

The BJP Model for India “Vikas Purush” and Vinash Neeti

Introduction

Before the 2004 elections the BJP ran the Shining India campaign, which evaporated in the face of reality. Before the 2009 elections it was the “iron strong man” campaign projecting Advani which also failed. Now heading to the 2014 elections, the BJP is talking of ‘Vikas Purush’ and policies of so called ‘Vibrant Gujarat’ under the leadership of Narendra Modi, as the future model for India. Orchestrated media shows and twitter campaigns, mobilised crowds, breathless spokespersons heralding of Modi as saviour, are all part of the massive public relations exercise which we are being subjected to.

A public relations firm called APCO Worldwide, has been especially hired for a reported fee of 25,000 dollars a month, to project Modi as the one-point solution to all the social ills and political maladies afflicting India. On the board of directors of APCO are retired officers of the Israeli diplomatic and security forces who have been hired in different countries by various dictators trying to whitewash their crimes. This company was known to play dirty tricks when it was exposed as having set up front organizations to support the American tobacco lobby to rubbish evidence that tobacco causes cancer. Today it is here in India to promote the cancerous politics represented by the communal agenda of the Modi-led BJP, in its most virulent avatar.

The first Himalayan blunder of such public relations exercises which thoroughly exposed the Modi bandwagon for what it is, was the claim that Modi had “saved” 15,000 Gujarati pilgrims by hiring 80 cars to bring them down from the hills, during the terrible calamity which hit the Kedarnath and Badrinath hill areas of Uttarakhand. People were puzzled as to how such a claim could be made when it took the army and defence forces ten days of constant helicopter sorties and transport to rescue around 40,000 people. Analysts made calculations with the number of pilgrims in each car, the number of kilometers to be travelled and so on and came to the conclusion that it would take, with non-stop driving without a second’s rest, 233 hours or almost ten days to manage this feat which Modi’s PR team said was completed in

one day! But it is not just the foolishness of the claim, it is the desperation to use every opportunity even the most tragic plight of the yatri, to score a goal for Modi. In the event, in the face of the exposures, Modi had to backtrack and the President of the BJP Rajnath Singh then denied that such a claim had ever been made in the first place!

In fact all the Modi claims are filled with similar such falsehoods. But the packaging of Modi is not just a PR exercise to promote the agenda of an individual relentlessly pursuing his personal ambitions. It is an exercise which is backed by corporates both domestic and foreign who see in the Modi model an opportunity to fulfill their dreams of a corporate led "reformed" India. It has the backing of the RSS, impatient of the restrictions put by NDA allies on its core Hindutva agenda which it believes will be best safeguarded under the leadership of Modi.

This booklet takes a hard look at the kind of governance and politics Modi represents and blows the myth of the "able administrator" for what it really is.

Modi's role in the 2002 genocide

Volumes of material on the genocide in Gujarat bring out how minorities were subjected to, the bloodshed, arson, rape and loot, and how the law enforcement machinery of the Modi Government not only permitted a free run for the most rabid organisations of Sangh Parivar but actively connived with them in many places. For most people, the Gujarat pogrom of 2002 has become synonymous with horrifying images of charred bodies of Muslim men, women and children.

Major findings of various independent citizens' groups that bring out the details of the savagery are difficult to read beyond a few pages. One team attempted to assess the impact of merciless violence on children in Gujarat. In its report, the writer describes:--

"Eight-year-old Saddam described to this team how men attacked and "...Then they stripped my mother naked...usko nanga kar diya." A nine-year-old volunteered to explain to another women's team what balatkar (rape) means. "Balatkar ka matlab jab aurat ko nanga karte hain our phir use jala dete hain (Rape is when a woman is stripped naked and then burnt). And then looks fixedly at the floor." The writer goes on to observe: "Only a child can tell it like it is. For this is what happened again and again in Naroda Patia – women were

stripped, raped and burnt. Burning has now become an essential part of the meaning of rape". (Page 117, Frontline, Jan. 3, 2003)

During the carnage, from the beginning, the complicity of the state government was obvious. Narendra Modi reportedly gave instructions to top officials not to take action against the rampaging mobs already on the streets. Also, trained volunteers led these mobs and most of them knew they had political patronage. Since there was systematic erosion of the rule of law in maintaining state 'neutrality', the anti-minority bias had become part of the state policy. While Modi propagated the fiction that the Godhra incident was a pre-planned act by terrorists, his Home Minister Gordhan Zadaphiya saw the hand of 'enemy country' Pakistan in the whole episode. This laid the base for the attack on Muslims, drawing an utterly perverse link between international terrorism, Pakistan and every Muslim.

That the carnage, which has been termed an upsurge of Hindus by the VHP and other RSS affiliates, was not spontaneous is also proved by the fact that cranes, trucks and shovels were used extensively for the whole operation. Also the extensive use of gas cylinders, availability of lists of Muslim households and business enterprises in advance and the import of trucks of swords and dangerous chemicals also point to the fact of extensive planning which went into preparation of this pogrom.

And yet neither the Chief Minister, the State Government nor the State agencies have been held accountable and punished. It is a matter of shame that the then Central Government under Atal Behari Vajpayee and all the allies at the time, kept silent while the great cover-up of the responsibility of the State Government was done. L.K. Advani was the prime mover as the country's Home Minister in this cover up.

The culpability of the Chief Minister and others is thus the core issue in bringing justice to the minorities in Gujarat to heal their wounds.

New Evidence

Now new and unambiguous evidence is available in the records of the Special Investigation Team which pinpoints the role of Modi and top Government officials. The SIT was set up by the Supreme Court in April 2009 to reopen investigation into nine crucial cases including the Gulbarg Society massacre. Former Congress MP and leader Ehasan Jafri and 69 others were beaten and burnt alive in the Gulbarg Society massacre case.

The SIT in spite of all the evidence gave a clean chit to Modi. This was in direct contrast to the report of the Amicus Curiae also appointed by the Supreme Court who on the basis of the same evidence available to the SIT, stated categorically that there was prima facie evidence to warrant inclusion of Modi's role in the violence. He in particular mentioned the critical evidence of Sanjiv Bhatt then police officer who had attended a meeting in which Modi had neutralized the police and law enforcement agencies from taking action against the carnage. This evidence had been brushed aside by the SIT.

On April 15, 2013, Ehasan Jafri's courageous widow Mrs Zakia Ehsan Jafri filed a protest petition against the SIT's clean chit, in an Ahmedabad court praying for the rejection *in toto* of the SIT's final report dated February 8, 2012, making a cogent case for the chargesheeting of all 59 accused listed in her complaint dated June 8, 2006, beginning with Mr Modi, the Chief Minister of Gujarat and including other top Gujarat Ministers and officials. The protest petition goes into great detail, relying on documents from the investigation papers, on how the administration and police were deliberately paralysed and neutralised by the conspiracy hatched by Modi, the then Gujarat DGP K Chakravarti, then Ahmedabad Police Commissioner P C Pande, then additional chief secretary (Home) Ashok Narayan and other key members of the bureaucracy and police who connived in the conspiracy.

The protest petition that runs into 514 pages also has three volumes of annexures and ten CDs. The Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) led by Teesta Setalvad, with its entire legal team, assisted in this painstaking exercise which is also coming under attack by the State Government in many ways. The court accepted Ms. Jafri's appeal to make all documents available to her and therefore all those documents which were kept secret by the SIT were brought into the public domain. They are a damning indictment of the Modi model of governance.

Modi Model of Governance:

On the terrible day of February 27 2002 the Sabarmati Express carrying karsevaks from Ayodhya was attacked just before the train reached Godhra station in Gujarat. 58 people including women and children were killed. It was a terrible and shocking crime. Subsequently over 100 Muslims were arrested. 31 have been convicted and the rest acquitted.

However, as the evidence being argued before the Metropolitan Magistrate in the Ahmedabad Court shows, the police were informing the Chief Minister's office from the beginning of February of the communal mobilizations going on to take groups of karsevaks for the Ayodhya Mahayagna for the building of the temple. These messages are dated from between 7-2-2002 till the return of the karsevaks on 27-2-2002, but the Modi Government deliberately ignored these messages. Communal and provocative anti-Muslim slogans were being shouted all along the way to Ayodhya and back, again no action was taken.

At the time of the horrific attack on the train, Narendra Modi was the newly elected Chief Minister of Gujarat. Who were the people he was in constant touch with on that day? The phone records quoted in Zakia Jafri's protest petition show that even before Modi contacted officials, almost as soon as the information of the news reached him, he spoke to Jaideep Patil, the General Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parsihad who has been chargesheeted as a main accused in another case of the killings of eleven Muslims. At that time reports were reaching Modi's office of the grossly provocative, communally rabid and bloodthirsty slogans being raised by crowds being mobilized by the VHP. It is known to any administrator in Gujarat that Godhra is a highly communally sensitive place where there have been several riots in the past but Modi refused to act on the stream of reports being sent by field operatives of the State Bureau of Intelligence.

In the statement prepared by the Modi Government and read out in the Assembly which was in session, the Home Minister deliberately concealed the fact that both the District Magistrate of Godhra and the officer in-charge had repeatedly reported the communal slogans being shouted by the karsevaks.

But when Modi arrived in Godhra later that evening, he held a mini-cabinet meeting which decided to hand over the bodies of the Godhra victims to the same Jaideep Patel, the leader of precisely that organization which had already started drumming up communal hatred through slogans and speeches. Shockingly, this criminal was himself present in the said meeting presided over by Modi, as testified by the Godhra district magistrate Jayanthi Ravi.

Secondly while Modi himself was in Godhra, he permitted the postmortem of the Sabarmati train victims to be performed in the open on the railway platform in front of the growing frenzied crowds.

This was an unprecedented action which stoked the flames of the communal fire.

What was the result? The bodies were literally used to mobilize mobs all over Gujarat and to start the communal genocide. In Ahmedabad the motor cavalcade with the bodies was headed towards the Sola Civil Hospital.

Even more damning, the Chief Minister held a meeting at his residence later that night in which the then senior police officer has given witness that the Chief Minister effectively neutralized any action the police should have taken.

Was that good governance?

Ignoring the Warnings

Here are some of the chilling police messages which were ignored:

- 12:30 pm on February 27: An SIB officer through fax no 525 communicated to the headquarters that there were reports that some dead bodies would be brought to Kalupur Station in Ahmedabad city. "So communal violence will occur in the city of Ahmedabad; so take preventive action."

- Another SIB message also warned about communal incidents if bodies were brought to Ahmedabad. "Communal violence will occur in the city. So take preventive action." The same message said that *karsevaks* had given explosive interviews to a TV station at Godhra and threatened to unleash violence against the Muslims.

- At 1.51 hours and again at 1.59 hours on February 28, there were panic messages by wireless police vans positioned at Sola Hospital demanding immediate protection by Special Reserve Police platoons and the presence of DCP Zone 1.

- A message at 11.55 am on February 28, 2002 said, "Sayyed Saheb, the Protocol Officer had informed Sola-1 that riots have started at Sola Civil Hospital at the High Court where the dead bodies were brought."

- Again, there was another message, with no indication of time, stating that the officers and employees of the hospital had been surrounded by a 500 strong mob and they could not come out." The message also made a demand for more security for the civil hospital at Sola.

•Another message (P 188, Annexure III, File XVIII) sent at 2038 hours on February 27, 2002, mentioned the following: “Dilip Trivedi, the general secretary of VHP, and joint secretary Dr Jaideep Patel and Kaushik Mehta in a joint statement issued by them have declared that innocent Ram Bhakts have been attacked and hence Gujarat Bandh has been declared. They have also stated that the attack on the Ramsevaks returning from Ayodhya was pre-planned by the Muslims. Innocent ladies were molested and compartments were set on fire and Ramsevaks were burnt alive.”

This joint statement issued by the three senior-most office bearers of Gujarat VHP’s unit was clearly designed to stoke communal passion. A reasonable response would have been an immediate government clampdown on such public utterances and if required, putting all these trouble makers under preventive detention. But no such action was taken. The VHP called for a bandh on the February 28 and the BJP, the ruling party, openly supported the bandh call. The state, instead of clamping down on the bandh call, gave the VHP leaders and its cadres a free reign and a license to kill.

In all this period not a single message from the Chief Minister appealing for peace or warning against violence was given or aired. On the contrary he along with fellow conspirators, namely top police and Government officials, all named in the petition filed by Zakia Jafri, ignited the flames that engulfed the State.

Recently BJP spokespersons have tried to counter the evidence by saying that over 200 Hindus were killed in police firing which showed that the Government under Modi had acted. What is the truth? The Government itself informed the courts that 93 Muslims and 77 Hindus were killed in police firing. Others were killed in clashes.

No Police Intervention

There was no police intervention to stop the already rampaging mobs. The next morning Jafri’s house was surrounded. In spite of repeated requests from him, no police force was sent.

In contrast to the refusal to send forces in spite of the repeated messages from the police and SIB, the PCR records — which the SIT was trying hard to conceal — also reveal that the Government had enough forces to escort a VHP leader known for his inciting slogans, Acharya Giriraj Kishore, from the airport to the Sola Civil Hospital to

accompany the processionists, shouting filthy hate speeches and murderous slogans. But they did not have enough forces to send to Naroda Patiya where 96 persons were massacred in broad daylight (chargesheet figures in the Naroda Patiya case, though more deaths have been recorded) and 69 persons at Gulberg Society the same day and around the same time aggressive processions were being allowed. Modi, allowing and openly supporting the bandh and neutralising his administration, decided to give the RSS-VHP-BD mobs a free run of the Gujarat streets to massacre innocents.

These are only a few examples. But what they show is that either there was gross dereliction of duty by Modi and his officers which blows the myth of good governance or there was a deliberate plan, as most people following the Gujarat developments believe, of a coldblooded conspiracy to teach the 'Muslims a lesson' the favourite pastime of communal bigots spawned by the RSS and its front organizations.

The Supreme Court in the Best Bakery case had rightly remarked, ***"The modern day 'Neros' were looking elsewhere when Best Bakery and innocent children and women were burning, and were probably deliberating how the perpetrators of the crime can be saved or protected."*** It further observed, ***"the fanatics who spread violence in the name of religion are worse than terrorists and more dangerous than an alien enemy."***

Put Modi on Trial

In the light of this clear evidence, the CPI(M) has reiterated its demand that Modi's name be added to the chargesheet at present before the court and that he should be tried for his leading role in the conspiracy of the worst communal carnage this country has seen.

1984 and 2002

Defenders of the BJP and Narendra Modi cite the 1984 carnage against the Sikh community led by Congress leaders following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as a deflection from the role of their leader. The BJP defence is that two wrongs make a right. They say why target Modi when no action was taken against the killers of Sikhs. It is true that shamefully the Congress and its Governments all through these years have shielded the main Congress leaders involved including Sajjan Kumar. The CPI(M) both inside and outside Parliament has been unequivocal and unambiguous about demanding

justice for the victims' families and conviction of the leaders and officials involved. The public apology of the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his expressions of regret for the 1984 massacre would have had more meaning if strong action had been taken against the top leaders involved instead of giving them party tickets. Modi of course has not expressed a word of regret leave alone an apology for the 2002 genocide. Even today he flaunts Ministers involved in the killings as his closest aides. His close aide and former Minister Maya Kodnani was given a ministerial berth after the carnage in spite of her role (perhaps as a reward) in the killings in Naroda Patiya. It is only the court which has brought justice by convicting her and giving a sentence of life imprisonment.

The issues go beyond this or that political party, whether Congress or BJP and their venal justifications for the mass killings of innocents whether it be in 1984 or 2002. What is at stake is the secular character of the Republic and the right of every Indian, irrespective of religion, to live without the fear of violence and discrimination. But even today Modi and the BJP have learnt no lessons.

Post-2002: Subversion of Justice

Since 2002, governments in Gujarat under Modi have taken a minimalistic approach to rehabilitate the 70 odd colonies of approximately 5,000 families of internally displaced. Some efforts were made by a few organizations and Trusts who tried to put together the facilities and provisions with great difficulty, against the odds posed by the hostile State Government. A few state run refugee camps were closed down soon under the pretext that State does not want to run "child production factories," the humiliating insinuation being was that Muslims produce more children and are "a demographic threat to the Hindu nation."

Muslims have been pushed to the ghettos which are poor in hygiene and distant from any civic amenities. Many social facilities like banking, schools, mobile-phone services are denied to them. Even the minority scholarship scheme funded by the central Government has been rejected by the Gujarat Government and not implemented depriving thousands of Muslim students of its benefits. In fact the case is presently before the Supreme Court. Whom can an ordinary Muslim post 2002 turn to in Gujarat?

The most shameful subversion of justice took place post 2002, with the Modi Government straining every nerve to deny the victims justice by subverting the investigation into cases, appointing public prosecutors many of whom were known to be rabid supporters of the communal genocide and pressurizing the judiciary. It is only the Supreme Court of India which stepped in to prevent the total subversion of justice though even such interventions, given the extent of the crimes committed, have been inadequate.

4000 cases of violence against the minorities in Gujarat were closed by the Modi Government. It was only on the intervention of the Supreme Court that the police were forced to reopen at least half of them. In the shocking Best Bakery case 14 people who had taken shelter in the bakery were surrounded by a mob and were burnt to death. The Modi Government pressurized the witnesses into changing their statements and all the accused were acquitted. The Supreme Court had to intervene and order a retrial with the Chief Justice saying he "had no confidence" in the Gujarat Government. The case was retried and some of the criminals were convicted while others escaped due to the deliberate gaps in the investigation.

No one can move on from 2002 as is being advocated by Modi supporters, as long as the guilty, including the Chief Minister are not punished.

Terror in the name of Hindutva

Terrorists and their activities pose a grave threat to India and every citizen of India must be mobilized against them and their backers. Terrorist groups involved in such attacks must be identified and punished regardless of the group they represent or the religion they claim to defend. Although terror knows no religion it is true that terrorist groups often act in the name of religion. It is also true that Muslim fundamentalist groups in different countries have supported and backed terrorist activities against innocent people. These terrorist groups and their leaders have long had the support of the CIA and other US State agencies and played a crucial role in the US fight against what it saw as pro-Soviet regimes in different countries. Democratic and secular minded citizens across the world, including in Islamic countries have strongly condemned such terrorist groups.

After September 11, 2001 the United States of America led a global campaign to defame Islam and to identify all Muslims as terrorists. In India the BJP echoed this perverted understanding. The Pakistan

planned attack in Mumbai on November 26, 2008 only strengthened this campaign. But the utter hypocrisy of the BJP stand against terror has been exemplified by its approach to the groups led by pracharaks who swear by Hindutva.

The RSS hate agendas against Muslims in India taken to its extreme forms by its front organizations like the VHP, Bajrang Dal ,Durga Vahini etc. has also spawned terrorist groups swearing by Hindutva. The bomb blasts in Mecca Masjid, Malegaon, Ajmer Sharif, Samjhauta Express targeting Muslims have been organized and implemented by these Hindutva terrorist groups. BJP leaders had defended them, visited them in jails. Narendra Modi himself has never uttered a single word against them although he does not tire of his propaganda accusing the Central Government of running a "soft State" against terrorists.

Innocent Muslims jailed

The double standards regarding the fight against terrorists is also reflected in the arrest and victimization of Muslim youth because they are Muslims. Whether in the Malegaon case or in the Mecca Masjid case where Hindutva terrorist groups were involved in the bomb attacks, or in other cases of terrorist attacks, in the first instance it is Muslim youth who are arrested and jailed for, in some cases between ten to fifteen years as undertrials and then finally acquitted by the courts. In fact scores of such cases where Muslim youth were wrongly arrested have come to light. While both the BJP and the Congress has remained silent on this grave miscarriage of justice and the profiling and the victimization of young people only because they are Muslim, the CPI(M) has waged a campaign both inside and outside Parliament for justice to these young victims, even taking their case up to the President of India. Even though the Home Minister finally had to make a statement on the floor of parliament that in such cases compensation and rehabilitation would be done, this has not yet been implemented. Thus innocent people suffer and their lives are destroyed. (see annexure)

While the Congress is responsible for not taking a stand against such wrongful victimization, the BJP goes much further. Not only do they justify the arrests but defend encounter killings. The model for the BJP, the Modi Government has gone out of its way in a shameless defence of those in his administration who have shot people dead in staged encounters.

The Governance of Encounter Killings

There have been a large number of fake encounter killings under the Modi Government in which a large number of the victims are Muslims. Top police officers and aides of the Chief Minister including Amit Shah a former Home Minister in his Government, are the main accused in some of the cases. It is this Amit Shah, a criminal accused as a conspirator, who is out on bail in a case of cold blooded murder, who has been appointed by the BJP as the in-charge of UP.

A petition in the Supreme Court praying for an inquiry into 22 such encounters was accepted by the Supreme Court in January 2012. It ordered the Monitoring Authority led by a retired judge of the court Justice H.S.Bedi to inquire into the encounters mentioned in the petition. Justices Alam and Ranjana Prakash Desai commented " It has happened more than two times in this court. the State initially stoutly and vehemently denies it. When the matter is scratched even slightly the fact comes to light and then the State Government admits it is a fake encounter."

The court was referring to the cases of Sohrabuddin and Tulsi Ram Prajapati. Both of them along with Sohrabuddin's wife Kausar Bi were cold bloodedly shot dead by the Gujarat police led by the then top officer, Vanzara and other senior police officers. Sohrabuddin was reportedly eliminated because of his blackmailing and demands for money from BJP funders in the marble trade. Others accused are Amit Shah who reportedly tried to destroy the evidence and Rajasthan's former Home Minister Gulab Chand Kataria.

The most shocking details are emerging in the ongoing case of the brutal encounter killing of Ishrat Jahan and three others. The CBI chargesheet squarely describes the killings as a fake encounter and cold blooded murder of four persons including Ishrat Jahan who were actually in their custody. The investigations point to a top level conspiracy to project a so-called terrorist threat against Modi when the police officers concerned knew it to be entirely false. Subsequently just like in the Sohrabuddin case, the successor to Amit Shah in the Modi Government, Praful Patel called a meeting to discuss ways to sabotage the probe into the fake encounter. All this forms part of the record being placed by the CBI in the court.

It is hardly surprising that there should be so many such killings because the Chief Minister himself had in an election rally in 2007

stated that Sohrabuddin “got what he deserved” —a clear message of encouragement for illegal killings.

Encounter killings have become an acceptable form of Governance under Modi.

Gujarat Model = Pro Corporate Model

The Gujarat Model of development has been cited by the BJP and its supporters as an example for India. Gujarat is among the top six States as far as State Domestic product is concerned. Gujarat is also among the States which has attracted investment in the manufacturing sector and has the highest share of GSDP in manufacturing among all States in capital intensive sectors. But this is far less than the tall claims of investments made after the “Vibrant Gujarat” summits. Much of it is hot air. As analysed by a biographer of Modi, only 3.2 per cent of the 2009 claims of investments has materialized on the ground. Of the 2011 claim, a mere 0.5 per cent is real.

In any case, how has high growth and increased corporate investment translated for the poor in Gujarat, for the worker and peasant and the common citizen?

Social Inequalities

There are higher malnutrition levels in Gujarat compared to other States including Uttar Pradesh. Child malnutrition levels in Gujarat are the same as in Chattisgarh and Orissa. A recent UNICEF report states that “almost every second child in Gujarat is malnourished and three of four are anemic. One mother in three in Gujarat struggles with acute under-nutrition”. According to the Government of India’s Children in India report (2012) infant mortality rates considered one of the basic indicators for social advance, is high in Gujarat at 44 per every 1000, giving it a low rank of 11 among States. The Chief Minister’s insensitive statement that this is because women in Gujarat diet, reflects contempt for the poor and the working classes in “Vibrant Gujarat”.

While the vibrant Gujarat summit showcases infrastructural development as being a priority, Gujarat has a very poor record in infrastructure for the poor. The vast majority of the rural population is

denied sanitation and water facilities with 67 per cent having no access to toilets, only 16.7 per cent have safe drinking water.

In social terms the Gujarat model has been discriminatory against dalits, adivasis and women. The adivasi areas for example have seen no development with all social indicators showing the discrimination against these sections. The recent Planning Commission review of educational and health facilities shows up the failure of the Modi Government on both these spheres. UNDP statistics show that Gujarat ranks 18th when it comes to success in keeping children in school. The Gujarat gross enrolment ratio in higher secondary schools was three percentage points lower than the national average of 39.3 per cent. The Gujarat school drop out ratio for SC/ST of 57.9 per cent was much higher than the national average of 49.3 per cent which in any case is shamefully high.

The most shocking example of the skewed social approach in this model of Governance is the high incidence of female foeticide and the consequent continually poor sex ratios. Gujarat's sex ratios worsened in this decade from 921 in 2001 to 918 women for every 1000 men. The child sex ratios (0-6 years) though slightly better than ten years ago are still shocking at just 886 in 2011 according to the Census 2011.

Jobless Growth and Low Wages

In economic terms, just as at the all India level the Congress led UPA Government has boasted of high growth rates as a measure of its success, so also does the Modi led Gujarat Government. It is true that Modi has pushed corporate reform policies much faster than UPA. In spite of its urgent desire to do away with labour reform and labour rights, the UPA can only do it incrementally while the Modi Government with its outright majority has virtually banned all trade union activity in its manufacturing special zone areas.

Inequality in Gujarat among the poor and the rich is therefore among the highest in the country. According to Planning Commission, per capita income of Gujarat in 2010-11 stands at 8th place among top states. It can be said that the per capita has increased faster than in any other state, but the inequalities have also increased. The NSSO data provides the reality: In high growth Gujarat, the quality of employment is mainly in the informal sector with 89 per cent men workers and 98 per cent women workers in the unorganized sector with no guaranteed minimum wage or protective legislation. As far as

women are concerned the percentage is higher than two percentage points compared to the all India figure which is 96 per cent of women in the informal sector. Thus the vibrant Gujarat summits have not changed the quality of employment and life for the state's working people. Moreover just as the UPA promotes pro-corporate jobless growth, so also in Gujarat, data shows that in the last decade employment has dropped to almost zero in Gujarat.

As far as wage rates are concerned, Gujarat ranks low in the all India index for 20 major States. For casual rural male workers it ranks 14th who earned on an average just 69 rupees a day. For women it ranked 9th with rural casual women workers earning just 56 rupees on average. For regular rural workers Gujarat had a low in the rankings at 17th position, (Rs. 152 for men) and 9th position for women (Rs. 108)

For urban casual workers, the State was in the 7th position with men earning a wage of 108 rupees and it was in the 14th position for women. For regular male workers in urban areas the position was even worse at 18th (Rs. 205) and for women 13th (Rs. 182).

The BJP has boasted that in Gujarat there have been no suicide deaths of farmers. According to RTI gleaned information shockingly between August and December 2012, there were 40 farmer suicides. These were in the main suicides by debt ridden farmers in the Saurashtra region. The main thrust of Modi's policies like the UPA is to encourage corporate farming and cater to the big farmer lobby ignoring the interests of small and marginal farmers.

Generosity for Corporates

But for corporates the Gujarat model is generosity personified. If India's top industrialists sing Modi's praises it is not for nothing. Huge tracts of land which should have been distributed to the landless, have been given over to corporates at throw away prices — an example of robbing the common people of Gujarat to help the corporates. This includes forest land. But at the same time the Forest Rights Act is blatantly violated. Gujarat has the worst record in implementation of the Act. As many as 1.20 lakh claims of tribals for land pattas was rejected arbitrarily by the Government. On May 3, the Gujarat High Court accepted a petition and ordered that all these cases should be reconsidered.

Currently there is a big kisan movement against the forcible acquisition of 55,000 acres of land in the Bahucharaji area for the

Special Investment Region to help corporates get land at low prices. In spite of opposition, Maruti Suzuki has already been given 750 hectares.

The compensation package is shamefully against the interests of the farmers and people of the area and much worse than even that suggested in the UPA government's pending Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill. For example there is no consent taken from farmers, leave alone the 80 per cent consent required under the proposed law. It may be recalled that in Singur there was over 90 per cent consent for the project. Also there is no compensation at all for tenants and agricultural workers, unlike the packages suggested by the then Left Front Government in West Bengal. In all these cases, for the Gujarat Government the issue of consent or fair compensation does not at all arise. The land is acquired forcibly for corporates.

Here are some examples:

According to the CAG, Modi's Govt. has bestowed around Rs 1275 crore rupees in dubious ways to benefit the corporate sector for the fiscal 2011-2012. The CAG report, which was recently submitted to the state assembly, says the chief gainers of Modi's generosity are the Adani, Essar, Reliance, Larson & Toubro among others. It is the double standards of the BJP that it has used its majority to virtually suppress the report.

According to the CAG report, the Adani group violated the agreement that was arrived at between the Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam and the Adani Power Limited Company. The Adanis were required to pay Rs 240.08 crore as fine. However, the Adanis paid Rs 80.82 crore only and were exempted from paying the rest about Rs 160 crore. This is the same company which was given huge amount of land along the coast at paltry rates ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 32 a square metre when the market rate was over Rs. 1,500 a square metre. The Adani group got the land for industrial use and port development, but it sold/leased out a significant portion of it to other corporate groups, flouting norms. Leasing out or selling such acquired land is illegal according to the purchase deed.

At Hajira, the Essar Steel Company encroached upon 7,24,687 square metres of land, which was clearly an illegal act. But Modi's generosity gave that land to the Essar group at a special, concessional rate. The state government lost Rs 238.50 crore.

The Modi government allotted land to the Larsen & Toubro company for a nuclear power plant, at a concessional rate, whereby the state exchequer lost a sum of Rs 128.71 crore. As per the rules, it is the evaluation committee of the Revenue Department of Gujarat that should have estimated the value of this land but in actual practice the valuation was done by the district level evaluation committee. The company was, moreover, allotted some land in Baroda district, whereby it benefited to the tune of Rs 79.77 lakh.

Similarly Nirma SEZ was allotted 268 hectares to build a cement plant in Mahua. The Modi Government wrongly classified the acquired land as "wasteland" when in fact it was being cultivated as also used as gauchar (grazing) land. 15000 people were deprived of their livelihoods.

The Tatas shifted their Nano project to Gujarat. 1100 acres were given at a throwaway price of just 900 rupees a sq metre when the market price was 10,000 rupees a sq metre. A huge loan at the rate of 0.01% has been given from the State exchequer. In economic terms analysts have calculated that each car rolling out from Tata factory will have the subsidy of 60,000 rupees.

Modi claims that 'good compensation' has been given to the farmers whose land is acquired for industrial purposes. The fact is that in villages near the cities, where real estate prices have shot up, Modi was forced to give the farmers a good deal. But Modi has used force along with emergency powers of the state government to acquire land in the hinterland and in coastal regions to develop big industrial zones. The new industrial policy which was announced in 2003 without any public consultation makes it easier for the government to change the classification of land so that it can be acquired, and also gives unprecedented authority to the District Collector to invoke emergency powers.

This kind of industrial development also induces displacement with women, dalits and Adivasis being the major victims of this displacement. It causes joblessness, homelessness, deprivations, marginalization and social fragmentation.

Cases of Corruption: The case of Geo Global

The BJP's campaign against corruption rings hollow. Only recently a senior Minister of the Modi Government, Babu Bokhiria was convicted

by a Porbandar court in the 54 crore illegal limestone mining case of 2006. But the “clean” Chief Minister Modi has retained him in the Cabinet. When the BJP held up Parliament demanding the resignation of Pawan Kumar Bansal because of the charges of corruption, its “most popular” leader was extending patronage to a man convicted of corruption.

But the hypocrisy does not end there.

The Chief Minister’s office itself has been involved in a number of scams. The CAG made a damning indictment of an agreement reached between a company called Geo Global and the State PSU GSPC. Without any tenders the Geo Global, a dubious company registered in the Barbados, a self confessed novice in gas exploration was given a 10 per cent share in an expansive gas field worth billions of dollars. Within days of signing this agreement Geo Global transferred 50 per cent of its shares to another shell company in Mauritius. As the CAG report points out, this company had no expertise nor funds and in fact the GSPC had to hire another expert at its own cost to do the work Geo Global was supposed to have done. At the time of incorporation its value was barely a cent for a single share. By 2008, within five years after the agreement it went up to a high of 14.92 US dollars.

There are other examples of such scandals. The charge against the UPA Government of allowing the loot and plunder of India’s natural resources is equally valid for the BJP. They are two corrupted sides of the same coin. This is a huge scandal but the Gujarat Government has managed to keep it suppressed perhaps because the main opposition in Gujarat, the Congress follows the same policies.

Need for An Alternative Policy Platform

The Gujarat model is little different in its basic framework from the UPA Government’s commitment to neo-liberal policies. The only difference is that with his brute majority Modi could do away with even any pretense of social sector policies to promote inclusive growth.

The current political discussions in the mainstream media do not look at policy alternatives but only leadership alternatives. In fact what the country requires is a policy based alternative platform which puts people before corporates and defends unequivocally the secular principles of unity and defence of minority rights, without which India can never be vibrant.

At the same time the UPA Government and the Congress in particular has utterly failed to confront the communal agenda of the BJP and the RSS spawned front organisations. Even today the legislation against communalism is in cold storage. The CPI(M) and the Left parties had suggested certain important amendments to the present draft. But in the face of an offensive by the communal forces against any legislation, the Congress leadership has refused to prioritise the passage of the Bill thus betraying the promise it had made. In states where the Congress is ruling like in Rajasthan and Maharashtra for example, the Congress has refused to take action against those in the administration and police forces who have connived in communal attacks. Most importantly, it has done little to help the victims of Gujarat, not even in the cases pending in the Supreme Court.

The thoroughly opportunist stand of the Congress leadership in politically confronting the communal forces makes it clear that it cannot be depended upon to take a sustained and strong stand against communalism.

**Text of the Letter Addressed to the President of India
by Com. Prakash Karat
Regarding unlawful confinement of Muslim Youth**

November 17, 2012

**The President of India
Rashtrapati Bhawan
New Delhi**

Dear Rashtrapati ji,

I write to draw your attention to the grave miscarriage of justice to scores of Muslim youth who were and are being wrongly arrested and charged in cases related to terror attacks in different parts of the country. In some cases these young men have been incarcerated for ten to fourteen years as undertrials and then finally acquitted by the courts as being innocent. Several reliable groups of concerned citizens and organizations who have collected the details of these cases, have revealed how the court judgements themselves have strongly indicted the investigation agencies for the biased mentality against the Muslim youth and in several cases the manipulation and presentation of concocted evidence against innocent young men. It would appear that the investigation agencies are more driven by the requirement to show "results" in their investigation rather than to ensure that it is the actual culprits who are caught.

Muslim youth are the most vulnerable targets today. The draconian provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act are used to deny the normal processes of justice, while there is no time bound procedure for the judicial processes. There is a growing feeling of fear and apprehension on the one hand and anger on the other that innocents are being implicated. Young lives have been destroyed, families stricken, forced into social isolation, driven into debt to pay the huge expenditures in legal fees—the terrible conditions caused by State led injustice.

As an illustration, the cases of the four young men Md. Aamir from Delhi, Syed Maqbool from Srinagar, Wasif Haider and Mumtaz Ahmed from Uttar Pradesh are presented before you. They were arrested arbitrarily when they were just eighteen or nineteen years of age, implicated in dozens of cases, incarcerated for over ten years and each one of them was, as held by the courts, innocent. They are today

without jobs, considered unemployable, with dark and uncertain futures.

While no quarter can be given to any individual or group which is responsible for dastardly terror attacks, the arrest of innocent Muslim youth has reached serious dimensions which requires immediate attention. It is a blot on the principles of secular democracy. At the same time, the arrest of innocent people means that the actual culprits go free. There are three aspects, which require to be looked at:

1. Compensation to and rehabilitation of the innocents. While in some cases, with the intervention of the Minority Rights Commission and other agencies, some monetary compensation may have been given in a few cases, by and large most of the victims of State injustice are in a terrible condition. It is essential to ensure justice by providing compensation as well as the means towards a livelihood through provision of employment or any other avenue suggested by the victim.

2. The provision of Special Courts with time bound procedures is essential so as to end the sometimes deliberate prolonging of the cases. All such cases should be settled in a year.

3. In cases where the Court has held that evidence has been concocted or misrepresented by the investigating agencies to implicate innocents, action must be taken against those responsible. This will act as a deterrent in the deliberate implication of innocents.

We believe also that the draconian provisions in the UAPA must be reconsidered. At the time of the passage of the Bill in Parliament the CPI(M) had warned of the consequences of keeping such provisions on the Statute book akin to TADA and POTA. Experience has shown the legitimacy of the apprehensions expressed at that time.

We request you to take up these issues urgently with the Government of India. We also enclose relevant information and documents with further details.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Prakash Karat
(General Secretary)

Annexure-II

Examples of some of the cases of acquittal and discharge of youth wrongfully charged and incarcerated

01. Mohd Marouf Qaamar (Delhi) ...Acquitted on 11.11.2008, Tis Hazari Court Delhi
02. Tariq Ahmad Dar (Kashmir)
Discharge 2006 Case of Tis Hazari Court, Delhi
03. Tasleem (Muradabad – UP)
Discharge – Release on 1998, Tis Hazari Court No. 19, Delhi Case
04. Najeem (Muradabad – UP)
Discharge – Release on 1998, Tis Hazari Court No. 19, Delhi Case
05. Shamim Akhtar (Kolkata)
Discharge – Release on 1998, Tis Hazari Court No. 19, Delhi Case
06. Syed Maqbool Shah (Kashmir)
Acquitted on 08.04.2010, Patiala House Court, New Delhi Case
07. Mohd Aamir Khan (Delhi) Acquitted - 17 Cases (Delhi & NCR), Release on: 09.01.2012
08. Haroon Rashid (Bihar) Acquitted on Jan – 2010, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi Case
09. Dilawar Khan (Orissa) Acquit on Jan – 2010, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi Case
10. Salman Khurshid Kori (Manipur)
Acquitted on 14.12.2011, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi Case
11. Syed Mubarak (Sitapuri – UP)
AcquittedCase of Bareilly Dist Court – UP

12. Abdul Mubeen (Sidhard Nagar) AcquittedCase of Agra Dist Court – UP
13. Ghulam Mohd (Kanpur) Acquitted on 12.08.2009, Case of Kanpur City – UP
14. Sajjad-ul-Thman, (Kishtuwar) Discharge on 14.04.2011, Case of Lucknow – UP.
15. Mumtaz Ahmad (Sopur) Acquitted on 06.08.2003 Case of GRP – Kanpur, UP.
16. Faheem Ansari (Maharashtra) Acquitted case of Mumbai, 26.11.2008, Session Court & Supreme Court
17. Saba uddin (UP) Acquitted Case of Mumbai, 26.11.2008, Session Court to Supreme Court!
18. Jogeshvari Rly st Case 2 Persons Acquitted Mumbai Maharashtra Case
19. Tilak Nagar Rly st Case 2 Persons discharge & 2 Acquitted. Case of Mumbai, Maharashtra
20. Ghaat – Kopar 2003 Case 9 Persons Acquitted, Case of Mumbai, Maharashtra
21. Gateway of India Case 2 Persons Acquitted, Case of Mumbai, Maharashtra
22. Rehmana Farooqui Acquitted by Delhi High Court in 2007 in 2000 Red Fort Case.

July 2013