The damage that the Mumbai blasts caused was extensive: they killed 447 people and injured about 1,005. Muslim gang lords, such as Tiger Memmon and Dawood Ibrahim, are widely believed to have been behind these blasts. During this period, old scores were also settled and known Hindu underworld figures, such as Ramdas Nayak, Prem Sharma and Ramesh More, were killed by hit men of the Muslim mafias (Tripathi, 1997, p 4). Ethnic wars rumbled in the belly of the beast.

In Mumbai the underworld has strong Muslim connections. Before Tiger Memmon and Dawood Ibrahim began their careers, one of the most dreaded figures in Mumbai was Haji Mastan. After a long innings as India's most notorious smuggler, he started an organization called the Bharatiya Minority Suraksha Mahasangh Party in response to what he felt his co-religionists were going through at the hands of Hindutva forces. The name of the organization clearly shows that Haji Mastan was directing his attention to winning over Muslims and other minorities to his outfit, for he clearly saw a political role for himself (Tripathi, 1997, p 4). Nothing much happened as far as Haji Mastan's political ambitions were concerned, but such attempts clearly show that Mumbai Muslims are not easy pushovers.

4.4 The way forward: towards a 'new' contested normal

As is clearly evident, nothing has remained the same, for the perpetrators of violence and even more so for the victims of ethnic hatred. Muslim survivors regard the state with much greater suspicion than before, although they have more recently begun to interact with it. Today many see their Hindu neighbours not just in terms of religious distance, keeping in mind some basic ground rules, but also as possible killers and looters. The world has changed completely for women who have become widows. Not only are they grief stricken and burdened by new responsibilities, but many of them cannot look their relations in the eye for shame at having been molested or raped during the riots. The number of school dropouts among Muslims increased, according to anecdotal evidence. Also, residential segregation has increased in both Mumbai and Gujarat. Finally, we should remember that relations between Hindus and Muslims in Gujarat, Mumbai or Bhiwandi have nationwide repercussions. This is why the sooner normalcy is restored, the better it will be for the whole of the

country. Militancy and hate campaigns will probably die out if the wheels of justice begin to move. They may move slowly, that can be allowed for, but they must grind fine.

I asked the Islamic organizers of the camps in Gujarat, the JI and JU, how the Koranic scriptures helped them and their inmates in those tension-filled days. Their answer was very simple, and somewhat along these lines:

We told our people to remain calm. If something unjust has happened to us, be sure that the sinners will be punished one day. In the meantime, remember you must only fear God and his wrath and not human beings no matter how menacing they may appear.

They said that this message was delivered at every opportunity, particularly after the Friday prayers, at all religious gathering and community festivals.

Mr. Madni, who is the Ameer-e-Halqa of the Islamic Relief Fund, said that it was unfortunate that the international relief organizations that were so active after the Bhuj earthquake did not come to Gujarat during the post-Godhra carnage. He did, however, mention that a large number of NGOs and important individuals had come to their help, because of which Muslims lost some of the fear that had completely consumed them in the refugee camps. They began to see that there were non-Muslims in the country who were on their side and who were deeply anguished at their plight, so it was not as if all Hindus were against Muslims. Though over six years had passed, he was able to effortlessly recall the names of Dighant Ojha (a prominent Gujarati journalist), Indu Kumar Jaani (a well known Gandhian who works among Dalits), Mallika Sarabhai (of the famous Sarabhai family of Gujarat and the head of the NGO, Darpan), Swami Agnivesh (a public figure, politician and an Arya Samaji preacher), Nirmala Deshpande (the well-known Gandhian activist) and several others who stood beside him when he addressed Muslim victims at several gatherings. He also commended Ojha, Jaani and Sarabhai for petitioning the Supreme Court on March 7, 2002 to intervene and stop the holocaust in Gujarat.

This effort is still going on. In an interview with Yogendra Sikand as late as October 24th, 2007, Shakeel Ahmed, who heads the legal cell of Jamaat-i-Islami-i-Hind, related a similar story. This organization, for which the Islamic Relief Committee is a front, held 18 public meetings during the 2007 Eid celebrations and invited a large number of prominent Hindus to them. In one meeting, he reported, they had asked Murari Bapu, a well-known religious Hindu figure, to be the main speaker. Mr. Shakeel

Ahmed went on to say that they had also organized a number of Dalit-Muslim-Tribal Sammelans. However, he confessed sadly, there is still a long way to go before communal harmony is achieved (see Sikand, 2007).

Afzal Memon of the Gujarat Sarvajanik said that it is impossible to forget the past for those who lost their families in the killings of 2002. When provoked by the statement made by many that Muslims should forgive, forget and try to understand why their killers had behaved in that way, Memon expressed nothing but scorn. I reminded him of T.K.Oommen's work, in which such a point was made. He dismissed this argument angrily and said words to the effect that people who don't understand what others have gone through can be very glib on these matters. When I further reminded him that in Oommen's book, his organization is acknowledged as a research partner and collaborator, Memon shot back, saying "how should I know what gets printed everywhere?" On querying whether he had been consulted before publication, he answered that if he had been, he would certainly have opposed this argument to the full.

Muslim victims like Zubeda Appa in Naroda Patiya, Nadir Hussein in Faisal Park or Hamid Ali in Paladi, told us that what they want above all else is that the killers are brought to justice. My friend Dakxin Cchara, who accompanied me in most of my visits, startled many Muslims in Citizen Nagar when he mentioned his full name. After all, as noted above, Ccharas have a terrible reputation with Muslims. After the first round of disquiet at his presence had settled down, one of the residents of Citizen Nagar asked him about Pappu Cchara, the most hated killer in Naroda Patiya. Dakxin replied that Pappu was dead. This news was greeted with an immediate sense of pleasure. Asked how he died, Dakxin responded that Pappu was drunk and drove his car into a lamppost. Those in the room were pleased with this news, with one of them going on to sermonize that a drunkard and a killer should meet a quick end. A little later, a middle aged woman in our midst quietly asked whether it would not have been better if Pappu had died in jail for the crimes he had committed. After a moment's silence, the whole room reverberated in fulsome agreement.

Mukul Sinha of the Jan Sangarsh Manch (a NGO specializing in delivering justice to the poor) has spent the past seven years of his life combating Modi's government and fighting for justice for the affected Muslims of 2002. His work is widely acknowledged and he has kept up the campaign for

bringing some of the BJP leaders such as Maya Kodnani to the attention of the law. But when he suggested in 2008 that Muslims drop minor cases, such as theft and stone throwing, and concentrate on big ones like murder and rape, he met with a lot of disapproval, including, he noted, from many of his erstwhile friends. While he believes that this suggestion is tactically sound given the long term strategy he had in mind, victims and even those in his corner did not agree with him.

If a mild suggestion such as that expressed by Mr. Sinha, which may have some merit, could arouse so much opposition, imagine the outrage with which the proposal of embracing your enemy, as put forward by Oommen and CARE, would be met if it were put to the vote. I asked Shakeela in Juhipara whether there was any merit in Mr. Sinha's tactical move. Without a moment's hesitation she strongly opposed such a strategy. It was clear that she was not encountering such a proposal for the first time. She expressed herself very unambiguously:

I would feel terrible if I knew that somebody else down the street was watching a movie on my television and I am sitting here in the dark. How would you feel if the goonda [ruffian] over there was drinking cold water out of your refrigerator and your throat was parched in the hot summer months?

As this question was directly posed to me, I had to concede that it was convincing.

However, the disagreement was not just about cold water and television screens. The violence had involved damage to household goods, trade utensils, shops and so on. What about that? Should we forget those too? This was clearly not Mr. Sinha's proposal, but some of my respondents unfairly took his position to its extremes. Their view was simple: No compromise. Although they admitted that they live with compromises, and will continue to do so, they insisted that it does not make them happy and that the anger and demand for justice will remain. While Mumbai may have forgotten 1993 to some extent, Muslims in Gujarat choke back tears when they recall the events of 2002. The naked barbarity they faced was so sustained and complete that their cry for justice makes them weep easily. The wounds are still there if only one cared to look.

The new 'normal' is thus very different from the old in Mumbai and Ahmedabad. In time it might become an established way of life. The hurtful memories may recede in their intensity, and the new practices that have emerged as coping mechanisms, whether relocating to Mumbra, consolidating

Muslim enclaves, or getting children into Gujarati medium schools, will become so entrenched and crusted over a period of time that Muslims will forget the earlier normal and pay attention only to the specifics of the new one. Community sensitivities, whether Hindu or Muslim, may adjust to this emergent reality and while there may not be much conscious theorizing on when and why the new practices began, the observance of the practices themselves will reflect the wariness with which the communities will approach and interact with each other for a long time to come.

4.5 Criticism of Islamic relief organizations: views from within the faith

Despite the acknowledged role of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in assisting the victims of violence in Ahmedabad, the 'beneficiaries' are quite critical of what they have received. Their criticisms range from outright condemnation to ridicule to mild disapproval. Perhaps unjustly, many complain that after taking the compensation money from them, the structures built or re-built by the FBOs were not up to the mark. They noted that they now had homes which are smaller, inadequately equipped and made of inferior materials. This was a universal complaint among respondents in the colonies set up by FBOs, although I have no way to judge the legitimacy of such views. Representatives of both the IRC and the GSRC dismissed such criticisms, saying that most of the beneficiaries do not realize the cost of construction and how difficult it is to find residential land in the city.

In addition, there is the issue of ownership rights to the dwelling units in resettlement colonies such as Ramola or Citizen Nagar. The residents in these areas say that without ownership rights, they always feel as if their current dwelling is not their real home, even though they are charged quite heavily for water, much more, in their view, than the true cost. They also complain that the water provided is of very poor quality, but that the FBOs are unconcerned about this. I can testify that the overhead tank in Ramola was filthy, with the remnants of a bird in it. The sub-soil water in Citizen Nagar is also far from being potable. The fact that Dorabji Yatimkhana has given all thirty of the residents it rehoused ownership rights is pointed out by the residents of that part of Citizen Nagar built by IRC, as an illustration of what the right thing would have been for FBOs to do.

The residents are also critical of the inhospitable sites on which the resettlement colonies have been built. Could the FBOs not have found better locations, they ask, as they must have got a lot of money

donated by Muslims around the world. Several of them believe that only those donations received from the Middle East would amount to crores of Rupees. The level of anger that was manifest in the JU colony of Ramola was unexpected. In this area, there were many loud complaints against the Maulana in charge of the colony. For example, he was reported to regularly bring in Muslims from other countries to show them around. On such occasions, respondents noted, the residents are paraded like specimens on display. By the end of such visits, they believe, the Maulana is given a lot of money. However, they insisted that they have no idea where these funds go. Their perceptions may or may not be true, but result in Ramola residents having a poor opinion of the FBO management in their locality, in particular the Maulana in question.

Further, in Ramola, I was shown row upon row of units that were kept locked by JU, which built this complex. I initially thought that the occupants in these units had gone out to work, but later confirmed that the rooms had not been allotted to anybody and was told by over thirty residents that, in their opinion, the Maulana in charge is waiting to sell them when he gets the right price. In fact, this group expressed the belief that some of the units had been given away to his favourites, following this allegation with many salacious details. While I cannot confirm some aspects of residents' complaints, I found that the units that were locked remained locked on subsequent visits. Such a situation is certainly not true in Citizen Nagar and Yes Colony, which were set up by JI and where every unit was occupied and overflowing. When I enquired as to why the mosque in the area was so lavishly constructed, I was told that this is how the JU wastes money. They pointed out the equally expensively appointed Meeting Hall adjacent to the mosque, alleging that it is often rented out to outsiders for a variety of functions. Respondents overall condemned the Maulana as a man who makes a mockery of Islam and of the very virtues he so broadly proclaims. One person even called him: "Hitler Number One". Several people, men and women, who stood around while this conversation was going on clapped when this was said. Usually it is expected that, given the trauma that Muslims underwent and the shelter that has been offered to them thereafter, they would be overflowing with gratitude, perhaps even becoming more religious in the process. However, in Ramola residents look upon the JU administration that built their colony with hostility.

In Modassa, outside Ahmedabad, we visited a colony built by Tablighi Jamaat. In this area, there is near open revolt against the FBO. The units are quite drab and unremarkable, much like those in the

resettlement colonies in the city. However, in this area, lines were clearly drawn between the residents of the colony and the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ). It was reported that the TJ cleric insisted that prayers should be offered in a certain way, which went against the established practice and conventions of the people who lived in the settlement, who had, therefore, refused to comply, although without too much fuss initially. As the clerics kept on making the same demands and raising the tone and pitch of their condemnation, respondents reported, the congregation largely walked away. Now there are two prayer sites: one an impressive mosque, which is presided over formally by the TJ cleric, and the other under a plastic tent where the rest gather for their *Namaaz*.

4.6 Islamic fundamentalism: between fact and fiction

The advantage of studying the victims of a religious carnage over a period of time is that one gets to see facets that would have escaped one in the earlier stages. Like a moving picture book, the greater the number of pages and the rapidity with which they are flipped, the more one gets to know the dimensions of a tragedy.

In the beginning, it was believed that, with the FBOs stepping in in the way that they did, the Muslim victims would turn more and more towards Islam. In fact, Rubina Jaswani's work makes this argument quite clearly. She may well have been right, for she carried out her research in the months immediately following the Gujarat carnage (Jasani, 2008). However, even in many of the resettlement colonies set up by FBOs, there is a marked absence of religious orthodoxy. Shahid of Yes Complex, for example, said:

Our homes were built by IRC but neither they nor the JI placed any religious conditions before handing over these units to us. They occasionally ask us to go for marches, or collect in front of some office or the other, but otherwise they don't really bother us. They don't come here and take us for prayers either. That is up to us. This is why we prefer them to the TJ. They make much less fuss.

It is clear that today, the TJ is not nearly as convincing to local Muslims as it may have seemed in 2002-3. Not only in Modassa, but more widely in Ahmedabad, the TJ does not receive popular endorsement from ordinary Muslims in areas such as Juhipara, Ramola, or Danilimda. As a resident of Yes Colony said:

The Tablighis are interested in what happens under the ground (when we are buried) and above the ground (where God is), but not on the ground where we live and spend our lives.

The orthodoxy of the TJ is irksome to many Muslims. Muddassar from Citizen Nagar, for example, felt that the TJ was just too demanding and unrelenting. He noted that the clerics from this organization come around from time to time and talk to them about the Koran, but complained that they cannot be expected to be available every time they visit. In his view, there is nothing wrong with being educated in one's own religion, but there is a problem when TJ Maulvis want them to give up their earlier practices, including worshipping at the shrines of Sufi saints and pirs. As he went on to say:

How can we give up our reverence for Sufi dargahs? How can we forget that during those terrible days after the toofan hit us, we all took refuge in Shah Alam dargah. That is a Sufi shrine and that shrine was so good to us, it protected us when we were absolutely helpless. That is what God is meant to do. We just cannot accept the Tablighi insistence that we stop venerating these saints. They too were men of God.

Here one has a clear statement of revolt against the orthodoxy that TJ best represents. The JI is also committed to preaching Islam, but members of this organization feel that the TJ carries matters a bit too far and that they are not really interested in any other aspect of a Muslim's everyday life besides religion and prayer. The JU is officially the least dogmatic of the three Muslim organizations, for its primary interest is in building bridges between Hindus and Muslims and in correcting misconceptions about Muslims. Even so, as we found in Ramola, the JU cleric was attacked vehemently by the residents of that colony.

In the earlier chapter it was noted that Muslims in Ahmedabad (and Gujarat as a whole) are keen to educate their children in Gujarati. Respondents asserted that they did not really believe in madrasa-type instruction, and to be fair, even the IR (a JI wing) supports this sentiment - the IR school in Naroda Patia, as already noted, is clearly not a madrasa and the teachers there, who are all members of JI, want their school to be recognized as a mainstream institution of learning. In some of the schools run by Muslim trusts, girls wear an Islamic type uniform, meaning that their head is covered, but they are not veiled. Both clerics and lay Muslims reported that there is nothing wrong with this, as long as it is the school uniform. As a mother of a school-going girl told me in Beherempada in Mumbai:

These clothes are fine for going to school. After all these are young girls and they must be modestly clad. But when they grow up and get married and become mothers of children, where is the need for all this covering up? If I were to be clothed that way do you think I could do half the work I do all day? Besides it is so hot. Nobody in my family ever put on a burqa, so why should I?

Zarina in Citizen Nagar also argued that it is unnecessary for Muslim women to wear the burka or cover their heads all the time. Indeed not one of the female respondents in Ahmedabad's FBO-constructed resettlement colonies wore a burqa and many did not even cover their heads in the traditional manner. I think it is important for all those who talk of the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism to take a walk through lower class Muslim quarters in riot-affected Indian cities to correct the popular impression that orthodoxy is sweeping Muslims in these areas.

What would also surprise such people is the clarity with which women living in these areas put forward their point of view. On many occasions during visits to Citizen Nagar or Yes Colony, most of the men were out and yet the women were very forthcoming with their views. This was not the kind of scene one would imagine in a ghettoized, fundamentalist Muslim enclave. Several women also asserted that it is not women who want to wear a burqa, but men who force them to do so. Dr. Seema Dalwai of Mumbai University seemed to agree with this position. At any rate, neither in Akbar Nagar in Ahmedabad nor in Khoja Chawl in Mumbai did I see a burqa-clad lady. In contrast, in Mumbra, the Mumbai suburb mentioned earlier, there were many burqa-clad women, despite the fact that most of those who now live in Mumbra had not faced any direct attacks during the ethnic violence in Mumbai in 1993, but had individually chosen to move to Mumbra over a period of time. These people had actively sought refuge in a Muslim-only area, where their practices are unchallenged and their way of life faces no threats. In Oshiwara, another Mumbai suburb with a smaller majority of Muslims than Mumbra, there were few women wearing burqas. Indeed, some Muslims in Byculla told me that they feel out of place in Mumbra, because it is too orthodox for their liking. In other words, there are conservative and liberal Muslims and it is inappropriate to generalize.

Overall, therefore, there is no evidence that there has been a widespread resurgence of fundamentalism on account of either the 1993 Mumbai episode or the 2002 killings in Gujarat.

4.7 The dividing walls of Mumbai and Ahmedabad: separating the metaphorical and imaginary

Many analysts have asserted that barriers to communication between Muslims and Hindus have hardened since the violence, but this assertion needs to be reconsidered in the light of the evidence assembled in this research.

Farid Sheikh, for example, is partly responsible for the management of Mumbai's Musafirkhana, which lodged a few thousand Muslims during the 1993 violence. He accepts that there are metaphorical walls between Hindus and Muslims that need to be breached and believes that the best way of bringing about inter-community harmony is by people doing everyday things together. According to him the area around Crawford Market and Mohammadali Road in Mumbai was relatively peaceful in 1993, despite the unrest in large parts of the city. This was unexpected, because in the 1980s, particularly between 1982 and 1983, this area had been tense and liable to flaring up along religious lines. He believes that by 1993, the situation had changed because people like him had worked hard to establish solidarity between Muslims and Hindus in the neighbourhood. Among other things, he asserted that playing cricket across community lines in the neighbourhood had really helped because Hindus had got to know Muslims and vice-versa. It is not clear whether this can be raised to a general principle: the more cricket is played, the less likely it is that there is fighting on the streets. In Beherampada, also in Mumbai, for example, a young man told us that his three storey school building actually housed three educational institutions: on one floor the instruction was in Marathi, on the next in English and on the third in Urdu. On the second floor, most students were Hindu families, although there were also a few Muslim boys, whereas on the third floor, all the students were Muslim. He described how year after year, floorwise cricket teams played each other, with the result that the boys got to know one another very well. However, he also reported that with the violence of 1993, such cricket matches suddenly stopped. Listening to this was as if one was replaying the India-Pakistan matches that were suddenly halted after the Kargil war.

The metaphorical walls between communities are also proving difficult to overcome in Gujarat, and it has also been reported by many commentators (for example Bunsha 2003, 2004) that physical walls have been built to separate Hindu and Muslim residential areas. Bunsha filed graphic reports of how walls had been built in Ahmedabad's Vejalpura area, but a visit revealed that a middle class housing colony called Venugopal Society had raised its surrounding walls by a few feet in 2002, fearing the

carnage around. However, across the street from this wall there are both Hindu and Muslim homes, so it does not signify a 'partition' separating Hindus and Muslims, instead simply cordoning off the housing colony. Jan Breman also mentions the erection of a wall between Hindu and Muslim communities, but in much measured tones and not as if a brick and mortar partition segregates the two communities across large swathes of Ahmedabad (Breman, 1999, p 262)

I came across a wall of sorts in Gomtipur, separating the Dalit settlements from the Muslim ones. We should recall that some of the bloodiest cases of killing and looting were led by Dalits against Muslims. In this slum-like location, the two communities live separately, although they did so well before 2002 and after the violence a gate with spikes was fixed in the opening between the two slums. It is not a big gate, but is a sturdy one that always stands open, although it can be closed. Likewise, there is a wall around the west side of Gupta Nagar that still exists, while the one on the east side has long been demolished. The wall that still stands is only about ten feet high and roughly 60 metres long - it is not an effective barricade between the communities, except for a very short stretch. Also it was initially constructed by Muslims, because the BJP and Vishwa Hindu Parishad are very strong in that section of the neighbourhood - it was not built to keep Muslims out of a Hindu neighbourhood, as in some reports.

When activists were asked in the course of this study to comment on the walls, they were remarkably lukewarm. This did not match the hyperbole with which such walls are described in a number of sources: the walls are, in practice, not nearly as imposing as they are made out to be, nor do they regulate intercourse between the two communities, at least not today, which is why many of my respondents thought that I was referring to metaphorical walls. As it turned out, I was talking of 'imaginary' ones. Exaggerations of this sort nevertheless have a deleterious effect on the credibility of secular activists. All Hindu partisans and sectarians need to do is to point to these inflated accounts in order to downplay the terrible things they have done. Ghanshyam Shah, a noted political scientist, who gave a lot of his time to gathering evidence from victims expressed a similar view, saying that even secularists want to create alarm by painting trivia in lurid colours, even though it does not do their cause much good. For example, he argued, some of the opponents of Hindutva had gone around claiming that Muslim rickshaw drivers dare not cross the river to enter Hindu parts of Ahmedabad, a patently false statement since Muslim and Hindu rickshaw drivers carry passengers from different parts of Ahmedabad, as a glance out of any window overlooking a busy street will prove.

5 Lessons learnt: majoritarian politics and democratic equality

In this concluding chapter we shall reflect on the research findings to take a second look at some of the broader conceptual issues that emerge. While majoritarian attacks attract intellectual attention around the time they climax, much more needs to be known about how victims pick up the pieces afterwards. Is it possible to arrive at a 'new' normal? Or is there just an uneasy calm during which the minorities swallow their hurt and hope to live incognito? What role does the state play in this process and with what kind of charter - a liberal democratic one, or one that is imbrued with the colours of the flag?

If India is to remain a secular state which recognizes all religions, then our discussions must necessarily be factored within a framework of liberal democracy, however flawed this might seem in practice. This is why we need to understand the challenges of democracy and how resolution between communities can best be achieved. To do this adequately, it is necessary to recognize that there are a number of misperceptions that make it difficult to understand both the causes of ethnic/inter-religious violence and how post-conflict resolution can best be arrived at.

The research examined Mumbai and Ahmedabad well after the violence had occurred in these cities: fifteen years in one case and a little over seven in the other. Far from this being a drawback, it is an advantage, for it makes it possible to see how things work out after the first shocks have ended and been absorbed. Sequentially, but not exclusively, the research shows that in the beginning it is all about refuge and then a roof over one's head, followed by sending children to school, getting compensation for damage, searching for viable sources of income to make ends meet, and last of all, a need for recognition as citizens. When violence erupts, it is not possible to anticipate what will happen during each of the stages. Indeed initially, it is not clear to either victims or observers that the former will ever be able to cope with the tragedy that has struck them. Bit by bit those affected realize that it is impossible to recapture the 'old' normal, and instead through a variety of ways they seek a 'new' normal which, however, may not be a happy one.

Whether it is multiculturalism in America and Europe, Sikh regional politics in India, or Muslim ethnicization in Gujarat, minorities want the state to act as guarantor of their citizen status. Hindu sectarians, however, believe that they do not need the law behind them, for in their eyes they are the authentic Indians with a status that arises from the soil. Sometimes majoritarian spokespeople can

make grand gestures and certify that certain members of minority communities are 'patriotic' and 'pro-India'. Bal Thackeray once said to me that a certain Muslim, Shakha Pramukh of the Shiv Sena, was a very nice man, because he lived and thought like a Hindu. On another occasion he commented that Mohammad Azharuddin, once India's cricket captain, was a good Muslim. The elements of Thackeray's reasoning were not clear, but evidently Azharuddin had passed the test and was now a designated patriot. Such people fit a Hindu idea of who is a 'proper' Muslim.

However, this sort of exceptionalism is ultimately unsatisfactory for minority communities. A final closure of sorts to ethnic conflicts can only come about when the democratic state reinstates itself in the eyes of the minorities. This, I would argue, is the final test of a democratic society. This argument is elaborated in the following sections, in which the meaning of democracy is examined and anti-Muslim violence placed within the wider comparative context of religious politics in India. The only basis for Muslims' long term security and developmental progress, it is argued, is for it to be guaranteed through the mediating role of a democratic liberal state acting as a counterbalance to opposing Hindu nationalist and Muslim groups. First, a theoretical grounding for this argument is provided, by reference to Lacan and others, and then, in sections 5.6 to 5.9, an empirical analysis of the differing dynamics of ethnic and other communal contests, the electoral arithmetic of Gujarat, and Modi's attempts to take credit for the state's economic success. Finally, it is reiterated that only through the political process and political change can Muslims be sure of the emergence of a 'new' normal that provides them with recognition, redress and security.

5.1 Multiculturalism and justice: the significance of democracy

In a democratic state, the issue is less about tolerance than about rights. In India secularism has often been misunderstood in terms of being large-hearted, soft-shouldered and generous to other cultures and communities. Such sentiments, while laudable, have little to do with the hard facts of the law, which emphasize individual rights and non-discrimination. Everything else, all other humanitarian and altruistic urges, must be subservient to the supreme liberal condition of individual rights and non-discrimination, which are enshrined in law. This implies that, at the most fundamental level, a citizen has rights that cannot be infringed upon. This is one aspect of the constitution of any liberal democracy that is not negotiable. If, for some reason, this aspect is undermined in favour of pure tolerance or love of the 'other', then the lives of minorities will always be delicately balanced on the

altruistic imperative. Such an approach depends too heavily on the goodwill of others, which can be taken away without notice. Majoritarian concessions do not satisfy minorities. In fact, this mode of thinking takes us back to medieval times, when minorities were given privileges at best, but not rights. What minorities want and need is political parity that is religion-blind and a state dispensation that treats all communities as equals, with equal rights. These issues are certainly amenable to democratic resolution. One of the basic principles used to resolve minority anxieties is to allow their cultural practices to flourish so long as they do not interfere with the fundamental rights that each individual has by virtue of being a citizen.

In contemporary societies, there are two possible scenarios in which religion and politics come together. The first arises from minority anxieties and the demand for self-respect and cultural equality, and the second from majoritarian attacks on religious minorities, ostensibly to protect the nation-state from enemies within. When religion and politics combine in the making of nation-states, then the outcome is either majoritarianism or theocracy, in practical terms meaning the same thing. But being a nation-state is not everything. It is democracy that makes a nation-state modern and liberal. Tracing one's ancestry in blood and territory can easily give way to jingoism, which has been the unfortunate case in many independent nation-states.

Minorities become politically active on the issue of multiculturalism or justice. In the politics of multiculturalism, the time period is indefinite, as the effort is to establish certain norms, for example with regard to dress codes, family law, education, worship and so on, in perpetuity. In such an approach, it is necessary to stay within the ambit of civil and penal law and not to violate the basic principles of liberal democracy or the rights of the individuals. Issues of justice, however, become central when minorities face majoritarian violence that is justified in the name of protecting territory and sovereignty.

In India, minority-inspired religious politics is no longer of much significance. Sikhs in the state of Punjab, where most of them live, have more or less come to accept the status quo, although the grievance of not having a capital of their own and having to share Chandigarh with neighbouring Haryana is not quite forgotten. The militant secessionist movement of the 1980s is now a distant memory and most Sikhs do not want to be reminded of it. The only other significant unrest where

minorities have taken the lead is in the Kashmir valley. Unlike Sikh politics in Punjab, secessionists here want to separate from India, although it is not clear whether the demand is entirely religious, or merely seems to be religious because Muslims are numerically preponderant in the Kashmir region. It is widely recorded that more Muslims than Hindus have died at the hands of separatist militants, which makes it difficult to call this a religious agitation. The fear of becoming a minority in a sovereign Kashmir state has pushed Hindu organizations like the Bharatiya Janata Party and Paunoon Kashmir to oppose the demand for Kashmiri secession or autonomy. This has an ironical side to it, as a majority of Kashmiri Muslims do not want to be part of Pakistan, nor do they identify with other Muslims in India, as became apparent after the 2002 mass killings of Muslims in Gujarat. Leading opposition parties in Kashmir failed to generate popular support for their call for statewide agitation in sympathy with the persecuted Muslims of Gujarat. The Kashmiri Muslims clearly see themselves as quite distinct from their co-religionists elsewhere in the sub-continent and as having little in common with them. Abdul Ghani Bhatt, a leading Kashmiri activist, argued that this was because Muslims in India “never reacted to whatever has been happening in Kashmir over the past 12 years.... We don't hold any grudges against them about it because we see them as Indians” (quoted in *Indian Express* March 5th, 2002).

Other than Kashmir, nowhere else in India is religious minority-inspired politics of any consequence. In contrast, at a national level religion and politics combine frequently, and with telling impact, when it comes to expressing Hindu majoritarianism. In India, religious politics did not win much favour during the struggle for Independence. This is quite surprising, given the potential for using this sentiment against the British. Indeed, there were Hindu activists from the 1920s onwards who tried to work up religious nationalism, but they never made it to the mainstream of the nationalist movement, which stayed in the control of the secular Congress party. With Independence came the Partition and the emergence of Pakistan. The bloodshed and the trauma of leaving what had always been home and becoming a refugee aided the Hindu nationalist cause in post-Independence India. In the opening section we discussed how Hindu organizations like the RSS and the Jana Sangh found it convenient to portray those Muslims who stayed behind in India as traitors and agents of Pakistan. To this day, the memory of the Partition is invoked in the many riots that have targeted Muslims in India. In order to comprehend the overall appeal of Hindu majoritarianism, it is necessary to factor in Pakistan and the significance of territory in any imagination of the nation-state, any nation-state.¹³

5.2 The significance of religion: how Muslims and Sikhs were minoritized

Ethnic mobilizations that use religion to thematize the nation-state find it much easier to survive than when other forms of community identity are activated. This point can be illustrated with reference to the way Shiv Sena has scored repeatedly with its attacks against Muslims at different points of time. In the opening section, it was pointed out how the Shiv Sena began its career in 1966 in Mumbai on a single anti-south Indian migrants to Mumbai platform. Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena chief, effectively argued that if Maharashtrians were not getting jobs in the capital of their own state, then it was because of a conspiracy hatched by migrants to the city from south India. Though he usually meant Tamils, his pronouncements against South Indians in general included migrants from the states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. While this platform launched the Shiv Sena to political heights in Mumbai, Bal Thackeray soon realized that he had no friends at the national level because none of the major parties dared to make common cause with the Shiv Sena for fear of losing its supporters from the four south Indian states. Shiv Sena found itself isolated: while it was strong in the city of Mumbai, its influence did not even reach nearby Pune, the cultural capital of Maharashtra.

It was then that Shiv Sena realized that it had to have a second string to its bow. In 1967 it attacked the communists, particularly the leftwing trade unions, immediately making friends with a number of parties, from Congress to the right wing parties, as a result. In the late 1960s, Mumbai was besieged by working class unrest brought about by recession, bad monsoons and famines in certain parts of the country. The anti-left stance of the Shiv Sena yielded rich dividends, so much so that Thackeray even said that communists were now its main enemies. As a result, the heat was off south Indian migrants in Mumbai. However, by the late 1980s, the leftist threat had receded and it had become hard to work up popular enthusiasm by attacking communists. At that point, the Shiv Sena was going through a political slump, but in 1984 it revived itself by adopting the Hindutva platform and isolating Muslims as its principal targets and it continues to milk anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan sentiments as its basic nourishment. This change of tactics has stood the Shiv Sena in good stead for many years, and it continues to do so.

Thus while linguistic differences can stoke a popular movement for some time, it is difficult to maintain the tempo because all-India level considerations make their presence felt before long. This is why

ascription-based mobilizations tend to thematize the nation-state and point to external enemies across its borders to win support for their cause. It is no wonder that in these circumstances, Muslims are the most frequent targets of majoritarian excesses, though through the 1980s, even the Sikhs were minoritized effectively. Because Sikhs could be identified as a separate religious community, the belief that many of them desired secession and fear of another Partition enabled the government to play up this anxiety for political advantage. In fact, the vast majority of Sikhs were not for breaking away from India and the manner in which the Punjab problem was resolved has lessons for other ethnic conflicts. If Sikh organizations are today willing to participate in the national democratic process, it is because post-Congress governments since 1989 have made concerted attempts to defuse the feelings of anger and hurt in Punjab. In 1990, when V.P.Singh was elected as Prime Minister and toured Punjab, he was given a rousing reception. Sikhs believed that he had come to apply a healing touch, and were grateful for this. Quite clearly, they wanted the state to safeguard their status as full citizens and punish those who were guilty in the 1984 violence, as well as for the way the Golden Temple had been attacked during Operation Bluestar in the same year. One shudders to think what would have happened if Sikh militancy had been allowed to fester for a few more years. Would the Sikhs then have been equally charitable about their future within India?

It is interesting to plot the trajectory of the disturbances in Punjab in the 1980s for yet another reason: to show that minority resentments can be made to look seditious by clever political manipulations. A legitimate demand by citizens can be transformed by the 'people', speaking in the name of the majority, into an anti-national act. That is why the political calculations behind ethnic killings need to be clearly brought out. The problems in Punjab did not begin with the demands for secession, however muted and fragmented. Political dissatisfaction with the Congress in the centre was originally based on the need to set up a tribunal to handle water distribution between the northwestern states, a territorial tribunal to resolve outstanding disputes between Punjab and neighbouring Haryana, and most of all on the demand for Chandigarh to become the capital of Punjab. None of these in any way was remotely linked to any secessionist or breakaway demands. In fact, many other regional parties have made demands for greater autonomy, much as the Akalis had done, without getting a secessionist tag.

In the case of Punjab, a variety of contingent factors helped to represent Sikhs as extremist. First, there was Bhindranwale and the religious politics of the Akali Dal, which constrained a large number of moderate Sikh leaders. Second, there was the memory of the Partition, which haunted many Hindu Punjabis in Punjab, and the thought of another Partition sent them uncritically into the arms of those who were demonizing the Sikhs. Eventually, it must also be said, the nation as a whole participated in this orchestrated fear that most Sikhs were out to break up India again and commit sacrilege with respect to the memories of those who had suffered during the Partition, especially after Operation Blue Star and Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination. What most people overlooked was not just the actual wording of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution, but also that the Sikhs had probably suffered the most during the 1947 Partition. In this case, the Hindu-Sikh face off did not require a history of traditional animosity. It was cooked over a slow fire from the late 1970s onwards by interested political parties (most notably, the Congress), till it came to a boil in the mid-1980s. Operation Bluestar, during which tanks were driven into the Golden Temple and bullet holes made in the sanctum sanctorum, and the massacre of Sikhs after Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination set the stage for a full scale ethnicization of Sikhs, led by the Congress. Thus it was not the Hindu parties that initiated the attacks on Sikhs but the Congress, long held to be a secular bulwark against sectarian threats. After 1984, it did not take very long for the Sikhs to be portrayed nationwide as enemies of India and friends of Pakistan. Even today, if a political party or community can be reasonably classified as a secessionist then they are in the same breath considered Pakistani sympathizers, so strong is the link between majoritarian politics, the nation-state and Pakistan. While the Shiv Sena self-consciously moved from being anti-south Indian to anti-Muslim, in the case of the Sikhs it all happened to them from the outside. It was the Congress that successfully made them look like secessionists, even though the Sikhs were really interested in issues that were well within the ambit of legitimate federal politics. However, in both cases there were winners and losers. In Mumbai, the Shiv Sena won by attacking the Muslims; in the case of Punjab, the Congress scored in the 1984 elections by minoritizing the Sikhs.

5.3 Enter Lacan: post-conflict resolution and the significance of the triad

Jaques Lacan's *Ecrits* (1977), which has already been referred to, gives us a profound theoretical basis for establishing post-conflict resolutions that are enduring and not limited to token gestures. Only by establishing a triadic framework, Lacan believes, can contesting communities (or dyads) reach

lasting peace. Without repeating earlier discussions, it is necessary to remind ourselves that, while jobs, education and homes are important considerations in terms of rehabilitation, the final and most comprehensive feature of lasting peace can only be achieved when antagonistic dyads acknowledge the state as legitimately occupying the triadic node.

In plain language, Lacan argued that a person's sense of the self must correlate with the space around him or her. Just as a child chuckles into a mirror when it sees its image, it is the urge among most of us to be able to project an image of the self which is in perfect concinnity with our surroundings. But this was no ordinary image that Lacan was talking about: he used the ancient term *imago* to dramatically capture the essence of what he was arguing. Unfortunately, as Lacan pointed out, the correlative space is not unproblematic. We are, more often than not, misrecognized, which creates a tension between the self and the other. The only way an imago can keep itself from turning pathological is when both the self and the other defer to a big Other with a capital 'O'. With the big O, a triad forms without which egos can only clash against each other in endless conflict or *jouissance*. Therefore, for a normal imago to emerge, it cannot be seen in isolation but only within a triadic framework in which the big O acts as the name of the father or (after being chided by feminists) as the fount of the law. If the big 'O' collapses, then all possibilities for communication between the dyads disappear.

This is why the voices of the minorities are often not heard, or if heard, are not understood. If the third element of the triad loses its position and minorities see the state converging its interests with the majority community, then the language of the democratic constitution becomes incomprehensible, because the state has become an extension of an ethnic dyad (in this case, constituted by the majority community). Consequently, minorities (Muslims or Sikhs) begin to feel that the state has compromised itself and the triadic node has merged with the Hindu 'other' (Lacan's small 'o'). I am not sure if Zizek has got Lacan right, for he argues that the theft of the big 'O' is like castration (Zizek, 1993, pp 203-6). However, so far as I can make out, it is not as if the big 'O' has been stolen and is now being enjoyed by the other, but that it ceases to occupy the triadic spot and as a result the dyads are thrown into limitless *jouissance*.

Societies are always sitting on a powder keg of diverse social forces, as Parsons had once said. The social compact is a delicate one, for the charge of being misunderstood is always lurking in the background. It is, therefore, important that equanimity be maintained, as the price of disruption is too high. To have to hold all round re-negotiations between social actors and institutions is much too laborious and unrewarding. This point really belongs to Hegel, but it has been expanded in recent times not only by Lacan (1977) but also by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1990). In *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1977), Hegel put romance and warmth in their place when he pointed out that the only relationship that can yield complete satisfaction is when the master consumes the servant without asking the latter. This is a valid point for us to bear in mind, for in ethnic violence, the master (the majority community) finds fulfillment only in the annihilation of the slave (the minority community). In less extreme cases of dyadic relationships, say between lovers, parents, friends, and, by extension, enemies, there is always a sense of an unrequited promise. Sometimes, even enemies do not behave badly and that can be a disappointment.

Lacan (1977) took this theme further and demonstrated that peace between any set of dyads is because there is a third element, the triadic node, which appears as the source of law (see Gupta, 1996, pp 1888-9). The presence of the triad restricts dyadic relations to a certain zone of activism, although every now and again the chain snaps under pressure. The triad then collapses and dyads enter a period of violence during which each party claims 'misrecognition'. This goes on until a new triad establishes itself, although this may now be headquartered somewhere else and not in the familiar ideological square. Such an outcome would alter not just relations between dyads, but also within each of them. So Parsons's notion of the powder keg is not at all inappropriate. By the time Deleuze and Guattari came along, it was clear that Hegel's notion of an asymmetrical relationship between dyads could be worked out only with the help of Lacan's triad. In such a case, neither dyad would be a complete victor and the desire of each to consume the other would have to be restrained. Such 'desire', Deleuze and Guattari argue, is itself a disruptive and dangerous sentiment (Deleuze and Guattari, 1990) for, as I see it, it tries to work its way in from the blind side of the triadic node. Desire is anti-thesis in the extreme, for it is always there waiting in anticipation of the triad collapsing.

In my own work, I have argued that democracy is a difficult project because it entails a conscious awareness of the fragility of Lacan's 'triad', which is constantly under pressure from Deleuzianesque

'desire'. To keep a triad that is based on liberal democratic and humanistic values going is one of the hardest feats of social engineering: it is against all that is spontaneous in social relations, which is why a democrat cannot let the guards off on furlough. Democracy requires constant vigil, for once the triadic node that is occupied by the Constitution fails to live up to its expectations, then the only language left is the 'cry' (see Gupta, 1997, p 189). Then the actors slip back into pre-democratic negotiations until the triad painfully re-establishes itself, if at all, and perhaps never in the same form again. Once re-established, there is a new normal and the old one is lost forever, but for remnants in people's memories. While on the face of it, the new triad and the dyads may have the same outward form, in fact there are significant internal variations because a fresh equation has been arrived at. The new normal may not be a happy, or happier, one, but the three nodes are now embedded in each other with a different set of angularities.

Therefore, the making of a normal imago cannot be seen in isolation. Instead, it must be seen within a triadic framework in which the big 'O' acts as if in the name of the father, the fount of the law, or the constitution of a liberal democracy. If the big 'O' collapses, the established terms of discourse cease to exist. This is how the terrorist is often born, for in such circumstances no communication is possible on either side. If in India we have been able to stave off fundamentalism for such a long while, it is because at the end of the day the big 'O' manages to assert itself, often after a long gap, in dramatic electoral reversals which restore some faith in the constitution and the law among the minorities.

5.4 Ethnic and communal movements: the varying impact of status and class

We can now pick up the theme of ethnicity versus communal movements again, with the help of some of the empirical material provided in the preceding pages. As mentioned in the early sections of this paper, ethnicity thematizes the nation-state (and with it sovereignty and territory), but communalism targets the government. Now it is possible to go further and assert that in ethnic movements the state loses its triadic node, or at least every attempt is made by at least one of the protagonists to undermine the state's occupation of this locus by merging itself with it. This is the ultimate success of an ethnic movement. However, not all ethnic movements manage to achieve this: when they are thwarted in their ambitions to attain this goal it is because they do not have enough adherents (both

passive and active) on their side. The ruling government (when it is not actively ethnic itself) can, in such cases, withstand such ethnic pressures and hold onto its triadic position. For example, when the Punjabi Suba agitated for a unilingual Punjab in the 1960s, many Hindu opponents tried to give this demand an ethnic dimension, saying that it was a thinly disguised attempt at another Partition (for a detailed exposition, see Nayar, 1966). Fortunately, this interpretation did not take wing and a unilingual Punjab came into being in 1965. The state held its triadic post.

In a communal movement, the sovereignty of the state is never in doubt, which is why the government of the day is importuned to act as an official arbiter and redress the grievances brought to its notice by the interested parties. The complaints usually are that members of the communal 'other' are either grossly misutilizing resources, are undermining the good faith on the basis of which the administration is run, or that there are some new laws that must be put into effect so that social imbalances do not occur, and so on. For example, caste conflicts are usually about how a certain section of the population is taking undue advantage of legal and statutory provisions or, conversely, how certain vested interests are not allowing underprivileged castes to access what is legally theirs. Linguistic movements in the 1960s demanded that better laws be put in place, so that the spirit of the constitution and the principles of federalism could be realized in practice. For example, the Kaveri water dispute between Karnataka and Tamilnadu depends on the Supreme Court's verdict, although both sides are doing their best to influence the Court's decision.

Now we can add another aspect that differentiates communal from ethnic movements, at least in the context of contemporary India. This may not hold in other circumstances, because every nation-state has come into being following its own unique path. As discussed above, ethnic movements in India are not driven by economic considerations. When Hindu mobs attacked poor Muslims in Gujarat, it was not as if they wanted their jobs. When the RSS and other right wing Hindu organizations hit out at Muslims and urge that they all go to Pakistan, it is not with the intention of taking over their land or their property. True, there may be certain manipulators in the ranks who see some petty economic interests being served, but one cannot in any way explain ethnic movements in terms of economic factors.

Shiv Sena's attack on south Indians was indeed determined by economic reasons as well as by the peculiar demographic and social profile of Mumbai. Imagine that city in 1966, where, in the capital of

Maharashtra, native Marathi-speaking people constituted only 43 per cent of the population. The best jobs and the best localities belonged to the non-Marathis. The lower middle class educated Maharashtrian faced rather stiff competition from migrants from south India, because the latter were in general better qualified for petty office jobs and clerical positions. It is in this context that Bal Thackeray advised his followers to learn English and typing in a hurry. However, when Shiv Sena dropped the south Indians as its main enemies and turned full-time ethnic, this cannot be understood in pure economic terms. Shiv Sena did not have an economic agenda as such, on the basis of which their partisans could be motivated to attack Muslims. Members of the real estate mafia in Mumbai saw some advantages in clearing slums so that they could then make mega-profits, but as far the ordinary mass of Shiv Sainiks and their many supporters are concerned, money was not the consideration. In ethnic movements, it is not so much class as status that is relevant. Hindutva asserts the status of being the 'real Indians'. For this status to be truly compelling, it cannot be soiled by economic considerations. Instead, in order to create the ethnic 'other', it must draw deeply on memory and the primeval grief that gave birth to the nation-state.

As ethnicity is a quest for affirming status, there are only absolute winners and absolute losers. Unlike a movement spurred by economic grievances, where there are chances of a compromise, status-seeking ethnic movements are absolutist in their scope. This is probably why ethnic movements invite so much violence and so little remorse. The ethnic 'other' is, after all, regarded as an alien, someone who does not belong to the nation-state. In caste movements in India, poorer castes are not told to leave the country, or denied their claims to being Indian. Dominant and prosperous castes know that they must negotiate a future with lower castes, even as they are engaged in political struggle. Further, when Dalit castes fight for respectability, a large part of their motivation is fuelled by their economic deprivation, in both village and towns. Dalit mobilizations frequently focus on land rights and jobs, although there are instances of Dalits agitating on grounds of pure status considerations, particularly in the many Buddhist conversion movements. What however keeps Dalit uprisings from becoming ethnic is that so far Buddhism is not seen as a threat to the nation-state by Hindu activists. The matter would have been quite different if Dalits had chosen to convert to Islam. Even so, as Buddhists they have often earned the wrath of Bal Thackeray because of their irreverence for Hindu sacerdotal texts. If it is Islam that arouses the greatest ire in ethnic mobilizations, it is because of the presence of Pakistan and the tragedy of the Partition.

Though there are elements of status embedded in many communal assertions, there are often clear economic reasons why in India language movements get the kind of support that they do, people can be activated to fight for the formation of Jharkhand, or the Kavery waters can arouse so much passion in Tamilnadu and Karnataka. Ethnic movements, in contrast, deny any economic motives and perhaps reflect them only at the margins. Conspiracy theorists may push these margins into the centre, but in actual fact, it is not economic gain that propels howling mobs to violate their ethnic 'other'.

5.5 The politics of Gujarat: getting the facts right

Some elections need to be studied as special cases because of the conditions in which they take place and because of the issues involved. Soon after the violence in Gujarat in 2002, the Chief Minister called an election, as if to justify the attacks against Muslims and to legitimate sectarian Hindu politics in the state. In this, he succeeded. His vote share went up and the number of seats he won also rose significantly. Chief Minister Modi was triumphant and the gloom among minorities and secular forces in the country deepened. Right-wing Hindu politics was firmly in the saddle and some wondered if it could ever be dislodged. Did these elections in 2002 and 2007 really demonstrate a Hindutva wave in Gujarat?

What is overlooked in both the glee and the gloom around BJP's victory in Gujarat in 2002, which was repeated in 2007, is that there are significant forces within the state that are opposed to Hindu politics. It is not as if Modi actually won a landslide victory, for there were many who cast their votes against his government. Let us take a close look at the 2002 elections, because they followed the post-Godhra Gujarat carnage. It is true that the final tally of results showed a definitive win for the BJP. It won 126 seats while the Congress secured only 51. However, if the voting percentages are examined, a different picture is obtained. In as many as 36 constituencies, the contests went neck to neck. An examination of voting figures released by the Election Commission show that the result could have gone either way. In Godhra, the epicentre of the 2002 killings, BJP's victory over the Congress was by a mere 0.6 per cent of the votes polled. In Talala, the BJP won by 0.5 per cent; while in Dholka the BJP secured 48.8 per cent of the votes and the Congress 48.1 per cent. In a few other cases too, such as Sarsa and Mandal, the BJP won by only around one per cent. In over 28 other constituencies the BJP's victory margin was less than three per cent. With a bit of luck these seats could have easily gone the Congress way, and the BJP victory would then not have appeared so pronounced. Further, if

the Janata Dal or the National Congress Party had formed an alliance with the Congress, the BJP might have had to sit on the opposition benches. After all, the National Congress Party won 11.19 per cent of the votes and in Jhagadia, the Janata Dal (U) captured 42.8 per cent of the votes to the BJP's 21.2 per cent and the Congress's 28.3 per cent. If in Jodiya, the NCP had partnered the Congress, then the 2.4 per cent of the votes it won could have been added to the Congress tally of 44.1 per cent and that might have just pipped the BJP to the post. In Kalawada and Olpad, the Congress would have certainly won had the NCP not taken away 5.4 per cent and 7.7 per cent of the votes respectively. This is also true of Mangool, Matar, Morvi and Wankaner. In all these cases, the few votes snatched by the NCP made all the difference between defeat and victory for the Congress.

In elections, the margin between victory and defeat does not really matter from one point of view. Even a single vote unambiguously makes for a victory. Yet when election analyses are made, it is unwise to limit them to the number of seats won and not pay attention to the votes polled. Further, this election in Gujarat was not an ordinary election: the BJP put in everything to make it a contest between Hindutva and the rest. In many ways, it was like a referendum, but less than half the people of Gujarat voted saffron. The 2002 Gujarat elections did not really demonstrate a saffron wave after all.

Mr. Modi very clearly wanted to capitalize on the riot factor to win the 2002 election by advancing the poll date. He was annoyed when James D. Lyngdoh, the then Chief Election Commissioner, was determined to spoil his well-laid plans. Regardless of what the BJP leaders might have said, it was Godhra that was to be the pivotal feature of the Hindutva campaign, because that is where Muslims allegedly burnt a train bogey containing Hindus coming back from Ayodhya. Yet in Godhra, as was mentioned earlier, the BJP was able to increase its lead over the 1999 elections by a mere 0.6 per cent. What a waste of a riot! In Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat state, the BJP actually lost to the Congress and the latter in fact increased its tally to 51.6 per cent from the 49.6 per cent it had won in 1999. In places such as Deesa, Deodar, Dhanera, Dhari, Dhrangada, Jamjodhpur, Kalawada, Lathi, Mahuva (and the list can go on), though the BJP won some seats, it actually polled fewer votes than it did in 1999. In Dharampur and Songadh, the BJP was practically routed. In some areas, such as Surat, the voting pattern was quite uneven. In Surat city west, the Congress met with a humiliating defeat, while it did rather well in the other sectors of Surat.

When analysing the election results most commentators have concluded that there was an increase in support for the BJP and that Mr. Modi was trying to set up the conditions for a second republic. They are certainly correct about the intentions of the BJP and Mr. Modi, but they have not paid enough attention to the plebiscite character of the election. As noted above, less than half the State's people went with the BJP in spite of the hate campaign generated by the riots. So had it been a pure referendum on Hindutva, the BJP would have lost — though narrowly. The BJP's allies in the NDA fielded a number of candidates but did quite miserably, as they were neither fish nor fowl in terms of the debate on Hindutva. For example, the Samata Party, headed by George Fernandes, put up as many as 25 candidates but failed to win a single seat. Nor can it be said that where there was a large voter turnout there was a high degree of Hindu passion. In both Jamjodhpur and Wankaner over 70 per cent voted and yet in both these constituencies the BJP won only narrowly, in the former by less than three per cent, while in Wankaner the BJP might have lost had the NCP not captured over 18 per cent of the votes. It must also be borne in mind that many voted for the BJP not because they welcomed the Hindutva plank but because they were seriously disturbed by the prospect of terrorism overrunning the country.

Nevertheless, only marginally more than 49 per cent of the electorate voted for the BJP and over five per cent voted for Independents. It is true that the BJP increased its vote share by 5 per cent over the 1999 figure, but so did the Indian National Congress. This hardly fits the Hindutva wave thesis. To round off this discussion, it should also be noted that the BJP's popularity in electoral terms has not increased over the years. It got fewer seats in 2007 (117) than in 2002 (127). The Indian National Congress, in contrast, increased its strength in the legislature by about eight seats, from 51 to 59. Thus, unlike in 2002, in 2007 the BJP did not get a two thirds majority in the Gujarat Assembly.

5.6 Disaggregating Modi's appeal: countering Hindutva

Countering BJP's aggressive Hindutva in Gujarat is essential if a stable 'new' normal is to be arrived at in the state. But to reach out to secular and democratic alternatives, it is necessary to examine how Modi has chiselled his political profile.

In Gujarat, there are reports that extol Modi's performance as Chief Minister. They refer to how he has set up small dams, built hydro-electricity projects, established industrial zones, provided better

transportation systems and electricity, and, above all else, created an environment conducive to enterprise, so that there are many more new jobs. Business is happy with Modi and the rural poor see a glimmer of hope in his emphasis on developing the countryside. According to this positive portrayal, the ordinary voters of Gujarat are not thinking of the 2002 bloodshed in Naroda Patiya and elsewhere. It may be hard to stomach, but the unadorned fact is that the majority community everywhere is concerned more about bread on the table and money in the bank than with what happens to poor Muslims.

That is why reports of Modi's popularity today are all the more striking. If, after riding the passions of the post-Godhra riots, his vote share was not that impressive, how is it that today, many years later, when tempers have cooled, he is still so popular? When supporters of Modi are faced with accusations regarding his involvement during the 2002 riots in Gujarat, they often respond with a counter accusation. What purpose, they ask, will it serve to rake up the past, as that can only have a divisive purpose? Why can we not move on, forget what happened years ago, and make sure that there is economic progress and order. Given the eternal disarray in which our public services usually are, even minor successes in organizational efficiency are a huge success.

Gujarat and West Bengal are ideologically and geographically poles apart, but their politics has something in common. Read carefully between the red and saffron lines and a similar sub-text emerges. Both these governments claim that the centre, which represents India, is doggedly undermining them even though they do all the hard work. Recently Modi made a public declaration that Gujaratis should consider not paying any central taxes, as all the money Delhi soaks in from Gujarat goes elsewhere. According to him, Gujarat contributes Rs. 40,000 crore to central revenue but gets only 2.5 per cent of it in return. If this is the case, Modi can argue credibly that if Gujarat is doing so well, it must be his administration that is responsible. He showcases this claim by pointing to the enormous successes Gujarat has notched up during his Chief Ministership. Strangely enough, nobody has really questioned him on these claims. Nevertheless, it is issues of this sort that need to be addressed, not purely ideological ones which pit a stylized secular against a caricatured sectarian.

Modi has managed to convey the impression to a large number of voters in Gujarat that, no matter how diligently his government works on the development front, his opponents persist in raising the

2002 bogey in the hope of driving him out. By doing so, he maintains, India, so-called secular India, is insulting Gujarat. By combining a species of reluctant sub-nationalism with his claim that he is putting Gujarat on the fast track to development, Modi has repeatedly scored against his opponents. However, how much of this is really true? A visit to any of the poor quarters of Gujarat, rural or urban, shows few signs of progress. Ask the carnage-affected Muslims and they respond that development has not come near their doorstep. How much of Modi's claim is really justified?

5.7 Gujarat: what miracle?

Gujarat's state domestic product grew at approximately 12 per cent in 2006-7 against India's overall growth of about 8 per cent that year. Fantastic, said Montek Singh Ahluwalia, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission in Delhi, lauding Gujarat's achievement.

However, what do the figures really tell us? In 1994-1995 Gujarat's state domestic product surged at the rate of 13.2 per cent. Where was Narendra Modi then? In the years 1994-2001, Gujarat's state domestic product registered a growth average of between 10 and 13 per cent per annum (Dholakia, 2007; <http://www.gujaratonline.in/Profile/Economy>). At the tail end of this period, Modi was elected as Chief Minister. What then has Modi done that is so special?

With respect to purely economic parameters, Gujarat was already among the top three states in India by 1990 – it had taken Gujarat twenty years since being created in 1960 to climb up from the eighth rank to the third spot in terms of its state domestic product (http://www.asiatradeshub.com/India/State_Gujarat2.asp; Dholakia, 2007). This represented twenty years of hard work, led primarily by Congress governments. Over 35 per cent of its infrastructural augmentation for power generation happened between 1995 and 2000 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Gujarat). If Gujarat today can show off its treasure chest, it should gratefully remember its pre-Modi past.

Besides other riches, Gujarat processes 49 per cent of the country's petroleum products. It also has India's largest shipyard in Bhavnagar, as well as the giant Reliance refineries in Jamnagar. Even with something as pedestrian as soda ash, Gujarat is responsible for 90 per cent of India's production (<http://ic.gujarat.gov.in/ind-guj/national-resources.html>). All this happened well before Modi cut his political incisors.

So what is so dazzling about Gujarat's current prosperity? Nothing really! In spite of decades of growth as usual, as much as 93 per cent of Gujarat's workforce toils in the lowly paid informal sector. This is why growth is not always development. In fact, on the Human Development Index, Gujarat fell one place in 2003-2004, and now ranks below Kerala, Punjab, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and Karnataka (Hirway et al, 2002; *Gujarat State Human Development Report, 2004*). In terms of rural prosperity, Gujarat is at number five and well behind Punjab, the front ranker (http://www.asiatradehub.com/India/State_Gujarat2.asp; see also Dholakia, 2007). In addition, according to a Parliamentary Committee headed by Kalyan Singh, a one-time BJP stalward, workers employed under the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) scheme are short-changed in Gujarat, where they receive half of what their counterparts get elsewhere.

Moreover, Ernst and Young, consultants for the Vibrant Gujarat conclave of 2005, ranked Gujarat's investment climate behind Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, and on a par with that of Karnataka – number five in India, compared with the Asian Development Bank's ranking of it at number two in 1996. In terms of workforce quality, the same professionals gave Gujarat a very average 'B grade', as it failed to measure up on a number of counts.

Why then does it seem that Modi invented Gujarat's golden wheel when it was already spinning? There are probably two reasons for this. The first is the simplistic assumption that all communalists are intellectual clunks who are unable to hold two ends of a book. Modi was read as a one talent wonder, good at leading riots from the front, but little else. Hence, it was expected by his critics that Gujarat would soon show negative economic figures and, before long, its heirlooms would be up for sale. When that did not happen, Modi's skills at book keeping rather than bloodletting began to draw attention. He cleverly stirred Gujarati *garv* (pride) into the pot, which made the state's usual growth rates taste nicely different. In addition, Modi's highly personalized executive style, rather than his tidy store-minding, attracted Indian corporates. They gave as much thought to Gujarat slipping in the development index as they would a drain inspector's report. What mattered to them was the manner of delivery. Modi did not just give Nano (a prestigious TATA automobile project) shelter, but also readied permits for Ratan Tata in three days flat. Democratic stage fright? Never heard of it! Here was a man who could bend the law at will, but those seeking favours had to be good to him. So when Modi welcomed private capital to Gujarat, many Indian entrepreneurs, big and small, rushed to his side.

True, Modi is partial to business, but this is nothing new, as Gujarat has consistently attracted a disproportionate slice of India's private investment, around 15 per cent (Rangarajana and Padia, 1980; <http://www.gujaratindia.com/business/Business.htm>). Nevertheless, Modi's portrayal of Gujarat's investor friendly climate was hard to resist, not because it was new, but because he delivered it with a bang. He promised favoured industrialists a spot in the sun, and this promise came with a personal guarantee. Thus instead of conflating Gujarat's prosperity with Modi, it is necessary to realize that Gujarat was always ahead, and Modi merely helped it along.

5.8 The significance of the political: establishing a 'new' normal

It is clear from this analysis that secularists must pay attention to development issues and not just concentrate on ideology. Only when an independent assessment of Modi's claims is positive can minorities hope that a lasting 'new' normal can be arrived at and that they do not have to worry every time a gun or a bomb goes off somewhere in the country. Right now, Modi's claim that he has lifted Gujarat to become a major economic powerhouse has taken away much of the stigma that attached to him after 2002. When the Nano project was launched, for example, Ratan Tata was all praise for Modi and his past was all but forgotten. This is why it is so important to examine the validity of Modi's administrative boasts.

In Mumbai, Muslims have attained a 'new' normal, but it is not one with which a democratic liberal country can be entirely satisfied. As mentioned earlier, the social character of Mumbai city allowed for different kinds of political opinions to flourish, even though Hindu extremists had some sympathizers in the ranks of the administration. Mumbai Muslims were also economically and politically better placed than their co-religionists in Gujarat. In many areas of Mumbai, Muslims actually took the fight to Hindu quarters. Recall that Hindu areas of Dharavi, such as the 90 feet road around Garib Nagar, were attacked by Muslims, although not on a scale comparable to the offensive mounted by Hindu sectarians. Ghettoization in Mumbai has been aggressively pursued by Muslims on their own without help from either faith based organizations or the state - they have enough estate agents, political go-betweens, well-to-do investors in land deals and, most of all, political space to make Mumbra, Oshiwada and Meera Road almost entirely Muslim. In these areas, as elsewhere, Muslims hold on to their preference for being taught in Urdu or English and do not regard Marathi language instruction as a serious alternative.

Muslims in Gujarat are much more vulnerable, for which reason it is necessary to take serious note of Modi's appeal and devise ways to undermine BJP's dominance in that state. Without this happening, Muslims in Gujarat will always be on tenterhooks, because they fear that Hindu bigotry may descend on them any day without notice. Ghettoization among Ahmedabad's Muslims is not as extreme as it is in Mumbai. Culturally too, Muslims in Ahmedabad are more than willing to learn Gujarati and to adopt this as their medium of instruction. Also Gujarat lacks the kind of political base that Muslims have in Mumbai, and have had for many years.

Therefore, if a 'new' normal that Muslims in Gujarat can live by is to be arrived at, it will have to be largely by taking over power from Modi, establishing the rule of law and delivering justice to the victims of 2002. As mentioned earlier, the Supreme Court has already initiated a Special Investigative Team (SIT) on this matter, but if BJP is to be dislodged then it must be, first and foremost, contested politically. Only then will its defeat be comprehensive.

Notes

- ¹ The term ethnic is mainly used in the Indian context to refer to different religious groups.
- ² The Babri Masjid (Babri mosque) in Ayodhya was destroyed in 1992 by Hindu nationalists, see Section 1.7.
- ³ Hindu killings of Muslims in Godhra, Gujarat, in 2002 see Section 1.8.
- ⁴ Varshney (2002) puts forward a different explanation, attributing the occurrence of inter- and intra-religious riots to the absence of strong social ties between competing groups. His methodology and conclusions have been subject to considerable criticism.
- ⁵ Deaths that occur during police actions in the pursuit of criminals are labelled 'encounter deaths', although there is widespread suspicion that the label is often used as a cover for extra judicial killings.
- ⁶ The romanticization of Sikh militants is not unique. Similar processes have occurred elsewhere. For example, in Greece, young men who had to leave a village on account of honour and vendetta killings took to the mountains and joined a band of klephts. Many were unmarried men, who were imagined as being in the prime of their physical powers and characterized by the quality of leventis - handsome, narrow-hipped and quick on one's feet (see Campbell, 1992, p 137).
- ⁷ See also Wilkinson (2004).
- ⁸ There was a similar story in Hyderabad after the 1985 riots there (see Alam, 1993, p155).
- ⁹ See <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/mp/2002/10/01/stories/2002100100260200>
- ¹⁰ A Hindu nationalist organization established in India in 1964.
- ¹¹ Winning trust through what may seem insignificant everyday activities is a tactic that Rashtrasevikas (lit. female national volunteers) of the RSS employ to win adherents to their fold. Tanika Sarkar details the many little things these women activists do in their localities to persuade people to join their organization. They drop in for tea, organize blood banks and help women to become economically more self-reliant (Sarkar, 1993, p 33). Javeed Alam documents similarly how the Majlis-e-Ittehad-u-Muslimeen won the trust of Muslim victims of the Hyderabad violence in the mid-1980s "by providing at a minimal level things which in a society like India one looks to the state to provide" (Alam, 1993, p 169).
- ¹² This discussion concentrates on the language of education, but quality is also an issue. In fact, the literacy rate amongst Muslims in Gujarat is higher than that of the Hindus (Government of Gujarat (2007) Statistical Abstract of Gujarat State, 2007, p 68).
- ¹³ See, for example, the lines that Sub-Lieutenant Rupert Chawner Brooke wrote before he died in the battlefield at Skyros, Greece, in World War I: "If I should die, think only this of me; That there is some corner of a foreign land, That is forever England...." (Brooke, n.d., p 5).

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