

**Hindu jago
Christy bhago !**

Violence in Gujarat

test case for a larger fundamentalist agenda



**Report of the Citizen's Commission
on persecution of Christians in Gujarat**

an initiative of the **NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WOMEN**

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Report prepared by
Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy

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This report is dedicated to
the people of the Dangs with
the hope that the times will
change for the better.... that
they may be allowed to live in
peace and dignity on the land
that has sustained their life
in frugal simplicity.

Foreword

We have entered a period of re-emergence of communalism, which has been afflicting the Indian social fabric with great severity and cannot be dismissed as sporadic outbreaks of localised tensions between communities. Early November 1998 saw a spate of attacks on Christian Minorities in different parts of Gujarat. The events ranged from burning of Bibles in Rajkot, to digging up of graves in Nadiad leading to a situation of national concern.

The build-up of violence in the Dang's district from Christmas eve ('98) onwards and its continuation till New Year caused deep anguish to Christians all over the country. It further increased the sense of insecurity and alienation that several minorities had been feeling in the face of growing fundamentalism.

Instead of bringing the situation under control, the government began dismissing these occurrences as 'sporadic & localised' events, and further enhancing the sense of anguish by saying that huts & not churches were being burnt in Gujarat.

This refusal of the authorities in recognising the magnitude of the violence and its hidden agenda, is condemnable by any standard. It therefore did not come as a surprise when suddenly the focus of the problem was diverted and a national debate on 'conversions' was felt necessary to resolve the issue.

The continuing denial of the Gujarat Government of the seriousness of the communal situation prevailing in the State and the persistent confrontationist posture of the VHP, Hindu Jagran Manch and other associate groups, necessitated the setting up of a national level citizen's commission, to visit these areas and conduct an independent inquiry into the matter.

By instituting an inquiry into the Dangs violence, we were reiterating once again our commitment to addressing concerns of different marginalised and disadvantaged sections. The National Alliance of Women as many are aware is a coalition of regional women's groups and organisations. NAWO women have taken a strong stand on the criminalization of politics and the politicisation of crime; we have a vision of working towards a just, democratic and humane society and 'peace' is our foremost agenda. The vision of NAWO thus vests us with a responsibility to address peace concerns and work towards conflict resolution in areas of caste and communal strife.

At Dangs we have witnessed distortion of facts. We have seen the outbursts of communal frenzy. It has left deep wounds on people whose rights have been violated. The poor unarmed tribals were subjected to intimidation and violence by large mobs. These attacks occurred broadly on account of total passivity, callousness and indifference of the police, and the administration in controlling the situation and protecting the vulnerable communities. Attacks on minorities were preceded by sustained rumour campaigns raising the bogie of conversion of tribals and a hate-propaganda against missionaries. The violence continued with impunity even while senior officers were present in the Dangs, including senior ministers of the State Government and others. All these facts are documented and borne out in our findings.

We hope the findings and the recommendations of the Citizen's Commission will expose the myths that were created to camouflage the persecution of Christians in Gujarat. Building genuine religious tolerance among people is crucial for preserving peace and democracy in the country. We believe that the protection of places of worship, sacred places and the specific cultural identity of all religious communities is a crucial responsibility of the Government at the state and central level.

On behalf of the National Alliance of Women we would like to record our appreciation and gratitude to

- Justice H Suresh, former Judge of Bombay High Court who kindly consented to be the Chairperson of the Citizen's Commission and guided the independent inquiry with his wisdom, experience and expertise on legal matters.
- This document would be incomplete without a special word of thanks to Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy for painstaking and meticulously preparing the final report of Citizen's Commission.
- Kirit Bhai Bhatt former Resident Editor, the Indian Express, Ahmedabad and Member of People's Union for Civil Liberties-PUCL, Ms. Rithambara Shastri, Senior Correspondent, United News of India News Agency, New Delhi. Ashim Roy, Trade Unionist and Member of PUCL, Ahmedabad, Sheba George, NAWO, Ahmedabad and Ms. Sofia Khan, Advocate, Ahmedabad for their commitment and support.
- We thank the staff and Director of SANCHETANA for helping us locally in organising the inquiry and providing all logistical support. The Movement for Democracy, who were responsible in organising our Gujarat meeting soon after the Dangs visit. Mr. John Dayal, spokesperson of all India United Christian Forum for Human Rights, Fr. Cedrick Prakash, who gave us access to different documents. Fr. Francis, New Delhi translating all available documents from Gujarati to English, and various local leaders of Hindu Jagran Manch, Social Activists and victims who have deposed before the inquiry. We also want to thank Ms. Anuradha Chenoy who has spent time and energy in shouldering the responsibility with Kamal Chenoy in compiling the report. Nasreen Faiyaz, our colleague at the NAWO Secretariat at New Delhi for her effort in organising the Citizen's Commission also for taking on the laborious task of printing.

NAWO places this report in your hands with the faith and hope that as responsible citizens of this country we will all work towards achieving peace for "Peace is not a choice but an imperative".

**Ruth Manorama
Sheba George**

Acknowledgement

The National Alliance of Women is deeply indebted to the people of Dangs for responding with patience and simple truth to the queries and investigations of the Citizen's Commission.

We also thank eminent members of the Christian community for their time and endurance in putting up several times over with different people / groups who must have visited them to investigate on the incidences of violence in Gujarat in the past one year.

We also wish to acknowledge all those Gujarat State officials, administrators and others who made available facts & figures to help the Commission with its investigation proceedings.

As always in an enquiry as sensitive as the present one, we place on record gratitude to a host of persons whom we interacted with for their all out solidarity and support and who do not wish to be named.

In the end it is our foremost duty to place a vote of special thanks to the director and members of the SANCHETANA team at Ahmedabad for the concern and commitment with which each one of them facilitated the work of the Citizen's Commission.

When we look back at the whole event of our investigation into the Dangs violence, we feel reassured that inspite of the sense of distress that one experiences at the state of politics in our country, we do still have the backup of a strong civil society that will, inspite of all adverse conditions, hold up the credentials of a secular, democratic and just social order.

Members of the Citizen's Commission

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Former Judge of the Bombay High Court, & Chairperson of the Commission

Ms. Ruth Manorama

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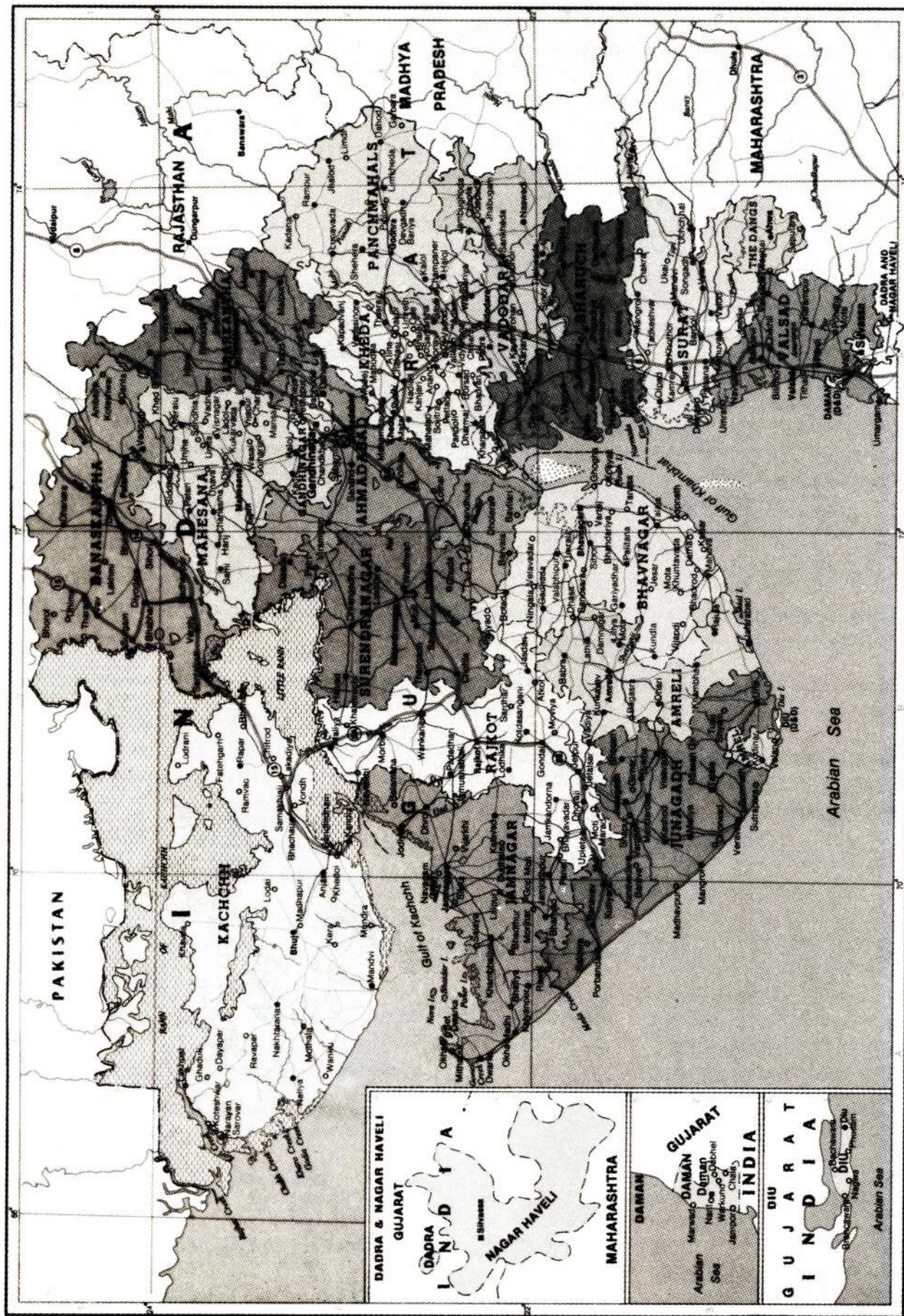
Ms. Sofia Khan

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SANCHETANA, Ahmedabad

Terms of Reference of Investigation for the CITIZEN'S COMMISSION

- In the wake of the continuing denial of the Gujarat Government of the seriousness of the communal situation prevailing in the State and the continued confrontationist posture of the VHP, the Hindu Jagran Manch & other associate groups/organisations, it becomes necessary that a national level citizen's team conduct an inquiry/investigation of the areas affected by violence in Gujarat.
- The National Alliance of Women, which is a coalition of regional/state level women's groups has been addressing peace concerns & working actively towards conflict resolution in areas of caste/communal strife. It is in keeping with this mandate that we have initiated and constituted this Citizen's Commission to conduct an on the spot investigation in Gujarat.
- Verification of the escalation of communal tensions due to the presence of Hindu missionaries in some areas of Gujarat also requires a feedback from local people of the area. This opens up the question of 'reconversion' of the tribal population by stated Hindu missionaries. (Unnai? Swami Aseemananda)
- The role of the regional Gujarat Press in kindling and abetting communal discord should also be examined in some detail with the aim of spelling out the code for objective and fair reporting specially on sensitive issues
- It is also the express purpose of the Citizen's Commission to examine in some detail violation of human rights of the minority group in question.
- To review the role of the Union government and its powers to protect citizen's basic fundamental rights.
- There is anguish and a state of fear in minority communities and their confidence in the secular nature of the state needs to be reinstalled in order that they live & contribute to the national cause as equal citizens.



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VIOLENCE IN GUJARAT

Report of the Citizen's Commission

Introduction

Concerned at the escalating violence in Gujarat, the National Alliance of Women [NAWO] constituted a national citizen's team to inquire into the series of attacks on the Christian community in Dangs district., Gujarat. The members of the Citizen's Commission were: Justice H. Suresh [former Judge of the Bombay High Court, & Chairperson of the Commission], Ms. Ruth Manorama [President, NAWO], Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy [Associate Professor in Comparative & Indian Politics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi], Kiritbhai Bhatt [former Resident Editor, The Indian Express, Ahmedabad & prominent member, People's Union for Civil Liberties [PUCL], Ms. Rithambara Shastri [Senior Correspondent, United News of India news agency, New Delhi], and Ashim Roy [trade unionist & member, PUCL, Ahmedabad]. Ms. Sheba George [NAWO, Ahmedabad] and Ms. Sofia Khan [Advocate, Ahmedabad], were associates who assisted the Commission.

The Citizen's Commission visited Dangs district on January 11 and 12, 1999, basing itself in Ahwa, the district capital. On January 12th, while some of the members of the team led by Justice Suresh set themselves to interact with Gujarat Government officials, Sangh Parivar leaders and others in Ahwa, another set of the members led by Ruth Manorama went to some of the interior villages of Ahwa, to interview the community affected by the violence.

The Commission sent Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy for a follow up visit to Dangs district two months later. Dr. Chenoy revisited a number of villages in Dangs on March 12, 13 and 14, 1999, and collected further evidence of the administrative and political action as well as the events that had taken place after the team's first visit January 1999.

Procedure

Due to the short period the entire team could only move in the Dangs district, between January 11 and 12, 1999, due to the difficult terrain and the distances involved, we were unable to have previously announced and scheduled sittings where witnesses could present themselves. Instead members of the team accompanied by social activists interviewed witnesses at their place of residence or work. After recording the witnesses' evidence, they were questioned to ascertain the veracity of their submissions. The deposition by a number of witnesses was videoed. We ourselves asked several questions to elicit correct information. The evidence of leaders of the Hindu Jagran Manch and other active anti-Church groups was also taken, and cross-checked against that given by the victims. Almost all had earlier given evidence to official sources. In some cases, their earlier statements in the form of complaints are already on record and they have tendered copies of these documents to us. State officials were also examined, as also official documents pertaining to the issue on hand.

Moreover, the evidence was recorded in an atmosphere where there was no fear or favour. It was made clear to all that this was an independent, non-partisan committee [tribunal/commission/], in front of which witnesses could speak frankly without fear of retribution. Many of the social activists and others who visited the scenes of the incidents, had their contemporaneous reports which supported their statements before us. In some cases, the audio and video tapes, vindicated the veracity of the version given by the witnesses.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

INTRODUCTION

Profile of the Dangs District

The 1,778 sq. km. Dangs district situated in south-east Gujarat, is almost completely covered by forest which accounts for nearly 95 per cent of its area. The total area under forests is 1760 sq. kms. of which reserved forests occupy 936 sq. kms. and protected forests 824 sq. kms. The tribals are allowed to make use of the protected forest lands for cultivation and residence. The tribal population is 1,35,376 of the total Dangs district population of 1,44,091 [1991 Census]. The main tribes in the region are the Bhils [32%], Koknas (Kunbi) [45%] and Warli [14%], with Chaudhuris, Kotwalias, Kathudiyas and Gamits scattered in the district's 311 villages. The district is comparatively sparsely populated with a density of population of only 64 per sq. km. The tribals are dependent on the forest for their existence. Their main source of income is from agriculture and minor produce. The vast majority of the working population, 88.31 per cent, depend on agriculture or agriculture-related work. Because of the area under reserved forests increasing and a growing population, a large portion of the tribal population migrates for six to eight months a year in search of employment to Bardoli, Vyara, Surat and other districts to cut sugarcane for the factories.

The population of Dangs rose from 1,13,664 [1981 Census] to 1,44,091 [1991 Census]. The Hindu population rose from 1,10,522 to 1,33,828 during this period, while that of the Christians increased from 1,514 to 7,824. Thus while the overall growth of population in the district was 27 per cent, that of the Hindus was 21 per cent while that of the Christians was 416 per cent. The statistically exponential growth rate in the Christian community is because of the expansion of a comparatively small base. In absolute terms, the Hindu population increased by 23,306 people, while that of the Christians by 6,310. The share of the Hindu population declined from 97.24 per cent in 1981 to 92.88 in 1991, whereas that of the Christians rose from 1.33 per cent to 5.43 per cent.

In respect of the overall growth rate of population in Gujarat during the decade, the growth of the Christian population has been considered statistically significant. The increase of the Christians in other tribal dominated districts in south Gujarat was 120 per cent in Surat, 66 in Broach, 53 in Bulsar and 46 in Baroda, all above the state's average of 21 per cent. All these statistically high growth rates are similarly caused by the expansion on a relatively tiny base. The absolute increase in numbers is not large. This relatively high increase in the Christian population has been attributed as evidence of large scale conversions; so-called "forced conversions" by the Christian missionaries.

However, these relative growth rates are also misleading because they do not reflect the overall trends in the proportion of Christians in Gujarat's total population since the 1951 Census. In 1951, Christians were 0.48% of Gujarat's total population. In 1961, this proportion declined to 0.44%, further declining to 0.41% in 1971, and to a low of 0.37% in the 1981 Census. The proportion of Christians in Gujarat's population in the 1991 Census which rose to 0.44%, was still **below** the proportion that Christians constituted in Gujarat in 1951, and equal to that measured in the 1961 Census.

Background to recent attacks on Christians

The recent spate of attacks on Christians and their institutions in Dangs starting on Christmas day 1998, are the culmination of earlier attacks which began more than a year back. These appear to have been fuelled by the reported hostility of important State government functionaries. The Gujarati and English newspapers repeatedly highlighted statements by Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel and Home

Minister Haren Pandya accusing Christian missionaries of 'forcible' conversions. Gujarati newspapers like 'Gujarat Samachar', 'Nav Gujarat' and 'Sandesh' consistently played up such allegations and generally carried reports hostile to the local Christian community. A senior government official in Dangs, (who spoke to the Commission on condition of anonymity), characterised the role of this section of the Gujarati press as 'yellow journalism'.

In November 1997, more than a year before the latest round of anti-Christian activity, major incidents of open animosity against Christians had been taking place. On November 13, 1997, in Umerpada village 24 Christian tribals were harassed by police inspector G.M. Damor on the basis of a false complaint allegedly made by a local VHP activist Kalu Chhibadia Gangurde. On November 25, 1997, in Kudkas village evangelist Premchand Gamit who was cycling home after a prayer meeting at 11 p.m. was beaten by the local police Patel. Later Premchand Gamit and other adivasi Christians in Kudkas were allegedly harassed by inspector Damor.

On December 25, 1997, the VHP organised a rally against the Christian community at Pipalwada village bordering Dangs district. This was part of a series of anti-Christian rallies organised by the Hindu Jagran Manch, VHP and Bajrang Dal in different taluks of Surat, Dangs, Valsad and Baruch districts of South Gujarat. On December 26, 1997, the night after Christmas, Christians celebrating the festival in Dagadpada village were stoned and harassed all night. On the basis of a false complaint, innocent Christians were arrested by inspector Damor and sent to jail. On February 20, 1998, the Christians praying in their prayer hall in Divan Temrun village were attacked at 8 p.m. by a group led by the police Patel Ramesh Avasu, and Suresh Avasu. Christians were beaten up with police sticks. On May 28, 1998, the Gujarat Samachar [Gujarati language daily] published a false but inflammatory report that adivasi Christians in Jhalsol village had butchered and eaten a cow. A false complaint was lodged, and Christians were taken into police custody by Inspector Damor.

In June 1998, anti-Christian pamphlets vilifying Jesus Christ and the Christian community were widely distributed in Dangs district. One printed pamphlet collected by the Commission, signed by Ramesh Balya Choudhari, the Sarpanch of Don Group Gram Panchayat, on behalf of the Hindu Jagran Manch, called on Hindus to join a mammoth rally on June 29th at 11 A.M. from Patilwada, Ahwa to submit a memorandum to the Collector. Ramesh Choudhari is also the President of the Dangs district, BJP. The pamphlet claimed that conversions by the Christians was the most burning problem in the district. It alleged that the innocent and illiterate adivasis were converted through deceit and monetary allurements. Under the pretext of providing services, the missionaries who were dubbed 'devils' were accused of exploiting the adivasis. The pamphlet claimed that the world over, Christian missionaries have looted the people and rendered them helpless. Missionaries were accused of teaching their converts to steal and lie in the name of religion. It accused the Christian adivasis of condemning Hinduism, while claiming to be Hindus in order to obtain facilities offered to Scheduled Tribes. It called upon Hindus to awake and join the continuing struggle against the missionaries whom it called 'robbers' who were snatching away adivasis' rights by deceit, and exhorted Hindus to teach them a lesson. Along with Choudhari, it is widely reported that Sampat Vadu, Sarpanch of Morizira Group Gram Panchayat, Dasharath Pawar of Pipaldahad village, Pradeep Sambhaji Patil leader of the Bajrang Dal and Bakul Tandel, a Vishva Hindu Parishad activist of Ahwa, also printed and distributed these pamphlets.

Thereafter, a series of attacks on churches and prayer halls in the district took place. On June 21, 1998, a church was attacked and burnt in Singhana village late at night. On June 26th at about 8.30 p.m., the church in Lahankadmal village was burnt. On June 29th the prayer hall in Umerpada was attacked but the assailants failed to set it on fire. The same day, the HJM held its earlier announced rally in Ahwa for which the mobilisation was through the anti-Christian propaganda spread through pamphlets cited earlier. According to Rev. T.V. Gaikwad, District Superintendent of the CNI, the largely

attended rally was marked by slanderous speeches denigrating Christian missionaries and their activities in Dangs, which further incited anti-Christian feelings.

On July 7th, when the Christians gathered for Sunday worship in the church in Dhavlijod the village Patel Baburao Gavit allegedly rushed in brandishing a bottle and threatened them. Later the church's lock was broken and its cross removed. On July 18th, a prayer hall [which had replaced an older one which was burnt earlier] was burnt in Bhapkal village, and local Christians were allegedly harassed by Bansha Bapu Pawar of the same village. On July 23rd night in Borkhal village, Christian adivasis houses were stoned by Hindu Jagran Manch activists. The same day in Payargodi, a Christian Sukar Bhai Gamit was attacked. On July 26th in Padalkhadi village, the local revenue official or thalathi Kalu Mana Gaikwad together with some fifteen local Hindutva activists allegedly attacked and injured adivasis who were at prayer late at night in the prayer hall. The adivasis were beaten up with sticks and later false cases were filed against them.

On July 24th July, in the vicinity of Darapada village, Ramesh Balya Choudhari of the HJM, district president of the BJP and sarpanch of Don, along with Dashrath Pawar addressed a rally attended by people carrying BD banners. The speakers called upon the tribals to leave Christianity and to rejoin the Hindu faith. Later on July 27th afternoon, a group of 13 people came to an adivasi Christian Ulus Ramji Pawar's house in Darapada village when prayers were going on and allegedly threatened the Christians present. Pawar was reportedly warned of dire consequences for hosting the prayers. One Christian sevak's cycle was removed by the group and thrown away. The same day Ulus Pawar and 10 others went to the Waghai police post and registered a complaint. Another representation was given at the Ahwa police station. Later the same night, Pawar was attacked and killed allegedly by Dinesh Nana Bhoje of Darpada and 12 others. According to eyewitness accounts given to the Commission on March 13th, Pawar disappeared on his way back home at around 9.30 p.m. on the 27th July night. His body was found hanging from a nearby 'Amba' tree around 5.30 a.m. the next morning. His family members and neighbours claim that the body was partly resting on the ground, and that there were no scuff marks or disturbed soil near the feet, indicating that Pawar had been strung up from the tree after he was killed. The body was apparently photographed in this position, with the feet resting on the ground. These photographs which were taken by the police based in Waghai, were allegedly later suppressed. Rev. Gaikwad who went to the spot on July 28th has confirmed this information. The police at the Waghai police outpost however, refused to register a murder case and claim that Pawar committed suicide because of an unrequited love affair.

The Commission feels this matter should be reinvestigated as repeatedly requested by Pawar's widow. Thus contrary to repeated and largely uncontested official claims, at least this one fatality in the Christian community may have occurred in the course of the anti-Christian campaign. But the official campaign may also explain the local police's determination not to reopen this case as reiterated in DSP Manoj Sashidhar's letter to Pawar's widow on February 22, 1999.

On August 30th, in Morjira village, five Christians were allegedly beaten up by the Sarpanch Sampath Bhai. [Sampath Bhai was later suspended for his involvement in the Christmas day, 1998 incidents]. These attacks continued unabated through November 1998. On November 4th, in Borigaotha village near Waghai the church was attacked, other structures were set on fire and belongings of Christian adivasis looted. The same day, the prayer hall in Nirgudmal village was extensively damaged, while the prayer hall in Kamath was partly burnt. The next day, on November 5th, the church in Gadhvi village was burnt. On November 14th, the prayer hall in Lahancharia was partly burnt.

Police complaints were lodged in all these cases. On November 10th, a delegation of Christians from Dangs met Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel to protest against the ongoing attacks. But as the CNI Bishop of Nasik Dr. A. George Ninan complained in a November 17th letter to the CNI Synod in New Delhi,

virtually, no action was taken to stop the anti-Christian campaign or to take action against the HJM/VHP/BD activists involved. *Instead 8 Christians were arrested for alleged attempted assault against Hindu priests and others.*

Trishul Investiture Ceremony

In a communally charged atmosphere, a trishul investiture ceremony was held at Ahwa, on December 6, 1998, prior to which 2,000 copies of a pamphlet, printed by Sunil Chaudhary, were distributed by the Bajrang Dal. The pamphlet described December 6 as "the glorious day of Hindu victory celebrated by Hindus worldwide" and urged youth to attend a meeting where trishuls would be distributed. The trishul investiture ceremony was addressed by Shri Arvindbhai Brahmabhatt, Minister of the all Gujarat Hindu Union, Ahmedabad.

Around December 15th, the Hindu Jagran Manch had distributed a pamphlet very critical of the Christian community of Dangs. The pamphlet issued by Janubhai Pawar, President of the HJM, accused Christian priests of "insulting the holy people and the volunteers of the Hindu Jagran Manch through the daily newspapers. This is an insult to the whole of Hindu society. It is indeed the sacred duty [dharma kaam] of the Hindu religion to teach the brazen Christian priests a lesson and put them in their place. The conspiracy of converting gullible tribals [vanvasis] by giving money, goods, black magic and also through threats is unearthed now. Hence, the Hindu Jagran Manch is determined to stop the conversions and curb all activities of Christian priests. For the safety of the nation and the Hindu religion we have organised a massive rally at Ahwa. All Hindus are requested to join the rally in large numbers."

Christian Representations to Government Prior to Dec. 25, 1998

The Christian community submitted a series of memoranda to Government prior to the events on Christmas 1998. A memorandum detailing the attacks on the Christian community of Dangs district was submitted by the Dangs district council of the Church of North India (CNI) to the President, Gujarat Minority Board and to the National Minorities Commission on January 5, 1998.

On June 30th 1998, the CNI submitted a memorandum in the Collector's office [he was not present in Ahwa], reporting and protesting against the communal and inflammatory propaganda. The CNI submitted another memorandum to the National Minorities Commission on August 11th. The Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel was sent a memorandum on the attacks on the Christian community on November 10th. Yet another memorandum was submitted to the Dangs Collector requesting him to intervene to stop the attacks on the adivasi Christian community on December 4th. On 24th December, the south Gujarat Lok Adhikar Sangh also petitioned the Collector not to allow the HJM Rally.

The local Gujarati dailies, the Gujarat Samachar and Sandesh also carried news about the plans of the HJM to organise a rally against the Christian community on December 25, 1998 in Ahwa, Dangs. On learning about the rally, the Christian community submitted three memorandums to the Collector. These memorandums were submitted by the Dakshin Gujarat Adivasi Christi Kalyan Parishad, CNI and Christi Samaj Rakshak Dal on December 18, 21 and 22, 1998, respectively. On December 23rd, the Collector Bharat Joshi called the Christian leaders Rev. J.H. Mistry, Rev. T.V. Gaikwad, Rev. M.M. Pawar, Rev. K.A. Shende and Mr. D.S. Peter for a meeting. The Christian representatives informed the Collector about the ongoing attacks on the Christian community and the communally surcharged atmosphere prevailing in Ahwa town and the villages of Dangs district.

The Collector was repeatedly requested not to give permission for the proposed rally on December 25th because of the apprehension of anti-Christian violence. The Collector stated that he had not yet given permission for the rally, and he promised to make the necessary police arrangements on Christmas

day. In Ahmedabad on December 23rd, representatives of the Christian community met with Gujarat Ministers Bimalbhai Shah and Mahendra Trivedi, and the Chief Whip of the BJP Bharatbhai Barot. The Christian leaders expressed their apprehensions over the proposed rallies by the Hindu Jagran Manch at Ahwa, Tokarwa and other villages on Christmas day. On December 24th, the South Gujarat Lok Adhikar Sangh also petitioned the Collector not to allow the HJM rally.

Despite these repeated requests and warnings, the District Collector in apparent consultation with Dy.SP Rajan Gaikwad and the SP Amarsing Vasava allowed the Hindu Jagran Manch rally on December 25th in Ahwa. Collector B.N.Joshi reportedly said that the HJM had the right to hold a rally in a democratic India. The Collector apparently also based his decision on a confidential report by the Dy.SP that there was no apprehension of violence. The Collector's reference to this report was cited by the report of the United Christian Forum for Human Rights (UCFHR) fact finding team to Gujarat, January 1-6, 1999. *The UCFHR report also mentions a perception in Ahwa, that the Collector who at one time was prepared to deny permission for the HJM rally, was forced to do so by political pressure.* The UCFHR team could not find any evidence to prove this claim. It is however, significant that Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee has repeatedly stated since his visit to Dangs on January 10, 1999, that the Collector and the local administration was wrong in giving permission for the HJM rally on December 25, 1998. The P.M. has also repeatedly stated that but for the events surrounding the rally, the anti-Christian violence would not have reached the dimensions it did. [The most recent such statement by the P.M., in an interview with journalist Saeed Naqvi was telecast on Doordarshan on March 18, 1999 evening at 7.30 P.M.].

Police Circular of December 3, 1998

There was a confidential circular no. TB/1819/1998 dated December 3, 1998 issued by the In-charge DSP, Dangs, in response to a suggestion by the Minister Mangubhai Patel. The circular in Gujarati was expressly marked "Confidential and Time-bound", and directed that "facts regarding Christian priests and Christian religion" be collected as suggested by the Minister. Copies were marked to the following police officials: 1] CPI, Ahwa, Dangs, 2] PSI, Ahwa Police Station, and 3] PSI, Waghai Police Station. The tone of the circular was hostile to the Christian community e.g. "this is to inform that presently the Christian priests are carrying out proselytisation activities in full force. This has come to the notice of the Honourable Minister, and the leaders of this religion are making police complaints on the basis of false representations and exaggerated charges." The officials were asked to collect the facts within five days, as the Government had asked for them. Among the facts to be collected, were a verification of the number of villages that had churches, and if these were on the official records with the talathi. It wanted details on how legal complaints were to be lodged regarding churches which were not legally noted in the talathi's records. Details were sought on the ownership of the land on which the churches were made, and on the nature of construction, 'pucca' or 'kuchha'. If wood was used, if it belonged to the owner or to the forest department. The circular also asked for details of the complaints lodged about attempts to damage or burn down churches.

The police circular asked the department to estimate the numerical strength of Christians in the villages in Dangs, with a separate break up of the males and females and their proportionate strength. It specifically asked for separate details about cases "of promoting religious ill feelings." In view of the repeated official hostility against the Christians including in public statements against the Christians and their institutions, which was also visible in this circular, *some of the specific instructions to the police cited above, were obviously intended to provide grist to the anti-Christian official propaganda.* Further, this circular was another reconfirmation of the implied direction of the Government reflected in the police attitude towards adivasi Christians. The Commission was informed by local CNI sources, that the police census estimated approximately 16,800 Christians in the district.

Sharp reaction of Gujarat government to 4th Dec.'98 Rally held by Christians

On December 4, 1998, Christians in Gujarat, as in the rest of India, observed a bandh and held rallies, demonstrations and other protest actions against the ongoing attacks on Christians in Gujarat. The Gujarat government reacted very strongly to the bandh call, and warned the Christians not to go ahead with it. The bandh however was observed in Gujarat. Christian-managed schools observed the bandh and students were asked not to come to school on that day. The Government was quick to issue show cause notices to the principals threatening the withdrawal of grant-in-aid to the school. The Commission was shown two such show cause letters marked "Emergency, Hand Delivery": to 1] the Principal/Manager, St. Xavier's High School, Vatva, Ahmedabad, dated 4.12.98, 12.10 p.m.; and 2] to the Principal/Manager, St. Mary's High School, Nidhrad, Sanand Taluka, Ahmedabad, dated 5.12.98. The text of the two was the same, barring the specific details of the schools, and the names of the educational inspectors who visited the schools on December 4th (See Annexure).

In both cases the schools were accused of observing a bandh without prior permission of the Government, thereby violating the grant-in-aid rules, the Gujarat Secondary Education by-laws, 1974 and the Government Notification against the bandh. The Principals/Managers were asked to present themselves in person the next day before the District Education Officer to clarify as to why the grant-in-aid should not be withdrawn. The national outcry against this threat probably ensured that this punitive action was not undertaken. But the intentions of the Gujarat government, and its determination to go to virtually any extent to deny the Christian community its right to protest in this fashion were made amply clear.

Hindu Jagran Manch organises a rally on Christmas Day (25th Dec. 1998)

The Hindu Jagran Manch rally mobilisation started on the eve of Christmas. Truck loads of people were brought in from the villages and from outside the district on December 24th night and on December 25th morning. The main road of Ahwa was decorated with saffron flags and banners. Several jeep loads of HJM activists moved around the town shouting anti-Christian slogans and mobilising for the rally. The rally began around 11.30 A.M. on December 25th from the Saputara Road and reached the meeting place at the Taluka School ground after passing through Patel Pada, Mission Pada main road, the road near the Church and Ashram road.

In view of the tense situation the Christian community in Ahwa took several precautions to avoid trouble on Christmas. The District Superintendent of CNI, Dangs issued an appeal to the Christians in Ahwa and Dangs to observe Christmas peacefully and not to be provoked by any incidents. The CNI also changed the venue and timing of the Christmas service. Instead of holding the service at the CNI Church which is on the main road at 11.00 A.M., it held the service in the Mission bungalow located at a distance away from the Church and main road, and began it at 8.30 A.M. so that it finished by 11.00 A.M. Around 800 people attended the service which passed off peacefully.

However, in the course of the HJM rally which commenced after the Christian service was over, anti-Christian slogans were raised throughout the route. Slogans, which were recorded on audio tape made available to the Citizen's Commission, included "Hindu Jago, Christi Bhago" [Hindus Awake, Christians Flee], "Gali, Gali Me Shor He, Padri Sab Chor Hai", [There is a public outcry, that all Christian priests are thieves], "Christi Chor Hai" [Christians are thieves]. Banners and placards held up the demonstrators carried these slogans. During the rally, the Christian representatives met the Dy. SP Rajan Gaikwad and the Navsari DSP Amarsing E. Vasawa, and requested that these provocative and objectionable slogans be stopped. Both officials promised to do so, but the anti-Christian slogans continued. At the meeting at the Taluka School ground at the end of the rally, the speakers maligned and denigrated the Christian religion, the Christian community as a whole, and Christian missionaries, in particular. *Significantly, the Collector Joshi attended the meeting, went to the dias and allowed himself to be garlanded by the organisers.*

While the HJM meeting was going on, around 10 to 15 adivasi Christian women and men who had gone to the bazaar to shop, (were identified by some people in the rally) and pelted with stones. Three of the women and one of the men reportedly sustained injuries. After that a large mob attacked and damaged shops owned by Christians and Muslims. Jolly Xerox and Vision Palace [owned by Christians], and Archana Radio [owned by Muslims] were damaged. A section of the mob broke away and went to the Deep Darshan High School run by the Carmelite Sisters of Charity since 1975, and attacked it. [We shall detail the attack on the Deep Darshan School below].

Around 5.00 P.M., the HJM crowd apparently instigated by the provocative speeches and slogans moved towards the CNI church on the main road. When the Christians learnt about the crowd moving towards the church, some of their prominent leaders and others gathered near their church to protect it. The HJM crowd reportedly became very aggressive and started pelting stones at the Christians who had gathered near the church. The police who tried to control the mob were unsuccessful. The initial police, and consistent government version reported in the press, and uncritically accepted by large sections of the media, esp. the Gujarati press, was that the Christians provoked the HJM-led mob by their stone throwing. *The new DSP, Ahwa, Manoj Sashidhar who took over more than a week after this incident, spoke to the Commission on January 12th, and admitted that the police was under strength in light of the demands on the force, and that there had been no regular DSP posted in Ahwa for six months, despite the violence and mounting tension in the district.* He also admitted that the HJM crowd was violent but insisted that the Christians had also been violent. As proof he cited injuries [none grievous] to the policemen. The Christian leaders including Rev. Gaikwad who spoke to the Commission on January 11th, argued that in the light of their far less numbers as compared to the HJM mob, (a few hundreds compared with some 1,500) Christians would not have been so foolhardy as to provoke the mob. They argued that the communalised mob really required no further provocation to begin their planned attacks on Christians.

In the face of the mob violence, the police lathi charged and tear gassed both the HJM mob and the assembled Christians. The Christian side claimed that many of their congregation, men and women, sustained injuries, and that some were beaten up inside their compounds and houses. These events took place between 5 to 7 P.M. on December 25th, while the rest of the country was peacefully celebrating Christmas. Janubhai Pawar, President of the HJM, a resident of Gadhvi village and an accused in several anti-Christian episodes and criminal cases, also deposed before the Citizen's Commission on January 12th. Significantly, Pawar took the Commission into the District Information Officer's office [which is opposite the DSP's office in Ahwa] where his deposition was video-recorded. The Office Superintendent G.L. Jade and other office staff present did not object to his taking over of their office. Pawar had a diametrically opposed version of these events in Ahwa, and accused the police of being biased against the Hindus and HJM. He had no convincing explanation of why a much smaller Christian community would risk attacking a much larger Hindu gathering.

Deep Darshan High School—attacked and terrorised by HJM break away group—25th Dec '98

It is important to note that the Christian-managed Deep Darshan High School, which was attacked by a break away group from the HJM rally around 5 P.M., was started in 1975, 24 years ago, at the express request of the then Collector of Dangs Vijay Ranjan and the then district Panchayat President Ramubhai Thakare. The foundation stone was laid the same year by the Advisor to the Gujarat Governor H.C. Sarin. In 1975, when this school started only 31 children were enrolled. In 1998-99, the school has 840 children, of which only about 100 are Christians. *Out of a staff of 24, only 7 are Christians.* Therefore, both in terms of enrolment and employment, this school caters to a largely Hindu majority of students and staff. The Deep Darshan High School also introduced computer education for its children in 1995.

Since then some 300 children get computer education from Standard V to Standard X. Its S.S.C. results have been outstanding. In March 1985, when the Dangs district had no examination centre, the School's pass percentage was 78.26% [18/23 students passed]. In March 1990, when Dangs had one of its poorest results, only 27.37% pass, the school had a 100% pass record [all 39 students passed]. The respective district and Deep Darshan S.S.C. results for March 1996, 1997 and 1998 are 29.51% & 94.87%, 28.84% & 92.37%, and 19.14% & 78.40%. This is why admission to this school is widely coveted, and corresponding to the demographic pattern is overwhelmingly Hindu. The Resident Deputy Collector G.P. Sudhani, who has been posted in Ahwa for three years informed the Commission that most officials' children studied in the Deep Darshan High School which was far and away the best school. The school celebrates all major religious festivals like Diwali, Navratri, Raksha Bandhan, Uttarayan, etc., apart from Christian festivals. It also has activities like the N.C.C. and Scouts and Guides, and has often represented the district at the State level in sports, in the Science Fair and other competitions.

Sister Carmen Borges, Principal of the Deep Darshan School, had submitted a written application, on December 21st, asking for police protection and consequently two police constables had been posted to protect the school only on December 24th. *This had followed a systematic communal campaign against the school.* A play on communal harmony which lauded the role of Mahatma Gandhi, in which 'Vande Mataram' was sung, was performed during the school's annual day on November 22nd in the presence of the Collector, the Dy.SP, the Gandhian leader Ghelubhai Nayak and other eminent citizens. Members of the Commission viewed a video-recording of the play and found it to be a wholesome enactment emphasizing the need for communal harmony, that lauded Gandhi as an embodiment of the best religious virtues. This play was later misrepresented as involving the desecration of Lord Krishna's statue, and this was used to whip up emotions against the school. This canard was published in the Gujarati daily 'Sandesh' on December 6th without any attempt to clarify the issue with the school authorities. Significantly, Sandesh published the same communally motivated story again on January 8, 1999, despite the surcharged situation in Dangs. This misrepresentation was also reported in the January 10th representation by Sr. Borges to the Prime Minister AB Vajpayee when the latter visited Dangs. Significantly, no action has been taken against 'Sandesh' for this communally surcharged and baseless reportage. [We shall examine the role of the Gujarati language press separately below].

Sr. Borges testified that she heard around 4 P.M. on December 25th about stone throwing at Christians and Christian-owned property, and promptly contacted the police for more force to protect the school. A little later, a very violent mob of about 100 to 125 men attacked the compound from the back coming through the forested area. They were armed with trishuls, lathis and *were carrying sacks filled with stones.* [This Sr. Borges believed was so that they didn't have to search for stones or rocks on the spot before throwing stones on the school complex]. The mob attacked sometime around 5.00 P.M. and damaged the boys hostel, causing extensive damage to the roof, smashing window panes, etc. [The damage was later estimated to be of about Rs. 60,000. This Sr. Borges emphasized was a minimal estimate.] At that stage, the Collector in a jeep with more police personnel of the Special Reserve Police [SRP] came to the spot, which deterred the mob which did not then attack the rest of the school complex and the main building where the six nuns were sheltering. The mob fled once the police came, no attempts were made to arrest the culprits despite the presence of the Collector and senior police officers on the spot of the crime.

Moreover, Sr. Borges in her testimony to the Commission asserted that despite her offer to do so, her statement was not recorded. When she heard that a statement had been taken from the Deep Darshan caretaker, she again complained on December 26th and submitted her written statement on the attack to the police, and insisted that her complaint be attached. Though she had no direct communication from the police she learnt that 7-8 people had been arrested in connection with the attack. Sr. Borges, who has been Principal of the school for the last eight years, believed that the attack was politically

motivated and premeditated, and part of the VHP/Bajrang Dal/HJM attack on Christians and their institutions. *Citing the low figures of the minority Christian presence among the students and the staff, and the absence of any compulsory Christian religious instruction, she argued that there could be no plausible claim of proselytisation and 'forcible' conversions against the school.*

The attack on the Deep Darshan High School was followed by a spate of attacks beginning on Christmas evening and night against other Christian institutions and churches in Dangs, and continuing thereafter. Though, as enumerated above, substantial damage to Christian properties and shrines had already occurred since 1997, the scale and spread of these assaults was unprecedented. On Christmas night, the church at Gadhvi village was demolished and then set on fire [complaint/FIR no. 78/98]. It is alleged that around 200 persons led by Baburao Kalu Gangurde, Janu Navsu Pawar, and Jemsu Navsu Pawar damaged the house of an adivasi Christian Lakshu Kolga, and looted chickens, foodgrains and Rs. 10,000/-. The church was damaged and set on fire around 9 P.M.. The same group reportedly went to Jamlapada near Gadhvi, where Janu Navsu Pawar was one of the main leaders, and looted Rs. 1,500/- from an adivasi Christian Suman bhai, and set fire to the church [78/98]. After their attacks in Gadhvi and Jamlapada villages, the mob led by Janubhai Navasu Pawar, Baburao Kalu, Jemsu Navasu reached Divan Temrun village around 12.30 A.M. and stoned Christian houses and the church, damaging the roof tiles [80/98]. The same night, at about 8 P.M. some 60 to 80 attackers damaged the roof tiles of the church in Nagadkadi [90/98—Waghai]; and around 11 P.M. a large mob tried to demolish and then set on fire a church in Padalkhadi [88/98].

At about 8 P.M. the same Christmas night, a gang of about 40-60 people in four tempos attacked the Jesuit [Catholic] Navjyot High School in Subir village [77/98]. According to the testimony given to the Citizen's Commission by Fr. Osborne, Principal of the Navjyot School and Fr. M.V. Anthony, who has been teaching there for the last six years, and who was present, the attackers were carrying saffron banners and spoke in Gujarati [not Dangi, indicating that they, or at least some of them, were not local adivasis. We received similar testimony and reports from the other affected villages.] The attackers first smashed the school jeep headlights which were on (since the generator did not provide enough electricity at the time), and destroyed the Christmas crib and star, before attacking a school building in which grain for the students' rations was stored. Slogans of "maro, maro" were shouted. The building was damaged and partly burnt along with 8 quintals of wheat. Then the school's jeep and motorcycle, which were their only means of transport were also burnt. Since the two teachers were immediately taken away and sheltered by two workers who were present, they were not assaulted though some of the miscreants searched for them. Fr. Osborne informed the police using the wireless set at the Forest Department office 50 metres away, and later two policemen arrived, just after the vehicles had been set alight. None of the attackers was apprehended on the spot.

Like Deep Darshan School, Navjyot School also has a predominantly non-Christian adivasi student population. Only some 30 of the 225 boys, all of whom stay in the hostel, are Christians belonging to the CNI and Pentecostal denominations. Originally, the school had classes only from the I to the IV Standard, but now it has been upgraded up to Standard X with the first batch now in that latter class. The majority of students are Kokanas, others include Bhils, Gamits, apart from boys of two Dalit families. The Commission spoke to the students and asked them if there was any attempt to convert them to Christianity. They denied this and pointed out that the large majority of them were non-Christians. *In this case also there is no evidence of the church or the management of the school trying to convert the adivasis.*

Swami Aseemanand and the Anti-Missionary Campaign

The next morning on December 26th, a Bajrang Dal meeting was held on a hillock close by. There were unconfirmed reports that *Swami Aseemanand* from Waghai, and a VHP leader had addressed the meeting. All reports indicate that Swami Aseemanand, who hails from Bengal and has resided in Dangs only for

the last two years, played a major role in organising the anti-Christian and anti-missionary campaign. At that time there was a widely prevalent rumour that the school had been razed to the ground and that the two teachers/priests had been assaulted. But anti-Christian propaganda and mobilisation continued after the attack, with the contractor who was constructing a girls hostel in the school premises, so that the school could become coeducational, being threatened, leading him to stop work. The Commission observed that the construction work had stopped sometime prior to its visit on January 11, 1999. The students, especially in Standard X were apprehensive but determined to continue their studies. Though only 131 students returned the first day after the Christmas holidays, the rest rejoined later. The parents have expressed their solidarity with the school management, but are reportedly scared of the Sangh Parivar, and its apparent official patronage. Fr. Anthony testified that the HJM/BD want to force out the Christian management from the school and premises. Swami Aseemanand had started a Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad hostel in the neighbouring village of Mokhamar in July-August 1998. The Subir children were encouraged to shift there, and some 4 children shifted there and left the school. There are 4 other high schools at a distance of 7-15 kilometres, with a zero or negligible pass percentage, so the parents do not want to shift their children.

On Christmas, there were, in addition, four separate attacks on adivasi Christians in villages separated by long distances. In Ahwa, two women Rebikaben and Surekaben were allegedly attacked. In Gadhvi, Lahsubhai [78/98]; in Diwan Temrun, Mohanbhai and Satrubhai [80/98]; and in Galkund, Devdan Pawar were attacked. Following the earlier pattern churches, chapels and prayer halls were attacked in scattered villages throughout Dangs district, at night or in the early hours of the morning.

Post-Christmas attacks on Christians

The attacks by HJM/BD and other Sangh Parivar activists continued unabated after Christmas. On December 26th, churches in Behdun [84/98] and Karadiamba [91/98] villages were severely damaged by attackers. There was a massive attack in Waki the same night when a large mob tried to set the church on fire. A jeep belonging to the Dangs Forest Department [No.: GRD 7443] was allegedly used by the mob. The Galkund Sarpanch Dinkar Gawli's house was attacked and an attempt was made to set it on fire. In self defence, the Sarpanch opened fire with his licensed 12 bore shotgun loaded with birdshot. 7 members of the mob received minor pellet injuries [82/98]. The sarpanch claimed that he meant to fire in the air, but because he was hit on the chest by a stone in the act of firing, the gun got lowered and pellets sprayed on the crowd. Most media reports, including in the English language press, did not mention the possibility of self defence, and exaggerated the injuries and the calibre of the weapon used. The same day, an adivasi Christian Anandbhai Varde and his relatives were assaulted in Galkund village. On December 27th, after the constitution of the Peace Committee in the presence of Home Minister Haren Pandya, many attacks took place. In Dongiamba, an adivasi Christian Goma was tied up and assaulted by Gamju Pandu Gavli of Pipliyamal village.

On December 27th, churches/prayer halls in the villages of Barda, Raochond [85/98], Sepuamba, Shivbara, Pipaldagad [90/98—Ahwa], Gougan [87/98], and Karenjpada [89/98] were attacked and severely damaged. Churches in Mulchond [85/98] and Baripada were attacked and partially damaged. On December 28th, a rally of about 200 persons shouting anti-Christian slogans moved around in Divan Temrun village which was attacked earlier on Christmas night. The mob was led by Janu Navasu Pawar of Gadhvi village and Babu Rao Kalu Gangrude. On the same day, there was another incident in Behdun village. After the church in Behdun was attacked on December 26th, Jiman Bhai Boye of Pipaldahad had lodged a formal complaint with the police. On December 28th, a Hindu communal gang led by Sonu Chowdhury threatened Boye that if he didn't withdraw the case his house would be destroyed and his life in the village would be made difficult. Other witnesses were similarly threatened. On the same night, two houses owned by an adivasi Christian Sonubhai were damaged by a group of people led by Chandu master and Laloo Boye of Savardakasad [86/98].

On December 29th, a church in Mathalbari [92/98] was severely damaged by a gang of attackers. On December 30th, churches in Jhalsol [95/98] and Naktiyanvath [1/99] were attacked and severely damaged. During the attacks in Jhalsol, five adivasi Christians Soni Rao and 4 others were attacked [95/98]. The same day some adivasi Christians in Katis [93/98] were also attacked. On January 1, 1999, the church in Kasarbari was set on fire, while the church in Chikar Jahwda was partly damaged. Even the Prime Minister's visit on January 10th did not put an end to the violence. After the PMs visit, attackers late at night set fire to churches in Duda and Lahancheria. The local villagers put out the fires saving their shrines from total destruction.

Testimony from Janubhai Pawar-President of Hindu Jagran Manch

The Commission, as cited earlier, had the opportunity to take videotaped testimony from Janubhai Pawar, President of the HJM, in the District Information Officer's office, Ahwa on January 12, 1999. Pawar claimed that the HJM had no connection with the RSS, VHP, BD, BJP or any other organisations of the Sangh Parivar. But he was unable to explain the convergence of views or the overlapping membership. He acknowledged that there were four criminal cases against him, but appeared quite unperturbed by that. Pawar was however insistent that the HJM's campaign would continue until all Christian priests left the district as they were allegedly guilty of anti-Hindu and anti-national activities. He appeared totally undeterred by the criminal cases lodged against him. Though he repeatedly referred to many priests as foreigners, he was not aware that many like Sr. Carmen Borges of Deep Darshan High School were Indians [she is from Goa] and not foreigners. But even in the case of Indian priests, he insisted that they must leave the district as they were foreign funded and inspired, and were converting innocent tribals through bribery, false promises and trickery. He claimed that the Christian population in Dangs had increased exponentially to over 40,000 and stressed that the HJM's campaign would not cease until all "padris" [Christian priests] were made to leave Dangs.

When Pawar was asked why Christian 'conversion' was anti-Hindu and anti-national, he replied that Christianity was a foreign religion, and that its followers were anti-national e.g. secessionist forces in the North-East. He claimed that the priests were collaborating with the Naxalites and the Congress(I). He also argued that the churches were 'kuchcha' buildings, often private dwellings, which were used as prayer halls, and not churches at all. He claimed that Christians had themselves burnt their churches to get political mileage and to defame the Hindus, Government and HJM. He stressed that the reports about the atrocities against Christians were politically motivated and grossly exaggerated. He also reiterated the HJM demand that adivasis who were Christians should not be allowed to avail of benefits given to the Scheduled Tribes, which was also a demand in the memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister by him during the latter's visit to Dangs on January 10th. When asked if this would not be anti-Constitutional since this had been permitted for Christian and other non-Hindus tribals prior to independence, and was so ratified during the framing of the Constitution and in practice thereafter, he insisted that this bar should be implemented at least in Dangs. He argued that since Hinduism was the only indigenous and authentically Indian religion, any 'reconversion' from Christianity to Hinduism was wholly justifiable, and thus could not be equated to 'forcible' conversion by Christians. He said that since the Muslims in Dangs were not involved in conversions, the Christians and not the local Muslims, were the real enemy.

Pawar's evidence was often confused and contradictory e.g. on the number of foreign priests, the numbers of 'reconversions' etc. At one stage he claimed that 1,500 Christians had reconverted. At another stage, he claimed that as many as 5,000 adivasi Christians had reconverted since Christmas 1998. He, in particular, praised Swami Aseemanand of the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Waghai and a VHP leader, for his role in reconversions.

Testimony by the Resident Deputy Collector–G. P. Sudhani

The Commission interviewed the Resident Deputy Commissioner [RDC] G.P. Sudhani, who had been posted in Dangs for the last 3 years. He pointed out that criminal and civil justice administration was delayed in Dangs because of the complete absence of district courts. In Dangs there is only a Judicial Magistrate. He believed that the Christian missionaries who were rendering much needed social services, were also playing on the naivete of the adivasis to convert. He attributed the tensions and clashes to third party intervention, and to a social differentiation caused by Christian adivasis adopting different religious rites on birth, death and religious occasions which led to social tensions even within families. He argued that the adivasis should be left alone by both missionaries and the Sangh Parivar, and be left to practice their traditional religion and customs without interference.

RDC Sudhani admitted that Hindu NGOs including the Swaminarayan sect and other groups who had been officially encouraged to engage in development activities, had not responded adequately to the needs of poor tribals of that area. While he appreciated the role of Christian institutions including Deep Darshan High School where his own children and that of other officials study, he claimed even there, and other Christian institutions, applicants were informally encouraged to get recommendations from Christian priests. He was unable to cite any proof, but claimed that this was a well known, informal practice. When Sr. Borges and the local CNI officials were asked if this was true, they categorically denied this. Sudhani insisted that compensation had been granted as speedily as possible. Explaining the delay in the compensation paid to the late Ulus Ramji Pawar's family, he claimed it was the fault of the family and neighbours in not providing the necessary information on time. [The family's counter claims are cited above]. Asked to explain the paltry compensation for the sarpanch Dinkar Gawli's house in Waki which was only Rs. 45/-, he claimed that only 18 roof tiles were damaged @ Rs. 2.50p. each, which came to a total of Rs. 45/-. The Commission later visited Waki on March 13th, and found the damage to be substantially greater than the RDC's estimates. [This will be dealt with in greater detail in the Findings of the Commission.]

Significantly, Sudhani insisted that the actual extent of damage to the Christian properties was Rs. 2 lakhs and not Rs. 4 lakhs, a figure which was widely stated, but which he termed the police estimate. The range of compensation was Rs. 50,000/- for Deep Darshan to Rs. 45/-. Rs. 1,000/- per head was given for simple injuries.

Testimony of Manoj Sashidhar, DSP, Dangs

DSP Manoj Sashidhar, I.P.S., joined on promotion in Dangs on January 4, 1999. He was earlier ASP, Gondal. Sashidhar estimated that the Christian population was between 10,000 to 20,000, probably not more than 15,000, but stressed that these were "guesstimates", since no proper census had been done since 1991. The current population in Dangs is estimated to be 1.70 lakhs, so that the claim that the Christian population was 40,000 or as much as 40 per cent or so of the district's population, he considered to be an exaggeration. He did not know of a single village which had a Christian majority. The Christians were of diverse denominations, both Protestant and Catholic. He cited official data to show that though approximately Rs. 30 crores was annually spent for the development of Dangs district, with the largely adivasi population, widely dispersed in 311 villages [approx. Rs. 10 lakhs per village], public infrastructure and basic facilities of education, health, sanitation, etc. were hardly adequate and in poor shape.

DSP Sashidhar, while admitting that he had been in Dangs for barely a week, a large part of which period he had been preoccupied with security arrangements for the dignitaries who were visiting Dangs, believed that the spread of various forms of Christianity in Dangs was due to the social work by the Christian groups, particularly in the field of health and education. He knew of no cases of forcible

conversion. The charge that missionaries and others were alluring adivasis to convert, depended on the definition of allurement. Did the provision of free or highly subsidised medicine, for example, amount to allurement for conversion? But his personal belief was that adivasis converted more due to the social services provided to them by the Christian groups, rather than due to 'ideological' reasons. He however, considered 'faith healing' practised by the Protestant evangelical groups not to be an ideological phenomenon, though he considered it to be a significant factor in conversions by the largely uneducated adivasis. Since Christians were a small minority, with large numbers of mixed Hindu-Christian families, there was no widespread religious antagonism or tension, except in the case of a few villages. He did concede that any sustained anti-Christian campaign, particularly if it received political support, would create serious law and order problems. Such issues, he stressed, could only be resolved politically, as the problems were politically created.

In response to allegations of police bias, he argued that the police was impartial, that grossly understaffed in the light of the challenges they faced. There were just two police stations and 200 policemen for the entire district, which in light of the widely dispersed character of the villages and the difficult terrain, was grossly insufficient. He had officially asked for an enhancement of the police force. As evidence of police impartiality and restraint he cited the instance of the Hindu-Christian clashes during the HJM rally in Ahwa on December 25, 1998, in which 10 policemen and one executive magistrate were injured. In connection with the various incidents in Dangs, 32 cases have been lodged, including two by the Government, 27 by the Christians, and 3 by the Hindus. More than 120 Hindus and 43 Christians had been arrested.

Testimony of Kishorebhai Patel, (Correspondent, Sandesh)

Kishorebhai Patel, the Dangs correspondent for Sandesh, a widely circulated Gujarati daily gave a videorecorded testimony to the Commission on January 12th. Patel hails from an affluent family. His father Narainbhai Lachhabhai Patel was an independent MLA, in 1957-62, and he himself owns a shop where he sells tribal handcrafts. In response to the widespread criticism including in some bureaucratic circles, that Sandesh's reportage had been biased against the Christian community and even inflammatory, Patel claimed the paper had been absolutely impartial and had reported whatever had actually happened. He defended the Sandesh report that the violence during the Christmas 1998 rally in Ahwa was the consequence of Christians stoning the Hindu rallyists. He argued that the Collector B.N. Joshi had made adequate security arrangements.

Patel claimed that as a consequence of conversions by Christians and immigration by Muslims, Christians now amounted to 40 per cent, and the Muslims another 15 per cent of the Dangs population. No other respondent or witness gave such an exaggerated estimate of the minority population, which especially in the case of the Muslims, is absolutely incredible. This however, indicates his strongly held opinions and biases, which are apparently reflected in his reportage. [The reportage in Sandesh is analysed in the 'Findings' section]. *Patel also blamed the Christian adivasis for provoking attacks by their allegedly unseemly, noisy and even at times sexually promiscuous behaviour in their prayer halls, which led their outraged Hindu neighbours to 'retaliate'.* An observer with the Commission who had interviewed Swami Aseemanand earlier noted the similarity between the Sandesh reporter and the Swami's views. Significantly, Patel was laudatory about the role of the controversial Swami. [Though the Commission visited the Swami's Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram in Waghai, the latter had left for Maharashtra and thus could not be interviewed]. Interestingly, he viewed the anti-Christian campaign also as an assertion by a unified 'Hindu' community against the Congress politics earlier dominant in the region.

Testimony of a 'Reconverted' Christian

Members of the Commission took evidence from a 'reconverted' adivasi on the night of January 11th. He insisted on being interviewed under cover of darkness and in complete anonymity since he feared repercussions from the HJM/BD. The adivasi who lives in Ghoghli village some distance from Ahwa, attended Christian prayers for about 19 years before he formally converted 3 years ago. His family owns and cultivates 7-8 acres of land near the village. While some of the brothers and sisters are Christians, the others follow their own tribal faiths and customs.

On January 4th evening a policeman, Vijay Soma, a local tough and VJM activist, and Gopi Chand Janu, a Hindu Patel, came to his house and threatened his family, that their families and their relatives [5 families] houses would be burnt if they didn't 'reconvert' to Hinduism. He was not there at the time, and his family and relatives were very frightened. His wife and relatives convinced him to convert, and the next morning they were all taken in 2 jeeps escorted by Ganpat Bayanand [the Patel's assistant] and Vijay Soma to Swami Aseemanand's ashram in Waghai. At the ashram, the particulars of the family members were noted down. He was given a 'Hanuman Chalisa' booklet and made to recite it in a prayer room. From Waghai they were taken to the Unnai hot springs which are also a place of Hindu worship. There they were made to buy coconuts and offer them to the local 'Mataji' deity, and wear 'tilaks', and a Hanuman amulet around their necks. They were given a laminated picture of Hanuman, as well as one depicting Rama, Lakshman and Shabri. [Shabri, according to local lore, was a tribal girl who offered local berries to Rama and Lakshman].

He was instructed to wear the amulet, hang up the pictures in his house, and strictly warned against going to the church. He hasn't worn the amulet, or hung up the pictures, but has been too scared to attend church. Instead he prays at home. Clearly this is a case of 'forcible' or coerced conversion.

Conclusion

Since the Commission's initial fact finding visit to Dangs district, the anti-Christian campaign has not subsided. According to news reports, 'reconversions' are continuing, with no official effort to intervene or to ensure that there is no intimidation or coercion. Some of this evidence is cited earlier in this report.

Two months after the Commission's initial visit, Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy, a member of the Commission, visited Dangs on its behalf, between March 12-14, 1999. Dr. Chenoy who camped in Ahwa visited Darapada, Gundvahal, Waki, Lahancheria, Jamlapada, Diwan Temrun, Gadhvi, Singhana, Subir and Jhalsol villages.

Dinkar Gawli, the Christian sarpanch who fired on the anti-Christian rioters in Waki is still suspended and facing prosecution in an attempt to murder case u/s 307 I.P.C. Because of the seriousness of the criminal case against him, his suspension as sarpanch has not been withdrawn and the deputy sarpanch who is with the BJP is acting as the sarpanch. On the other hand, *Ramesh Balya Choudhuri*, the district BJP president and HJM leader who has been accused in several cases of assault and arson, has been reinstated as sarpanch of Don village.

In Lahancheria, the church which was partly burnt has not yet been fully repaired. The villagers claimed compensation was inadequate, thus the delay in completing repairs. In Jamlapada, the church which was demolished is still being rebuilt. Only Rs. 5,500 compensation has been given, but the estimated costs of repairs including the cost of tiles and wood [excluding labour] is estimated to be approx. Rs. 30,000. The Special Reserve Police [SRP] constables guarding the Christians confirmed that they were not being allowed to draw water from a nearby village well by their Hindu neighbours. They also alleged that they were being coerced to 'reconvert' but claimed that not a single Christian there had 'reconverted.'

Continuation of Coercive 'Reconversions' to Hinduism

In Gadhvi village, the demolished church has not been fully repaired. Only the roof's frame had been rebuilt. The official compensation of Rs. 4,350 was inadequate. Under pressure some Christian adivasis had converted to Hinduism, but had later returned to the Christian faith.

Coercion in support of 'reconversion' to Hinduism is continuing. Four Christian women of Gadhvi village: Vanitaben Laksubhai Bhoje, Shakuben Kakdiya Pavar, Miraben Yashwantbhai Pavar and Parsuben Sitaram in a signed affidavit dated March 5, 1999 to the Collector, Ahwa, a copy of which is with the Commission, (see Annexure) claimed that six Bajrang Dal activists from the village: Janubhai Pawar, Babhurav Gangude, Sakharam Balbard, Gorubhai Manyabhai, Somabhai Manabhai and Pandyabhai Soniravna, had tried to forcibly convert them to Hinduism on February 22nd. According to the affidavit, the BD activists led by Janubhai Pawar came in a jeep at 8.00 a.m. to the women's house and tried to forcibly take them for the purificatory bath for conversion, and also offered them Rs. 125 each as allurement. When they refused they were "severely thrashed." Because of "the threat and fear", the four women did not register their complaint with any authority earlier.

In Singhana, the church had been rebuilt with the Christians providing free labour. The local sarpanch Shantubhai had offered no help. In the Navjyot High School, Subir, only Rs. 5,000 compensation had been given for the burnt and demolished Mahindra jeep. Compensation for the damage to school buildings was Rs. 26,000, but the actual costs exceeded Rs. 40,000. Communal tension persists in Subir. Christians were threatened that they would be attacked once the SRP protection was removed. *The school's well was also poisoned with an itch causing herb.* It was reported that the adivasi woman who had sold the land to the school had been threatened. Local Christians attributed the tension to the return of Swami Aseemanand who had earlier left Dangs under pressure from the local administration, but had returned a few days earlier. Dr. Chenoy on behalf of the Commission also visited Jhalsol, where 5 Christians had been injured in an attack on December 25th, 1998 night at 9.00 p.m.. The villagers deposed that the total compensation given to them for their demolished church was only Rs. 3,500 which was inadequate, and that was the reason why their church had not yet been repaired. They said they had received no compensation for their injuries. They were not aware of any attempt at forcible 'reconversion'.

As recently as March 14, 1999, Christians attending a prayer meeting in Moti-Kasad were threatened by a group of people led by Phulabhai Dev Singh. In the complaint lodged in Subir police station by Sonubhai Kalga Bhai of the same village the next day, a copy of which was given to the Commission, it is alleged that the Christians were threatened that they would "be killed" if they continued to conduct prayer meetings. Sonubhai's complaint alleges that Phulabhai has been consistently instigating villagers against the Christians, which had led to an earlier attack on the house of Bhikubhai Lasaya. Bhikubhai's house had been damaged in the attack, and a consequent police complaint had been lodged. There have also been other reports of attempted forcible conversions of tribal Christians in this period.

From the above evidence it is clear that the communal tension and the terrorisation of Christian tribals in Dangs persists. Even the local administration is apprehensive of renewed violence especially around December 6th [anniversary of the demolition of the Bābri mosque] and Christmas. The reports of anti-Christian violence in Orissa and elsewhere, including the murder of Graham Staines and his children, and the attacks in Gajpati district, are being seen as a warning of bad times to come by the local adivasi Christian community.

FINDINGS OF THE CITIZEN'S COMMISSION

I. No Cause for the December 25, 1998 Hindu Jagran Rally Violence

We have narrated in detail the facts and circumstances which resulted in the incidents of violence against Christian tribals, churches, schools and others. We find that there had been no provocation on the part of the Christians to incite such incidents during Christmas. On the other hand, the evidence shows that the Christians were repeatedly presenting memoranda to the authorities apprehending violence and attacks on them.

The only incident of significance was that on 4th December, the Christian schools all over Gujarat had observed a peaceful bandh and which ostensibly had no links with the violence that occurred on 25th December 1998.

The other significant incident was a canard published by "Sandesh" on December 6th about a play called "Ekta" staged by the children of Deep Darshan High School, Ahwa on the School's Annual Day on November 22, in the presence of the Collector, the Dy. S.P., an eminent Gandhian, Ghelubhai Nayak and other dignitaries. We have ourselves seen the video recording of the play and there could not be any objection from any one, as it purported to preach communal harmony and the futility of violence. Yet, after 15 days "Sandesh" gave a twist to the play, without even seeing it, that it had depicted the desecration of Lord Krishna's statue. However, this reportage also had not led to any notable incidence of violence.

Thus without any provocation from Christians, the HJM distributed a pamphlet around 15th December, 1998 instigating the "whole of Hindu society" to do "the sacred duty" to "teach the brazen Christian priests a lesson and put them in their place". It was announced that "for the safety of the nation and Hindu religion", a massive rally would be organised.

The Collector and the Police ought to have realised that the rally organised on 25th December would definitely result in violence and ought not to have given permission. There were several appeals from the representatives of Christian community and others not to give such permission. Yet the rally was allowed to be held.

The rally began around 11.30 A.M. and no steps were taken to control the frenzied tempo of the rally, till it was beyond control. The Deep Darshan School was attacked at 5.00 P.M. and there was no justification whatsoever to attack this institution which was a distance away from the rally at that late hour.

Thus, we are of the opinion that the rally and the resultant violence were all deliberate acts on the part of the Hindu Jagran Manch and its associates without any justification whatsoever.

II. Incidents of Violence Against Christian Tribals and their Prayer Halls/ and Institutions — an Organised Crime

We are of the clear opinion that what happened in Dangs between 25th December, 1998 and 3rd January, 1999 were all part of an organised crime. This is evident from the fact that on 25th December, Christian schools were attacked not only at Ahwa, but also at Subir village more than 22 kms. away where the Navjyot School is situated. On 25th December 1998, at more or less the same time churches and prayer halls were attacked in several villages such as Gadhvi, Nadaghadi, Jamlapada,

Jhalsol villages and at many other places over a widely dispersed area including in interior villages, quite some distance away from the road. Again thereafter on 26th December and on 27th December, several churches and prayer halls were attacked and destroyed at villages like Mulchond. We, the several members of the Commission have seen the damages caused in these places where there was no provocative incident from amongst the Christian tribals. When questioned by us as to what the Christians did in retaliation, they quoted the biblical advice of turning the left cheek after receiving a blow on the right cheek.

These attacks also show a pattern, as to the time of attack, and the manner of destruction, all indicating that the attackers believed that they could indulge in this organised crime knowing full well that the Government and the administration was on their side.

III. The Myth of Increased Population of Christians

HJM had distributed pamphlets stating that Christians would soon outnumber Hindus in the district and they would demand an independent State like Nagaland. We find that this was a false propaganda circulated only to instigate Hindus to attack Christians. We have analysed the statistical details of the population in Dangs while dealing with the summary of evidence. Out of a total population of about 1.70 lakhs as at present, the Christian population at the most would not exceed 15,000. We also found no evidence whatsoever to imagine remotely that the Christian population was thinking or was even capable of thinking in terms of Nagaland or Mizoram for themselves. In fact, the tribals and the Christian tribals are economically so backward and were kept so backward for decades by all political leaders, that they would be not be able to politically and socially assert themselves at all. ***Thus this false propaganda of a secessionist threat was yet another attempt to instigate people to attack the Christian adivasis and to justify such attacks in the name of national security.***

IV. No Forcible Conversions to Christianity

We found no evidence of any forcible conversion to Christianity. The established institutions like the Deep Darshan High School at Ahwa and Navjyot School at Subir run by the Jesuits has had at no time indulged in any act of conversion. Yet these two institutions were the major targets of HJM violence. Deep Darshan School has 840 children, of which only about 100 are Christians. Out of a staff of 24 only 7 are Christians. In Navjyot School which is a resident school out of 225 students, only 30 were Christians. *The fact that after these incidents the students came back to the school shows that none of the parents had any grievance whatsoever against these institutions.*

However, when we talked to Christians belonging to CNI and Pentecostal denominations they admitted that they did convert some tribals into their fold, but not by force. As far as CNI was concerned the number did not exceed 100 persons in any year. Here again, we found that there were many houses where CNI Christians and non-Christians were living in peace for years together. There were instances where one brother becomes a Christian while the other one continues as a tribal, both living under one roof and in harmony with each others choices.

Some of the tribals told us that when they suffered from any disease or sickness, the ordinary herbal treatment which they knew of would not work. During that period a Christian priest would ask them to pray to Lord Jesus and (as their luck would have it) they were cured of the ailment. The evidence shows that they did not become Christians immediately thereafter. One of them told us that for several years thereafter, though every day, he prayed to Lord Jesus, he did not become a Christian. He became a Christian recently about four years ago.

We could not get any evidence to hold that any of these Christian priests gave allopathic medicines

to cure the ailment while falsely representing that it was some holy water, so as to induce the tribals to become Christians. Even assuming that there is some truth in these allegations, we cannot consider such conversions as forcible conversions. The question of conversion cannot be considered without taking into account the background of the people involved—particularly tribals in Dangs living in abject poverty, illiteracy, and with no facility for health care and comfort. If in such a situation, a hungry man starving to death is offered food, medicine and religion, he would accept all. What consolation will he have, if he is allowed to die and denied all reliefs only because he was born into a particular religion?

We are aware of the fact that many of these conversions have taken place not because of any understanding of the theological tenets of Christianity or on the basis of any comparative study of different faiths. What is important is that many of these tribals have experienced a sense of liberation be it educational, social, moral or spiritual, on becoming Christians. Such an experience cannot be considered as forcible conversion.

V. Forcible Process of "Hinduisation" is a Violation of Human Rights

It has been implicitly and explicitly assumed in most discussions that the adivasis of Dangs were originally Hindus, some of whom had been converted to Christianity. This is questionable. Though there has been a gradual process of 'Hinduisation' of the adivasis, many of them do not subscribe to the commonly accepted Hindu pantheon or religious cultural practices. In a number of cases, existing tribal deities are appropriated. For instance, a rock signifying a local deity is smeared with vermilion (sindur) by Hindu priests or HJM/BD activists and taken to signify Hanuman. The non-acceptance of the adivasis in anything approaching equal status in conservative Hindu society is indicated in the Sangh Parivar's rejection of the term adivasi and its terming tribals as 'vanvasis' (forest dwellers).

Since many of the adivasis are not Hindus to begin with, though some may be 'Hinduised', there can be, properly speaking, no 'reconversion' from Christianity to Hinduism. The change of religion from Christianity to Hinduism is a conversion like any other, it can not properly be termed 'reconversion' as is normally done. As the Sangh Parivar's ideology treats Hinduism as the original and authentically Indian religion and tradition, for them any conversion from any non-Hindu religion to Hinduism is 'reconversion'.

Whatever be the nomenclature, such conversions are going on in Dangs forcibly. The tribals who have accepted Christianity are threatened with dire consequences if they refuse to become Hindus. The "Testimony" of a "Reconverted" Christian (See supra: —) shows in detail how this process goes on. It is a purificatory procedure (Shuddhikaran) and many tribal Christians have been forced to undergo this. *The very concept that a man becomes impure on accepting a particular faith itself is against human dignity and constitutes a fascist premise.* Here again the "re-conversions" are not on the basis of any understanding of tenets of Hindu religion, but mainly on the assumption that they were born as Hindus and that they could not have been converted into any other religion or faith. If they were praying to Lord Jesus earlier, they are now required to pray to Hanuman! It is also not for any social, moral or economic liberation or upliftment of these persons.

No religion can compel any one to remain within its fold perpetually. It is always a matter of faith, belief or conscience. The accidental birth into a religion cannot confer on any one any hallmark of superiority. It all depends on one's life, one's frustrations and many other factors which may ultimately help one in finding an anchor of salvation elsewhere. By forcibly "re-converting" tribals has been a denial of freedom of conscience and choice. Thus such forcible conversion is a violation of Art. 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights besides being violative of Art. 25 of our own Constitution.

VI. Role of Gujarat Government : Biased and Arbitrary

The role of the Gujarat Government appears to have been biased and arbitrary. Minister of State for Home Haren Pandya and Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel repeatedly sought to minimise and play down the reports of assaults on Christians, and repeatedly criticised Christians, political parties, the English language media, and the international media, for 'exaggerating' the extent and severity of the anti-Christian attacks. The State BJP leadership, RSS, VHP, BD, HJM and others of the Sangh Parivar virtually spoke in one voice, criticising the Christian 'missionaries' for foreign funded 'forcible' conversions of 'innocent, naïve' adivasis. These conversions were alleged to be part of an anti-national, international conspiracy directed at destabilising India. RSS, VHP, HJM and BD leaders accused the Congress in general, and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, in particular of being party to this alleged conspiracy. Statements from the VHP International General Secretary Dr. Pravin Togadia, explicitly accused the churches of being Italian-funded in their conversion activities, and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi [because of her Italian origins] of being party to the conspiracy. *While some local BJP leaders echoed such statements, there was no official effort to distance the government from such inflammatory and unsubstantiated allegations.*

It is significant that a number of these incidents took place on December 26th and 27th when Home Minister Haren Pandya was in Ahwa, Dangs. On December 27th the Home Minister was present when the peace committee was constituted.

The Government also sought to curb the Christians' right to protest. A Government Notification was issued against the proposed closure of Christian institutions on December 4, 1998 when a bandh in protest against the attacks on Christians was called. When the Christians went ahead with the bandh, show cause notices were issued to the Christian-managed schools ordering them the next day to explain why their grant-in-aid should not be withdrawn. *The apathy of the Government to Christian complaints is also borne out by the fact that no DSP was posted to the Dangs district for as long as 6 months. Nor was any salutary action taken in response to any of the repeated and consistent Christian complaints. Instead, when a Christian delegation presented a memorandum on December 29th to the Chief Minister in the presence of Home Minister Haren Pandya, Minister Bimal Shah, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Dr. Subba Rao and others, they were requested to take back their memorandum. After further assurances from Dr. Subba Rao in his office, they took back their memorandum. This was done after the spate of organised attacks unprecedented not only in Gujarat, but in India's history.*

The role of the police, including individual officers like Dy. SP Rajan Gaikwad, Inspector Damor and others, indicates substantial anti-Christian bias, dereliction of duty and even abuse of power. It is simply unconscionable and legally untenable, for the police not to have taken necessary action under the relevant sections of the Cr.P.C. and I.P.C. including Sec. 153A against the HJM, VHP and BD for their communal propaganda aimed at instigating anti-Christian hysteria and animosity. But since these sentiments were also reflected in the propaganda and statements of the ruling party, the BJP, this is scarcely surprising. The December 3, 1998 secret police circular from the DSP, Dangs office is starkly indicative of the police's and government's anti-Christian bias. The fact that a similarly biased circular no. D.2 Hindu-Christi/83/99 dated February 2, 1999 signed by P.B. Upadhyaya on behalf of the Director of Police [Intelligence] was sent to all important district police officials asking inter alia "which foreign countries" are Christian missionaries encouraged by? From which foreign countries and how much grant do they get? How do they make use of it? "What type of trickery is being used by the Christian missionaries [in their] defilement activities?" The tone and contents of this circular which has been taken up suo moto by the Gujarat High Court, again reveals the extent of the police and official bias; as the official attempt to first defend it, and then downplay it indicates the Government's complicity. In any case it is difficult to believe that any police official, esp. a senior one, would issue such a circular on such a delicate and controversial matter without official sanction. The fact that this circular was followed by another circular from the same office and officer, No.: 2/2.com/muslimactivity/84/99 which seeks information about Muslims "very often"

involved in anti-social and anti-national activities, including those "often involved in knives [sic.] or serious fights and murders" etc., confirms this anti-minority bias.

These circulars are now a subject of a public interest litigation [PIL] in a division bench of the Gujarat High Court. Justice M.R. Calla who took up the matter of the circular on Christians suo moto in his Order of February 11, 1999 stated that the Court would have to consider the Constitutional validity of this circular esp. in the light of Arts. 14 [right to equality], 15(1), 29(1) and 30. It was also to be considered whether such a census was permissible under the Census Act, 1948, and whether "this Circular has the sanction or approval of the Central Government?" On February 16th, Justice Calla ordered that the matter be put up before the Division Bench of the High Court dealing with PIL matters. Significantly, R.N. Bhattacharya, Director General of Police, C.I.D. Intelligence, Gujarat in his affidavit in reply to Justice Calla's original order, defended the circular as necessary "to assist the maintenance of the law and order problem and for maintenance of communal harmony between the two communities (Christian and Hindu)." He systematically defended every controversial part of the circular, and also argued that since this circular was a fax message, it was an "Intra-department communication (which) cannot prejudicially affect any of the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India to the citizens of our country. It is not a resolution or circular issued by the State Government."

This determined defence of this circular in the Gujarat High Court by a very senior police official must have been sanctioned by the highest quarters of the State Government, even if the original circular was an intra-department communication of which the Government had no prior knowledge. It is also indicative of the State Government's communal bias that this circular, and the other of the same date on Muslims have not been withdrawn, despite the public controversy over the issue.

The role of the Forest Department in the district is also suspect. In a number of incidents in which Christians and/or their shrines were attacked, Forest Department vehicles or its staff was allegedly involved according to testimonies made to the Citizen's Commission. In view of the strained relations between this department and the Dangs adivasis in general over the former's taking over as reserved forest tracts earlier cultivated by the latter, together with official sanction anti-Christian activities appear to have received, this appears probable. This aspect however, requires more investigation, before any conclusive finding can be arrived at.

VII. The Sangh Parivar and the HJM : Clear Nexus

The Sangh Parivar repeatedly claimed that it had nothing to do with the Hindu Jagran Manch. Apart from the BJP, the RSS, VHP and BD also repeatedly issued such denials. Janubhai Pawar in his evidence to the Commission also denied these links. So did Swami Aseemanand in separate testimonies to journalists and others. However, a recent book by Sadanand Damodar Sapre, published by Surichi Prakashan, the official publishing house of the RSS, contains the names of all the affiliates or offshoots of the RSS with brief descriptions. Of the 29 organisations listed, the HJM is placed at number 21. Apart from this, the overlapping membership within these organisations, with many HJM members also being active in BJP and other Sangh Parivar affiliates, apart from the similarities of ideological positions [often identical], have convinced the Commission that the HJM can not be viewed as wholly autonomous of, or unconnected to, the Sangh Parivar.

A former RSS pracharak, who preferred to remain anonymous but gave testimony in the Commission's possession, who was then active in Dangs has claimed that the RSS had planned a campaign against the tribal Christians as far back as 1996. Preliminary discussions on the allegedly 'anti-national' activities of the Christian missionaries and the urgent need to combat them, had started even earlier in 1990. He claimed that strategies for this anti-Christian campaign were systematically planned in shakha meetings held in Dangs from 1996 onwards. This first hand testimony from a RSS pracharak [as he was then]

present at these meetings would tend to confirm the role of the RSS, and its linkages with other organisations in the Sangh Parivar, in the later incidents investigated by the Commission.

The BJP, VHP and BD leaders spoke, more or less, in one voice throughout the country. There were notable exceptions like Madanlal Khurana, who criticised the attacks on Christians and later resigned from the Union Cabinet and the BJP's National Executive. The accusation of forcible conversions against the Christians, the downplaying of the incidents and their consequences, the allegations that the allegedly exaggerated reports of anti-Christian attacks were part of an international conspiracy to destabilise the BJP-led Union Government were repeatedly made by members of the Sangh Parivar, including Ministers in both the Gujarat and Union Governments. The conversions by the Christians were also alleged to be part of a foreign funded and inspired conspiracy. It was alleged, even by Union Ministers like the HRD Minister Dr. M.M. Joshi, that the media, including international media, hype over these incidents was connected to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi's leadership of the Congress. The Sangh Parivar leaders also alleged an Italian or Vatican-inspired conspiracy in which they tried to implicate Mrs. Gandhi. This convergence, often an identity, of views also indicates the linkages between the HJM and the rest of the Sangh Parivar, in Gujarat and the rest of the country.

VIII. The Role of the Union Government : Dereliction of Constitutional duties

There is no evidence of the Union government putting sufficient pressure on the BJP government in Gujarat to cease these anti-Christian activities. As we have shown, these actions had commenced as far back as 1997. There were clear indications that matters would worsen unless immediate remedial action was taken. Apart from media reports and repeated representations from Christians, these facts must have been reported to the Union Government by the intelligence agencies. Yet there is no evidence that the Union took up these issues with the required seriousness. It should be remembered that this is a Constitutional requirement under Article 355 and various entries in the Union and Concurrent lists.

The Union Home Ministry team that visited in early January 1999 was not allowed to visit Dangs or even to meet with any Christian delegation. Since there was no protest from the Union Government, this visit would appear to be largely a formality to assuage national and international pressures and outrage. The PM's visit also did not offer a corrective. Though the PM deplored the incidents, he gave a virtual clean chit to the Keshubhai Patel government. By calling for a national debate on conversions during his visit, he provided ammunition for the Sangh Parivar campaign that these incidents were a consequence of the forcible conversions by the Christians. Rev. Gaikwad [CNI] and other church leaders told the Commission that they believed that the PM's visit not only did not deter the HJM and its cohorts, but actually encouraged them. This would seem to be borne out by the two attacks on churches just after the visit. Later, when the State Government and the Sangh Parivar rejected the National Minorities Commission reports on the Gujarat incidents, and sharply criticised the Minorities Commission, there was no attempt by the Union Government to defend this body. The State Government in its Action Taken Report [ATR] on the Commission's report placed in the Assembly earlier this month has also rejected most of its findings and suggestions including the setting up of a State Minorities Commission. There has been no attempt by the Union Government to intervene in support of the National Minorities Commission.

The determined and unrelenting defence by the State Government of its controversial circulars on Christians and Muslims which are being judicially reviewed by the Gujarat High Court, is as indicated above, highly questionable legally and constitutionally. There however appears to have been no intervention by the Union Government which under Art. 355 has the responsibility to ensure that governance in Gujarat is carried on in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution including the observance of Fundamental Rights, which in this case prima facie appear to have been violated.

The Commission is forced to come to the conclusion that the Union Government in this case failed to fulfil its statutory and constitutional duties.

IX. The Role of the Gujarati Press : Biased

In addition to the instances cited in the report of biased and communally inflammatory reporting in the Gujarati language press, some of the more striking instances are given below. These instances are illustrative of our contention, many more could be cited by us to establish our point.

"Sandesh" in its December 26, 1998 issue in its report captioned "Riots in Ahwa due to stone-throwing by Christians on Hindu gathering", blamed the Christians as "the main cause of the riot". It claimed on the basis of an FIR[No. 74/98] lodged by Pradeep S. Patil of the Bajrang Dal, though the paper refers to him as VHP], that the Christians targeted 2-3 shops of the Muslims, and disturbed the HJM rally. The same reporter based in Valsad, claims that in Patilpada, Christians damaged a jeep owned by a Hindu. Another report of the same day from Ahwa is captioned, "Christians vandalised two Hindu temples", and claims that a Shiva temple at Shivgadha and a Dutt temple at Missionpada were vandalised and damaged by Christians. This report is unsubstantiated, and no evidence has yet been found to implicate any Christian in any such event in Ahwa—where no such event had been reported by any official source on that day. The Sandesh of the next day [27.12.98] published an official denial from the State capital Gandhinagar of any such vandalism or incident. The same day, the paper uncritically reported the State-wide dharnas held by Sangh Parivar organisations against the alleged Christian attacks on the HJM rally in Ahwa and on Hindu temples. It cited the Hindutva claim that adivasis who refuse to convert are targeted by Christians. Therefore, in this case, as in several others, "Sandesh" was only printing baseless anti-Christian propaganda, despite some of it being officially rebutted.

In its report [from Valsad, 28.12] on the Waki firing, the "Sandesh" claimed that "the Christians" fired at a Hindu assembly injuring 8 Hindus, and that this took place in the presence of the Home Minister Haren Pandya. [Minister Pandya was not present, and a Christian sarpanch alone fired allegedly in self defence when attacked by a mob, as detailed above in the "Summary of Evidence"]. Later the paper [30.12] virtually provides a justification for the burning of the church in Gadhvi, saying it was in retaliation for the breaking of a Hanuman statue "into three pieces" by Christians a year ago! Days later, during the anti-Christian attacks, the paper reports [Valsad, 2.1.99] that Christians have threatened to kill all who have reconverted. Similarly, another report [Surat, 7.1] claims that an adivasi Hindu boy Ramesh was severely beaten by Christians for refusing to convert in Rashmati village, Songadh, Vyara. "Every one converted is paid Rs. 100/- per day. The police are suspected to be hand in glove with the pastors as they refuse to register the complaint against the pastors. The Home Minister, Mr. Haren Pandya, had to intervene". The CM is uncritically quoted in the same issue threatening the press: "The news agencies which provide biased facts would be properly dealt with. The issue is exaggerated out of all proportion all over the nation and the world".

The "Sandesh" the next day therefore, [8.1] had a report that the visits to Dangs by political leaders were "the result of the exaggerated news by the electronic media and the English dailies which have contributed to the undue fear even among the Christians". The paper [9.1, unattributed] carried two reports: the first claiming that a convert is paid Rs. 3,000, a pastor Rs. 700 a month and is given a Suzuki motorcycle, while an attendant is given Rs. 300 a month. The second claims without any details provided that Mrs. Sonia Gandhi visited an adivasi woman who offered her land to the Navjyot Trust, Subir [which runs the Navjyot High School there]. Another report [Gandhinagar, 8.1] uncritically repeats the allegations that 10,000 families have been destroyed by Christianity, with 40,000-50,000 converted. "Christianity is a slow poison which is the cause of destruction of peace and family felling among the tribals. Christian missionaries have made use of Government resources for the purposes of conversions."

Sandesh also regularly reproduced inspired and quite absurd demographic projections of how an allegedly burgeoning Christian population would reduce Hindus to a minority in Dangs. In a typical report [Gandhinagar, 19.1], it was claimed that because of widespread coverage of the Dangs incidents, "it is

expected that Vatican city would provide 10 times greater budget to multiply the rate of conversions". Thus, Christians would become 60 per cent of the total population of Dangs. Because "crores of Rupees would be doled out for a greater number of conversions", "The next century will witness 10 per cent Christians in India".

The reporting and commentary in the other widely circulated Gujarati language daily "Gujarat Samachar" was also biased and irresponsible. Some illustrations will reveal this bias. In its report on the Ahwa rally [25.12], the paper repeated the HJM accusation as a fact; that 200 Christians had attacked a peaceful Hindu rally, provoking the Hindus to retaliate by burning churches. Pradeep S. Patil's [BD] complaint was cited as evidence. Another report [29.12] claimed that two Hindus: Kuvarjibhai and Harisingbhai were beaten up by Christians in Magharol, Surat district. No police or official source was cited. Two days before the PM's visit the paper reported [8.1.99], that some unidentified adivasis at the circuit house of Dangs claimed that Dangs had only one church which no one had attacked. In contrast, the Christians had allegedly demolished the temples of adivasi deities: Nagdevata and Vaghdevata, and are using them as toilets. These anonymous adivasis also claimed that the National Minorities Commission team was not ready to listen to them. The report went on to claim that adivasis were shot with bullets by a Christian Sarpanch in Galkund after the latter called them for peace talks. [As we have seen above, the firing was in Waki, and the Christian Sarpanch fired a shotgun discharging pellets (not bullets) when attacked, not during any 'peace talks']. The kind of communal tension that this baseless report would have caused is not difficult to imagine in the context of Gujarat.

During Mrs. Sonia Gandhi's visit, "Gujarat Samachar" reported [9.1.99] that Mrs. Gandhi deliberately avoided visiting any affected Hindus, and "neglected Hindus though various people from different religions had come to report to her." Another report [21.1.99] claimed that a Hanuman temple at Badalkhadi, 25 kms. from Ahwa was set on fire. Cow bones were allegedly thrown into the temple, and a Christian cross was allegedly hung there. As usual Pradeep S. Patil and "sadhus" were the source of this unsubstantiated and inflammatory report.

The "Nav Gujarat" Gujarati language daily's reporting also revealed a consistent bias, and also contributed to the spread of a communal consciousness. We will cite some instances. In its report on the violence in Ahwa during the HJM rally [26.12], it mirrored the HJM propaganda that the Christians had stoned the rallyists as part of a preplanned strategy. It further reported that Christians had attacked a Hanuman temple at Borkat village, 7 kms. from Ahwa which had provoked the Christians. No official source was cited. It commented that the Christians had forgotten the preachings of Jesus by attacking the tolerant Hindus. It followed up this reporting the next day [27.12], that after attacking "the Hindu saints" at the Ahwa rally on December 25th, the Christian mob had attacked Hindu temples with the police unable to do anything. It also claimed that the house of a BD member Sanjay D. Vyavahare was attacked in Patilpada, Ahwa, causing substantial losses. It claimed that the Christian attack on the "Gujarati vanvasis" was at the instruction of the church authorities, and warned that there would be retaliation based on the people's mandate.

The "Nav Gujarat" also tendentiously reported [2.1.99] the visit of the Union Home Ministry team claiming that the team had held that the Christians had attacked the Ahwa rally, and that Christian youth had mixed with the crowd at the rally in order to disrupt it. It later reported [5.1] that the violence had erupted because of forcible conversions by Christian missionaries, which led to Hindu retaliation. The report also claimed the churches were built without permission. In a report before Mrs. Sonia Gandhi's visit [8.1], it claimed many Hindus were injured in the alleged attack by Christians on the Ahwa rally, and that as many as 84 bullets were removed from their bodies in the hospital. The timing of this report and its baseless but incendiary claims about extensive bullet injuries, is particularly deplorable. On 9.1 Nav Gujarat reported that "Christian Sonia had swallowed poison from the Christians and would spew it out to the foreign press and supporters." In a later report on the day of the PM's

visit [10.1], it alleges that on December 25, 1998, adivasi Christians were having a Christmas party in the Ahwa church premises where they were eating meat and drinking liquor. It alleges that they tried to drag Hindu "vanvasis" inside the church and force them to do the same so as to convert them. It also reports that the Mulchond church was set on fire by the Christians themselves.

The consistently communal reporting by the vernacular press, (even officials admit), contributed substantially to the communal tensions in Dangs and the rest of the State. There are a number of legal and administrative remedies that the State Government could have employed to curb such irresponsible journalism. That it did not, is indicative of its own biases, as well as its inability to uphold the constitutional rights of a section of its citizens.

X. The Damage to the Secular Fabric: Inestimable

Government and Sangh Parivar propaganda has emphasized that there were no fatalities in Dangs, and that the damage was relatively low, less than Rs. 4 lakhs. But as a senior government official as well as Christian leaders pointed out and the Citizen's Commission verified, the damage is not adequately reflected by these figures. As the Commission found in its visits to Navjyot School, Subir in January and March 1999, the loss of the burnt Honda Splendour motorcycle and Mahindra jeep have not been reflected in the official estimates, starkly illustrate. For the poor adivasi population these losses are materially greater than they seem. The 'kuchha' structures, both shrines and dwellings that were demolished or damaged represent years of carefully accumulated savings. What is more, the emotional and religious divide that has been created, leading to a siege mentality among the Dangi Christians, and to a lesser extent among their co-religionists elsewhere, is the greater loss.

It should be remembered that this is the first instance in independent India that the Christian community has been so systematically targeted. The communal divisions and animosities have not only been accentuated in Dangs and the rest of Gujarat, but also in other parts of the country. The damage to the secular fabric of Gujarat and the country can not be minimised. The Dangs incidents have provided grist to the anti-Christian mill elsewhere as the brutal murders of Graham Staines and his young sons in Keonjhar district, allegedly by BD activists. If any organisation or political party comes to believe, as the Sangh Parivar and the present Gujarat Government have, that they can attack and harass any community with relative impunity, the consequences for secularism and democracy in our multi-religious and heterogeneous country, can be disastrous.

The Citizen's Commission saw for itself the alienation, and deep sorrow and agony of the Christian community, including desperately poor adivasis in Dangs who lost precious belongings, or had their religious shrines desecrated or their faith virtually proscribed. Much painstaking work, including developmental measures, will have to be undertaken before this alienation and fear psychosis can be overcome. If recent events are any indication, the tragedies of Dangs will be visited elsewhere in the country, with terrible consequences.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITIZEN'S COMMISSION

I. Ban HJM from Dangs

HJM is a recent outfit of the Sangh Parivar, the sole objective of it is to instigate people to create trouble on communal lines. It is this organisation that has been responsible for all the incidents in Dangs. The leader of HJM has found his organisation a convenient instrument to export, blackmail and terrorise people. Obviously he has the backing of the Government as is evident from the way he took us to a Government office to give his views— when the officials at his very sight stood up to receive him and thereafter waited outside literally in attendance. There are four cases registered against him and having regard to the activities he has been indulging in, he should have been externed from Dangs for the mere asking. HJM is not a religious organisation propagating religious tenets or beliefs, and as Janubhai Pawar himself claims, it is not even a political party. It is plain that it is an organisation of people whose sole programme is to terrorise tribals and Christians and to ostensibly take tribals to Unnai for forcible conversion.

II. Ban the Purificatory Programme (Shuddhikaran)

The purificatory process as is being carried out is nothing but forcible conversion. No authentic religious text shows that the garamkund (hot springs) at Unnai is a holy place and a dip in the hot springs would enable any one to get converted. The process thereafter such as compelling tribals to read "Hanuman Chalisa" or to have a Hanuman amulet around their necks and compelling them to take a laminated picture of Hanuman and hang up the pictures in their homes is not a known or recognised process of accepting any one to Hindu religion. (On the contrary, this clearly shows the connection between the Bajrang Dal and HJM). This is a process which HJM in connivance with Swami Aseemananda invented on their own, only to terrorise tribals and force them to accept what they consider as Hindu religion. All these activities are liable for prosecution u/s. 295, 295-A of the Indian Penal Code.

III. Withdraw all the Circulars Relating to Certain Information collection on Christians and Muslims

These circulars are patently violative of Articles 14, 15 and 25 of the Constitution of India. During the communal riots in Bombay (1992-93) a certain department of the Government went on a census spree only to mark out the houses occupied by the Muslims, which became an easy target for attack and demolition by the Hindu communalists.

IV. Increase the Number of Police Stations and Outposts

In the entire District, there are only two police stations and 200 policemen. We also found that in many villages, there is no proper access to police in times of emergency. Having regard to the widely dispersed character of the villages and the difficult terrain, the police strength is grossly inadequate. We recommend that there should be at least 10 police sub-stations with each station having at least 40 policemen on duty, so that sufficient security can be provided to the people in times of disturbances and violence.

V. The Need to Provide Basic Facilities of Education, Health, Development and Employment

It appears that the Gujarat Government spends approximately Rs. 30 Crores annually for the development of Dangs District which has about 311 Villages. This would work out to approximately Rs. 10 lakhs per

village. If the amount sanctioned had been really spent on development programmes, the present disgruntlement between communities would not have arisen so sharply nor political mileage drawn from them.

In the entire district there are only two Schools — both private — Deep Darshan and Navjyot which are the best. There about 6-7 other High Schools with a zero or negligible pass percentage. There are certain Ashram schools based on Gandhian principles of basic education which is not at all suited to the modern conditions of advancement in education. (In Deep Darshan, computer education has been introduced and in effect a better equipped school.)

We found that the roads are all neglected which makes it impossible to have access from one place to the other. There is hardly any doctor in any village and we found no primary health care centres. We also could not see any developmental activity in any of the villages, the people are still living on forest produce and very few on agriculture. The district gives us an impression that it has remained much the same as on the day the nation got independence.

Therefore, the basic question is where did the money go – Rs. 30 Crores a year? It is therefore necessary that there should be a social audit by an independent agency on the money supposed to have been spent in Dangs. It is also necessary for the Government to initiate various development projects in the villages which will generate jobs and security for the villagers. It is also necessary to have primary health care centres and medical facilities in every village. There is also an urgent need to start literacy centres for tribals.

The utter backwardness of the district has only facilitated politicians and people like Janubhai Pawar, Ramesh Balya Choudhari and Swami Aseemanand to exploit the tribals of the Dangs, without there being any genuine desire to bettering their living conditions.

VI. Need to set up State level cell by the National Minorities Commission

In August 1998, the National Minorities Commission had requested the BJP Government to provide information about "forced conversions" in the State. The State Government could not furnish even a single recorded case of "forced conversion". Again when the Dangs incident of 25th December, 1998 took place, the National Minorities Commission sent a "Bench" to Ahmedabad obviously to inquire into the state of affairs. It is unfortunate that the "Bench" members did not visit Dangs where they could have had first hand information. We do not know why they went back from Ahmedabad. We are also not aware of what concrete measures the Commission has suggested to prevent any recurrence of the incidents in Dangs.

Despite this, we suggest that in all such areas that are prone to minority persecution, the National Minority Commission (NMC) should set up cells which will not only be able to assess first hand the extent of atrocities on minorities, but also be able to take preventive steps. It is futile to think that there are no such powers under the Act. Those who swear by the Constitution must learn to innovate to stand by the Constitution both in its letter and in its spirit. We believe that a state level minorities cell (which has an official status, having been appointed by the NMC), would protect the minorities in a more effective manner.

VII. The Need to Establish Peace Committees in riot-prone areas

We suggest that in any event, the local police and the collectorate should organise peace committees. These committees must comprise of responsible citizens of the area (not Janubhai Pawars or Ramesh Balya Choudharis), belonging to different communities, for the purpose of taking initiatives for peace and harmony for protecting secular, democratic cultures in civil society.

In Conclusion

The demolition of Babri Masjid, the attack on Christians and Christian Institutions at Dangs, the triple murder of Australia-born Graham Staines and his young sons — all form a part of the strategy of the Sangh Parivar to divide the people and keep them permanently divided on the basis of majority Hindus and the rest of non-Hindus, so as to play the number game to keep themselves in power for ever. The Sangh Parivar wants to project that it is all a sign of Hindu revivalism. Far from it, they do not represent the best or the essence of Hindu culture. Destruction of any Mosque, Church, or any religious place, killing of innocent persons, forcing people to undergo a bogus purificatory process of conversion can never be a part of Hindu culture. Conversions take place and will take place all over the world, as long as freedom of conscience remains recognised as part of human rights. In India, if Christian missionaries have succeeded in converting certain sections of people belonging to Hindu society, that is because of the oppressive caste system that treats millions of human beings worse than animals. Sangh Parivar is not interested in eliminating the caste system as they still talk of Sanatani Hindu faith which still considers birth in any caste as the sole determining factor of social status. The transformation of a tribal or a dalit into a life of dignity is anathema to the philosophy of Sangh Parivar. The attacks on Deep Darshan School or on Navjyot School, or for that matter, the attack on Graham Staines and his two sons, are all part of the ongoing fascist campaign to eliminate all principles of a secular democratic life from the body polity of the country.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

Jeep burnt at
Navjyot High School, Subir ➡



⬅ Karadi Amba

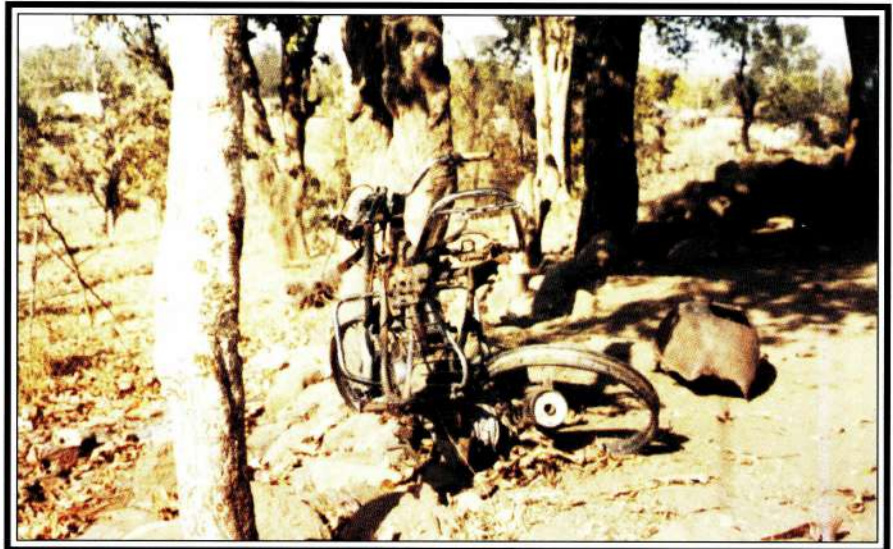
Church at Diwan Temrun ➡





Ⓒ Burnt Church, Jalsol. Not yet repaired,
March 14, 1999

Burnt Honda Splendour motorcycle,
Navjyot High School, Subir Ⓒ



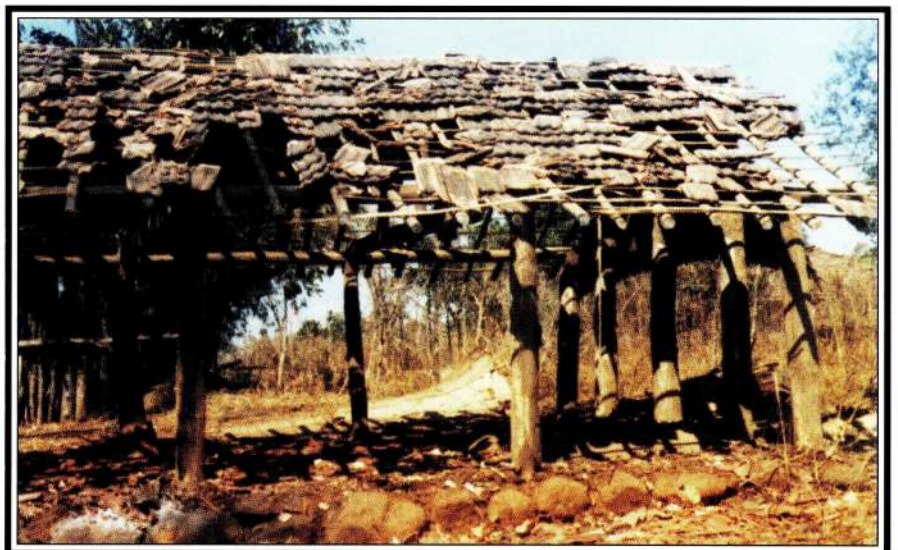
Ⓒ Karadi Amba

Jamlapada-Dang's ➡



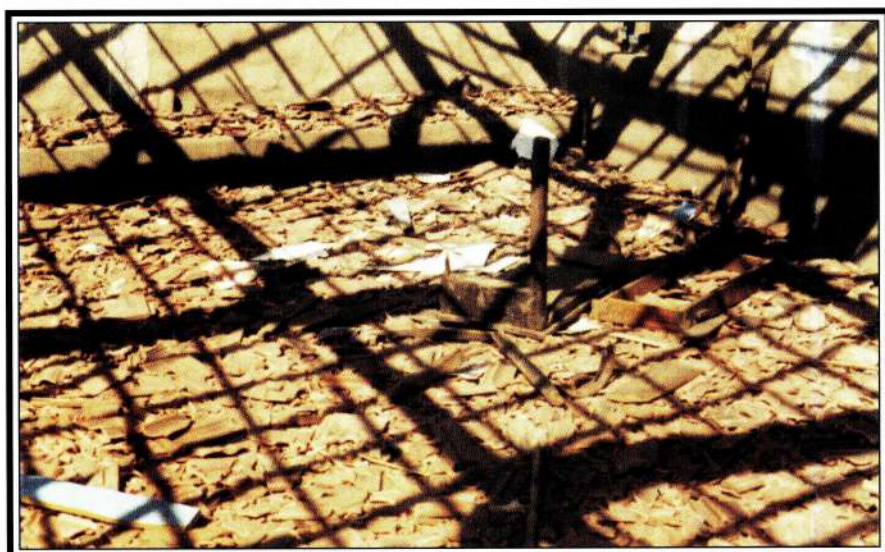
➡ Naklya Hanvat

Karanjapada ➡





☉ Jamlapada

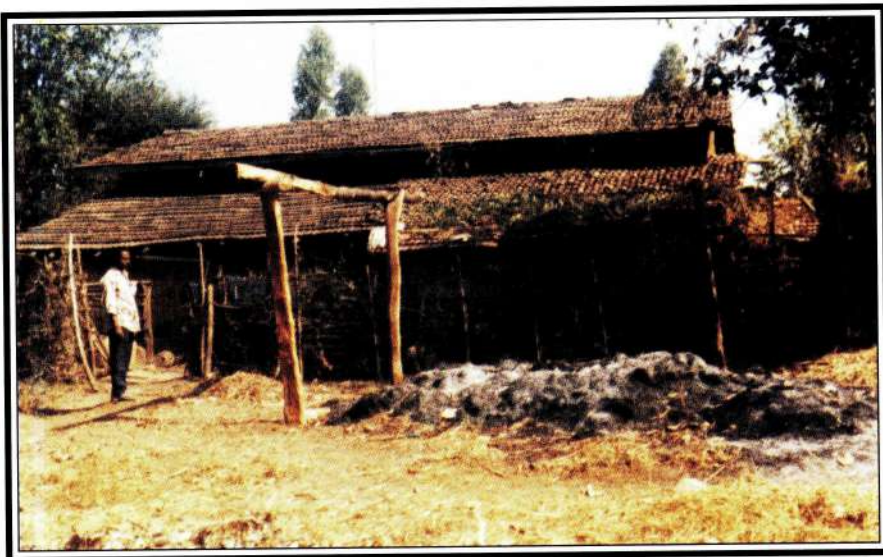


Behdun ☉



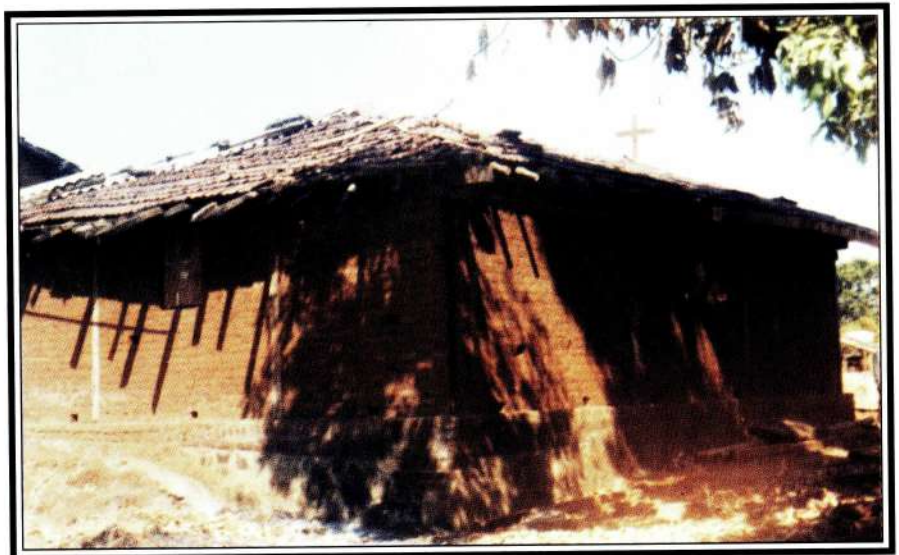
☉ Pipaldahad-Bardal

Baripada (Gavhan) ➡



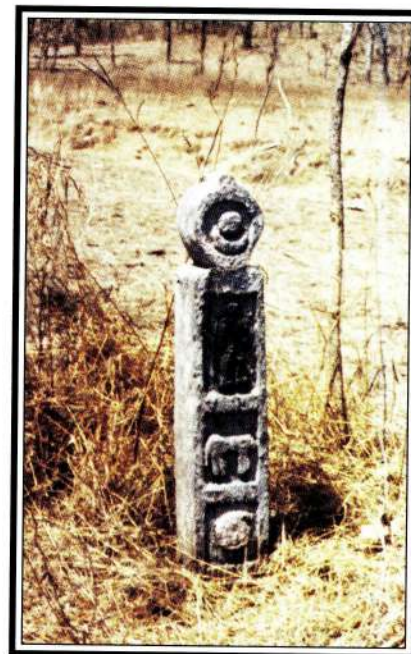
Mr. Ananda Varde, Christian man here was burnt at night 11-1-99 after visiting of Prime Minister at Ahora.

Vaki ➡





Karadi Amba



Vaghdevta-Nagdevta idol,
[Tribal God] Jhalsol village, Dangs.
Hindutva forces & HJM claimed
this had been broken by Christians.
Photographed intact in its original
place by Kamal, March 14, 1999



Door of house of Late Ulusji Pawar,
Dasapada



Deep Darshan Boys Hostel roof damaged

Church at Jamlapada, still not fully repaired because of inadequate compensation, March 1999



Christian injured in attack at Jarsol (Jhalsol village)

Church/Prayer Hall burnt at Jamlapada



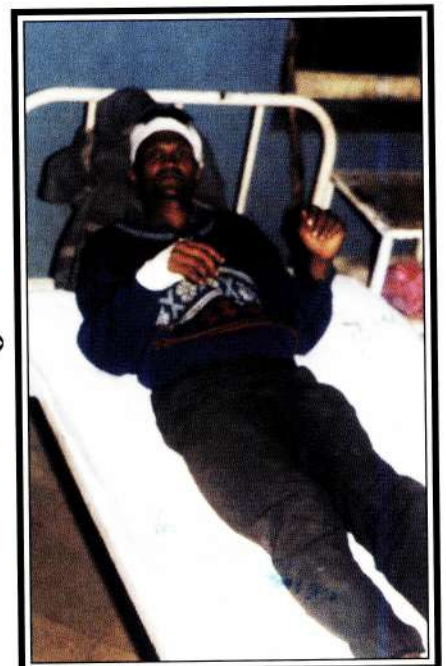


☛ Forcible conversion of Christian couple, Jamunvihar



Eldest daughter and grand daughter
of Late Ulusji Pawar, Darpada ☛

Christian injured in attack ☛



અંક-૩ વર્ષ-૩૦ માર્ચ '૯૯
સંવત-૨૦૫૫ યુગાબ્દ-૫૧૦૦-૫૧૦૧ કિંમત રૂ.૫

વિશ્વહિન્દુ સમાચાર

ધર્માન્તરણ એજ
રાષ્ટ્રાન્તરણ એજ...
એજ રાષ્ટ્રદ્રોહ



એ શું કરે છે
તેની તેમને
ખબર નથી છે
ભોળા હિન્દુઓને જ
ખબર નથી

English translation of the
Gujarati pamphlet distributed
by Hindu Jagran Manch
before 25th Dec. 1998

COME TO THE RALLY

COME TO THE RALLY

HINDU JAGRAN MANCH, DANGS DISTRICT

The priests of the Christian religion are scared of the awakening of patriotic Hindus and have begun insulting the holy people and volunteers of the "Hindu Jagran Manch" through daily papers. This is an insult to the whole of Hindu society. It is indeed the sacred duty (*dharmanu kaam*) of the Hindu religion to teach the bold Christian priests a lesson and to put them in their place.

The conspiracy of converting gullible tribals (*vanvasis*) by giving money, goods, black magic and also through threats is unearthed now. Hence, the "Hindu Jagran Manch" is determined to stop the conversions and curb all the activities of Christian priests.

For the safety of the nation and the Hindu religion we have organized a massive rally at Ahwa. All Hindus are requested to join the rally in large numbers.

Signed by Janubhai A. Pawar
President, Hindu Jagran Manch

ડાંગ જિલ્લાનો આજનો સીમો વધારે ભયાનક સમયનો પ્રશ્ન હોય તો તે ખ્રિસ્તી પાર્ટી દ્વારા ચાલતી વડાણ પ્રવૃત્તિ છે. અખુલ, ભાલાઓના વનગામીની જેને હુલકપટ, લોભ-લાલચ અને અનેક પ્રકારની કપટલીલાઓથી વટલાવે છે. રોવાનો આંચળો ભોટી આ રોવાનો વનવાસી સમાજના ભયાનક ગેરલાભ લઈ શોપણ કરી રહ્યાં છે. જગતમાં આ ખ્રિસ્તી પાદરીઓ જ્યાં જ્યાં ગયા તેઓએ ત્યાંની પ્રજાને લૂંટીને બેકાલ બંધાવી છે. જૂઠાંણા અને હુલકપટો એ એમનો ધર્મ છે.

ખ્રિસ્તી પાદરીઓ પાંચા નામથી ચોરી કરવાનું અને જુકું ખોલવાનું પણ શીખવે છે. ખિરાતી બનેલા આજે પણ પ્રમાણનો અને દાખલાઓમાં ખ્રિસ્તી બન્યાં છતાં હિન્દુ લખાવે છે. તેઓ હિન્દુઓને ગાળો આપે છે, હિન્દુ ધર્મની નિંદા કરે છે અને ખોટા લાભો લેવા ખોતાને સરકારી કામકાજોમાં હિન્દુ લખાવે છે.

હિન્દુઓ જાગો યાગે જૂઠાંણા ચલાવી તમારા હક્કો હક્ક કરી જતાં આવા ચોરો સાથે રાજત સંબંધ ફરો અને આવા લોકોની શાન ઠેકાણો લાવો.

તા. ૨૯-૬-૯૮ ને સોમવારે સવારે ૧૧.૦૦ કલાકે પાટીલવાડા - આહવા મુકામે એકત્ર થઈ એક વિરાટ રેલી નીકળશે અને કલેક્ટરશ્રીને આવેદનપત્ર અપાશે.

તમારા હક્કો માટે જાગુ થઈ મોટી સંખ્યામાં આ રેલીમાં જોડાવા વિનંતી છે.

લિ.,
સંપોજકશ્રી
રમેશભાઈ બી. ચૌધરી (દોહડ)
હિન્દુ જાગરણ મંચ - ડાંગ જિલ્લા

HINDU JAGRAN MANCH

Conversion activity by Christian Priests is the most dangerous burning problem at present in Dangs district. Innocent and illiterate tribals are converted through cheating, alluring by offering temptations and other deceiving activities, under the pretext of services, these devils are taking advantage of tribal society and exploit them. In the world, wherever these Christian priests have looted its people and have made them helpless. Lie and deceit are their religion.

Christian priests teach to steal and to tell lies in the name of religion, converted christians today after being concerted write Hindu in their certificate and proof evidences. They condemn Hindu religion and write Hindu to take advantage in Government Programmes.

Hindus, awake and struggle, continuous with these robbers who snatch away your rights by telling lies and teach these people a lesson.

A mammoth rally will be taken out on Monday, 29/06/98 at 11.00 am from Patilwada-Ahwa and will submit memorandum to the Collector.

You are requested to awake for your rights and to join this really in a large number.

Yours,
Co-ordinator
Rameshbhai Chaudhari (Dron)
Hindu Jagran Manch -Dang District



વંદે માતરમ

જય શ્રી રામ

"ધર્મ : રક્ષિતમ્ રક્ષિતઃ"

ભારત માતા કી જય

બજરંગ દળ - વિશ્વ હિન્દુ પરિષદ

મણીનગર સ્ટેશન, પ્રા.નં. દક્ષિણ કર્જાવતી.

પ્રિય ધર્મબંધુજનો,

પ્રિય ધર્મપ્રેમી માતાઓ, બંધુઓ, બહેનો આપ સૌ વિશ્વ હિન્દુ પરિષદ અંતર્ગત સંસ્થા "બજરંગ દળ" વિશે આપ કયું પણ જાણતા જ હશો. છતાં, વિશેષ જાણકારી આપવા માંગીએ છીએ.

"બજરંગ દળ" પુલકોનું વિશાળ સંગઠન છે.

"બજરંગ દળ" નું ધ્યેય

- દેશની રક્ષા એટલે ભારતમાતાની રક્ષા કરવી.
- હિન્દુ સમાજની ઉપેક્ષા કરનાર સામે બુલંદ અવાજ ઉઠાવો કરવો.
- ધર્મ, સંસ્કૃતિની રક્ષા કરવી.
- હિન્દુ બેન-બેટીની રક્ષાર્થે કામ કરવું.
- રાષ્ટ્ર વિરોધી તત્વો સામે ઝઘમઘું.
- ગૌહત્યા સામે જેઠાદ જગાવવી.
- હિન્દુ કન્યાની મુસ્લીમો દ્વારા કસામણી તેમજ ખિરતી મોસીનરીની રાષ્ટ્ર વિરોધી કામગીરી સામે જન જાગૃતિ અભિયાન.
- બજરંગ દળ એટલે રાષ્ટ્ર શક્તિ - હિન્દુ શક્તિ.
- જગત જનની માં જગદંબા, એ જ દુર્ગા માતા એ જ માં ભારત માતા તો તેમના રક્ષણ માટે ચાલો રાષ્ટ્ર હિત માટે જોડાવ "બજરંગ દળ" માં
- "દેશનું અસ્તિત્વ તો, આપણું અસ્તિત્વ"
- તો દેશ માટે ચાલો પુવાનો ઉમટી પડો.
- "બજરંગ દળ" માં જોડાઈ ભારત માતાનું સ્વયં ગદા કરીએ.

❀ ત્રિશૂલ દિક્ષાન્ત વિધિ કાર્યક્રમ ❀

મહોદય શ્રી

મુખ્ય મહેમાન : શ્રી હંસમુખભાઈ પટેલ (મુખ્ય વક્તા - કર્જાવતી-બજરંગદળ સંયોજક)
અતિથિ વિશેષ : શ્રી દિલીપભાઈ પટેલ (કર્જાવતી દક્ષિણ જિલ્લા બજરંગદળ સંયોજક)
આગવું સ્થાન : શ્રી અયુભાઈ બાગવાળિયા હિન્દુ પરિષદ દક્ષિણ જિલ્લા - મંત્રી

દિનાક : ૧૫-૯-૯૮

વાર : મંગળવાર

સ્થળ : સ્વામિનારાયણ મંદીર,

સમય : સાંજે ૭:૦૦ કલાકે

રામબાગ, મણીનગર કર્જાવતી

❀ નિમંત્રક ❀

શંકરરાવ મોરે (કાર્યકારી અધ્યક્ષ વિ.હી.પ)
ભીખાભાઈ પ્રજાપતિ (મંત્રી)
ડો. દેવેન્દ્ર શર્મા (સંયોજક, વિ.હી.પ પ્રમુખ)

સુપીર સેની (બજરંગ દળ સંયોજક)
અમૃત દેસાઈ (બજરંગ દળ સહ સંયોજક)

નોંધ : વરરાદ હશે તો પણ કાર્યક્રમ ચાલું રહેશે.

પ્રાંતીય કાર્યાલય : વિશ્વ હિન્દુ પરિષદ ડો. વજીર ભવન, ૧૧, મંડાલશી સોસાયટી, પાલડી, કર્જાવતી. દુરભાષ : ૪૧૪૦૧૫

મુદ્રક : શ્રી સાઈનાથ પ્રિન્ટર્સ અમીનગુપ્તા મણીનગર, અમદાવાદ-૮.

Bajranj Dal – Vishva Hindu Parishad

Muninagar Station, Division-South Karnavati

Dear Fellow Religion followers,

Dear religion lover mothers, brothers, sisters, All of you must be knowing some thing about Bajrang Dal working under Vishva Hindu Parishad. Then even, we want to give more information.

Bajrang Dal is a wide Organisation of Youth.

Objectives of Bajrang Dal are :

- To Protect country i.e. mother India.
- To raise a loud voice against people ignoring Hindu Sabha
- To protect religion, culture
- To work for protection of Hindu women (sister & daughter)
- To fight against anti-national elements.
- To go for crusade against cow-slaughter
- People's awareness drive against trapping of Hindu girls by Muslims and anti-national activities by Christian missionaries
- Bajrang Dal means national power-Hindu Power.
- World creator mother Jagdamba, she is only Durga mata, she is only Bharatmata (Mother India)

Hence let us join Bajrang Dal for protection of national interest.

"Our existence only if country exists."

Come youth come out for the country.

Let us join 'Bajrang Dal and pay the gratitude to her.

Trishul Dikshant Vidhi Programme**Gentleman**

Chief Guest : Shri Harmukhbhai Patel (Guest Lecturer Karnavati Bajrang Dal)

Guest : Shri Dilipbhai Patel (Co-ordinator, Karnavati South Dist. : Bajrang Dal)

Shri Bachubhai Ladva (Vishva Hindu Parishad, South Distric Sectretary)

Date : 15/9/98

Day : Tuesday

Palce : Swaminarayan Temple

Time : 7.00 P.M.

Rambag, Maninagar, Karnavati

Host

Shankar Rao More (Executive President VHP)

Sudhir Saini (Co-ordinator Bajrang Dal)

Bhikhubhai Prajapati (Secretary)

Amrut Desai (Joint Co-ordinator Bajrang Dal)

Dr. Devendra Sharma (Co-ordinator VHP President)

Note: Programme will take place even is it is raining.

Regional Office : Vishva Hindu Parishad, Dr. Vanikar Bhavan, 11, Mahalaxmi Society, Paladi, Karnavati, Telephone : 414015

Printer : Shri Sainath Printer, Aminbhuvan, Muninagar, Ahmedabad-8

ચાલો ટોંકરવા



ચાલો ટોંકરવા

"હિન્દુ જગે તો વિશ્વ જગેગા"

વિશાદ હિન્દુ સંમેલન

વિશાદ હિન્દુ સંમેલન સંજ્ઞા

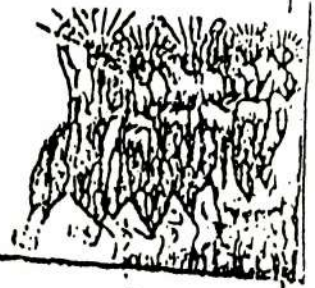
સેવાના આંચળો ઓઢીને ફરતા ખ્રિસ્તી પાદરીઓનાં અસલી ચહેરાને ઓળખી "રુકજાવ" કહેવાનો આવસર આવી ગયો છે. આપણા વિસ્તારમાં ચટાળ પ્રવૃત્તિ દ્વારા આપણી હિન્દુ સંસ્કૃતિ પર કુઠારાધાત ધઈ રહ્યા છે. તેની સામે એક અવાજે પડકાર ફેંકવા અને હિન્દુ શક્તિનાં દર્શન કરાવવા હિન્દુ સંમેલનમાં પધારવા આપ સૌ હિન્દુ ભાઈઓ -બહેનોને હાર્દિક આમંત્રણ છે.

હિન્દુ જાગરણ મંચ
સોનગઢ વિભાગ

સાંસ્કૃતિક કાર્યક્રમ

ડાંગ દરબારનું પ્રખ્યાત ડાંગી વૃત્ત
અને

આદીવાસી સોંગાડયા પાર્ટી



"જાગરણ હિન્દુ ફીરસે, વિજય ધ્વાની ફેરવશે,
અંગડાઈ લે ચલે પુત્ર હૈ માં કે કષ્ટ મિટાશે"

નોંધ : ભોજન વ્યવસ્થા રાખવામાં આવેલ છે.

વિનિયંત્રિત, સુખ દેવ વડેલો, પાટણ

"The world will awaken if Hindu Awakes"

GREAT HINDU CONVENTION

Date : 25th December, Evening at 5.00 P.M.

Now a time has come to recognise original face of Christian priests
who pretend to serve people and to tell them "Stop"
Attacks on our Hindu culture are being hurried out by conversion activities in our area.

All Hindu men and women are heartily invited to
Hindu Convention to challenge this conversion activity
and to show them Hindu Power.

**Hindu Jagaran Manch
Songadh Division**

Cultural Programme

Famous Dangi Dance of Dang-Darburs.
and
Adivasi Songadya Party

"Rise, We Hindus have to awaken again to unfurl the voice with enthusiasm
have the son embarked to end the misery of their Mother.

Note : Food arrangements have been made.



Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh

Rakshabandhan Message

1. India is a country of Hindus
2. All Indians are children of Mother India
3. We are all brothers as, we are children of one mother.
4. Our religion of Rama & Krishna is pious. To (convert it leave it is a sin
5. We all must protect our religion & country together today it is the message of Rakshabandhan.

Jai Bharatmata (Mother India)

Publisher : Dr. Bipinbhai Jani

Printer : Jyoti Printers, Kosamba

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હિન્દુ જાગરણ મંચ

ક રક્ષાબંધન સંદેશ ક

- ❖ ભારત આપણો દેશ છે.
- ❖ આપણે બધા હિન્દુઓ ભારતમાતાના સંતાન છીએ.
- ❖ એક જ માતાના સંતાન હોવાથી બધા હિન્દુઓ એક બીજાનાં ભાઈ-બહેન છે.
- ❖ રામ કૃષ્ણનો આપણો ધર્મ પવિત્ર છે, એને છોડવું પાપ છે.
- ❖ આપણે સૌ ભેગા મળી એકબીજાને રાખડી બાંધી આપણા હિન્દુ ધર્મનું અને આપણા સમાજનું રક્ષણ કરવાનો સંકલ્પ કરીએ એ જ રક્ષાબંધનનો સંદેશ છે.

ભારતમાતાની જય

! ગણપતસિંહ વસાવા

પ્રમુખ

હિન્દુ જાગરણ મંચ

પ્રકાશક - ગણપતસિંહ વસાવા મુદ્રક : શ્રીધર પ્રિન્ટીંગ પ્રેસ, નવસારી.



HINDU JAGARAN MANCH

Rakshabandhan Message

- ❑ India is our Country
- ❑ We all Hindus are children of mother India.
- ❑ As we are children of one mother only, all Hindus are brother and sister of each other.
- ❑ Our religion of Rama-Krishna is pious. (To convert it is a sin. To leave it is a sin.)
- ❑ The message of Rakshabandhan is to pledge to protect our Hindu religion and our society by typing Rakhi to each other unitedly.

Jai Bharatmata (Mother India)

Ganpatisinh Vasava
President
Hindu Jagran Manch

Publisher : Ganpati Vasava

Printer : Sridher Printing Press, Navsari

હિન્દુ જાગરણ મંચ

卐 રક્ષાબંધન સંદેશ 卐

- ❶ ભારત આપણો દેશ છે.
- ❷ આપણે બધા હિન્દુઓ ભારતમાતાના સંતાન છીએ.
- ❸ એક જ માતાના સંતાન હોવાથી બધા હિન્દુઓ એક બીજાનાં ભાઈ-બહેન છે.
- ❹ રામ કૃષ્ણનો આપણો ધર્મ પવિત્ર છે, એને છોડવું પાપ છે.
- ❺ આપણે સૌ ભેગા મળી એકબીજાને રાખડી બાંધી આપણા હિન્દુ ધર્મનું અને આપણા સમાજનું રક્ષણ કરવાનો સંકલ્પ કરીએ એ જ રક્ષાબંધનનો સંદેશ છે.

ભારતમાતાની જય

! ગણપતસિદ્ધ વસાવા
પ્રમુખ
હિન્દુ જાગરણ મંચ

પ્રકાશક - ગણપતસિદ્ધ વસાવા મુદ્રક : શ્રીધર પ્રિન્ટીંગ પ્રેસ, નવચારી.



HINDU JAGARAN MANCH

Rakshabandhan Message

- ❑ India is our Country
- ❑ We all Hindus are children of mother India.
- ❑ As we are children of one mother only, all Hindus are brother and sister of each other.
- ❑ Our religion of Rama-Krishna is pious. (To convert it is a sin. To leave it is a sin.)
- ❑ The message of Rakshabandhan is to pledge to protect our Hindu religion and our society by typing Rakhi to each other unitedly.

Jai Bharatmata (Mother India)

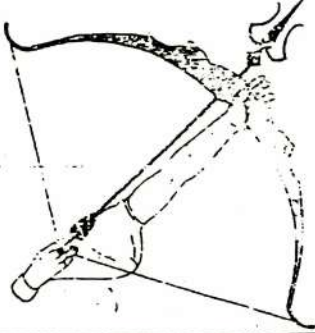
Ganpatishinh Vasava
President
Hindu Jagran Manch

Publisher : Ganpati Vasava

Printer : Sridher Printing Press, Navsari

વિશ્વ હિન્દુ પરિષદ, બારડોલી

હિન્દુઓ સાવધાન!
મુસ્લિમોના અધમ કૃત્યોથી ચેતો....



હિન્દુ સમાજ 'ધાર્મિક પરપેક્ષતા અને સહિષ્ણુતા' ની સાદર આંદોને ધોર નિદ્રામાં સૂતો છે ત્યાર મુસ્લિમો દ્વારા હિન્દુ સમાજને ઇત્ર ભિન્ન કરવાના યોજનાબદ્ધ પ્રયત્નો થઈ રહ્યા છે. હિન્દુ સમાજે વહેલાસર એનાથી ચેતવું જ રહ્યું.

ગો-ગંગા-ગાયત્રી-ગીતાના ઉપાસકો! ચેતો..... હવે તો ચેતો.....!

- હિન્દુ સંસ્કૃતિ અને મૂલ્યો પર અનેક આચાર્યશાસ્ત્રીઓએ ચર્ચા કરી છે.
- 'ગો-ગંગા-ગાયત્રી' ની સાથે જ આંધ્રો ગાંધી જેવાં નેતાઓનું સાધન બની ગયું છે.
- અન્યથા જોવાથી, ગો-ગંગા-ગાયત્રી હિન્દુ સંસ્કૃતિના મહત્ત્વની મુસ્લિમો હિન્દુ સમાજનાં શત્રુ છે. અનેક મુસ્લિમો દ્વારા ગો, ગંગા, ગાયત્રી અને મુસ્લિમોની પત્નીઓને માર્યા છે.

બારડોલી પ્રદેશના કેટલાક કિસ્સાઓ

- ગો-ગંગા-ગાયત્રીની મુસ્લિમો દ્વારા મુસ્લિમોની પત્નીઓને માર્યા છે.
- ગો-ગંગા-ગાયત્રીની મુસ્લિમો દ્વારા મુસ્લિમોની પત્નીઓને માર્યા છે.
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સાવધાન હિન્દુ કન્યાઓ!

- દર વર્ષે પાંચ લાખ જેટલી હિન્દુ કન્યાઓને મુસ્લિમ મુંઝાઓ ફોજવાથી પીડાતી. આંખોની અંધારાને અપહરણ કરી લેવાની આચાર્ય પદો છે અને મુસ્લિમ પંડાઓ આંખોની અંધારાને પીડી છે.
- અપહરણ પછી તે પંડાઓને મુસ્લિમોના આંધ્રોના પંડાઓના આંખોને મુસ્લિમોની અંધારાને પીડી છે.
- મુસ્લિમોના પંડાઓ દ્વારા ફોજ કરી રહ્યાં અને પંડાઓ પાંચ કરવાની અંધારાને પીડી છે.
- હિન્દુ કન્યાઓને ફોજ કરવા આંખોની અંધારાને પીડી છે.
- ફોજ કરવા પછી તે પંડાઓને મુસ્લિમોની અંધારાને પીડી છે.
- ફોજ કરવા પછી તે પંડાઓને મુસ્લિમોની અંધારાને પીડી છે.

હિન્દુ કન્યાઓને કોણ ફસાવે છે?

- મુસ્લિમો દ્વારા ફોજ કરવા આંખોની અંધારાને પીડી છે.
- મુસ્લિમો દ્વારા ફોજ કરવા આંખોની અંધારાને પીડી છે.
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સાવધાન ! 'ગટરના આ પ્રવાહનો રેલો તમામ ઘર સુધી ન પહોંચે....

- તે માટે આટલું જરૂર કરો....
- ગટરના આ પ્રવાહનો રેલો તમામ ઘર સુધી ન પહોંચે....
- ગટરના આ પ્રવાહનો રેલો તમામ ઘર સુધી ન પહોંચે....
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આ વિલટ રમવાનો કાચો ઉકેલ લાવવા આટલું જરૂર કરો....

- આ વિલટ રમવાનો કાચો ઉકેલ લાવવા આટલું જરૂર કરો....
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આ સમસ્યા આપણી છે....

આપણે જ ઉકેલવાની છે....

'ઉઠો, જાઓ અને ધ્યેય પ્રાપ્તિ સુધી મંડ્યા રહો'

સ્વામી વિવેકાનંદ

પ્રજાસત્તાક હિન્દુ પરિષદ, બારડોલી પ્રમંડ

VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD, BARDOLI

Caution Hindus!

Beware of inhuman deeds of Muslims...

Hindu community is in sound sleep by covering itself under sheet of "secularism and tolerance" Whereas systematic planned efforts are being carried out to shatter Hindu Community. Hindu Community will have to get cautioned from them at the earliest.

Beware Hindu Girls!

Every year about five lacs of Hindu girls are allured, trapped raped and married by Muslim ruffians and children are given birth by them. They are enslaved and sold to Arab countries.

- ❖ Illegible.....
- ❖ To Produce more and more children by marrying Hindu girls is considered as service to Islam by Muslims.
- ❖ Money in abundance is spent in Planned training to Muslim ruffians on how to trap Hindu girls.
- ❖ Illegible.....

Who traps Hindu girls?

- ❖ A well Muslim dressed roaming around at the school gate or college gate.
- ❖ College muslim who work together.
- ❖ Hindu made servant working in Muslim's house because of his wife.
- ❖ On getting opportunity Muslim teacher, doctor, lawyer make Hindu girls who visit them make them their wives or mistresses.
- ❖ A Muslim living in neighbourhood kidnap girl of Hindu family.
- ❖ Muslim sitting at the pan shop traps Hindu girl who is passing through the road.
- ❖ Hindu girls visiting ladies garment shop or cosmetics shop run by Muslims are trapped by owners
- ❖ A Muslim who develops family relations with Hindu family has target of that family's daughter and he abducts her by trapping her.

Devotees of cow-Ganga-Gayatri-Gita
BewareBeware now.....

- ❖ Attacks continue on Hindu culture and values.
- ❖ Where is the matter of "Women as Goddesses" A Woman has become a thing of joy (Use)
- ❖ Muslims are destroying Hindu Community by slaughter houses, slaughtering cows and making Hindu girls elope Crime, drugs, terrorism are Muslim's empire.

Some case examples from Bardoli area

1. Illegible.....
2. Kinnari (M.Sc. Gold Medalist girl of Bardoli today is leading life as Begum of Arif Nana Muslim.
3. Married Munjula was kidnapped by muslim from that village (vankaner)
4. A young Patel girl of Bardoli who married to a Muslim who is Pinjara, now lives alone with children in station area.
5. Yogita Rimar of Bardoli was made to elope by Asif who was working at Petrol Pump, she has returned to Bardoli after becoming of mother of a child.
6. Arati Khatri of Bardoli is today also a slave of slave.
7. Recently, Minaxi-married woman of Bhundari community has become victim of Sher Ali's sexual desires.

Cautions This gutter stream should not reach all houses

For this not to happen definitely do this :-

1. In case of any illegible muslim tearing Hindu girl immediately contract Vishva Hindu parishad Durgamata or 'Bajrang Dal' 'Teen Agers' tailors, main market, Bardoli.
2. Register Police case.
3. Bring to come respectfully your daughter who had become muslim or entrust her to Vishva Hindu Parishad.

To Solve this problem permanently , do this much.....

Illegible.....

This is our problem.....
We have to solve it.....

"Awake, rise and continue work till goal is achieved"
-Swami Vivekanand

SUBMISSION
MADE
TO
THE SPECIAL BENCH
OF THE
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES
(MR. BAWA SINGH AND DR. JAMES MASSEY)
BY
THE UNITED CHRISTIAN FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (GUJARAT)

(REPRESENTED BY :
BISHOP STANISLAUS FERNANDES SJ
&
FR. CEDRIC PRAKASH SJ)



UNITED CHRISTIAN FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

C/O BISHOP'S HOUSE, MIRZAPUR, AHMEDABAD - 380 001

☎ 5624777

7th January, '99

The Special Bench
Of
The National Commission for Minorities
Camp : Circuit House, Gandhinagar

Dear Sir,

Welcome to Gujarat !

The incidents against Christians and other minorities right through 1998 and very specially from December 25th (Christmas Day), have not only rattled us as a community but has also created a tremendous feeling of fear and insecurity among all Christians, especially those living in our rural areas.

We are appending to this letter all relevant materials which we hope will help the National Commission for Minorities to arrive at an assessment of the reality here.

The systematic and the planned attacks against the Christians and the totally insufficient response from the Government to ensure that the Christians have peace and security have literally brought us to the end of the tunnel.

We sincerely hope, Sirs, that your visit will help restore our lost confidence and that this land from which the Mahatma launched his campaign for Ahimsa, Peace, Harmony and Religious Tolerance will return to that haven of freedom.

Yours sincerely,


(BISHOP) FERNANDEZ, S.J.
On Behalf of, DIOCESE OF AHMEDABAD

The United Christian Forum
For Human Rights (Gujarat)

CHRISTMAS DAY - 1998 AND THEREAFTER

(Attacks on the Christian Community in South Gujarat and other areas of the State)

December, 25th, 1998

1. Ahwa (Dangs Dt.)

An anti-Christian rally is organised in Ahwa the capital of Dangs Dt. in spite of repeated requests from Christians earlier to either prevent or postpone the rally for fear of life and property, the rally is permitted by the District Collectorate. The organisers of the rally are the Hindu Jagran Manch (HJM), a loose outfit consisting of people who belong to the Bajrang Dal (BD), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (RSS). The Collector of the District is felicitated at the rally and he goes up to the dias to be garlanded by the organisers. Earlier, Mr. Amarsing E. Vasava, the DSP from Navsari, is posted to supervise the law and order situation in the Dangs (Mr. Vasava is the brother of Mr. Ganpat Vasava the ex-BJP MLA of the Mangrol Taluka who led the attack on Shantiniketan school in Zankhvav in June 1998).

2. Ahwa (Dangs Dt.)

Several inflammatory hand-bills are circulated prior to the rally calling for an ouster of Christian missionaries. During the public meeting of the rally, several inflammatory speeches are made against the Christians and all kinds of slogans like "Christio Chor Hai", "Christi Bhaggo" are raised. Banners and placards also carried these slogans

3. Ahwa (Dangs Dt.)

About 10 to 15 Adivasi Christian women who were passing through the market place were identified by the people from the rally and stones were pelted at them. Three Adivasi Christian women and one youth sustained injuries. A mob moves towards the CNI church after damaging shops owned by Christians and Muslims. A free for all follows which results in the police bursting tear gas shells and resorting to lathi charge. Several Christians were beaten up by the police even after they entered their compounds and houses.

4. Ahwa (Dangs Dt.)

About 100 to 120 men of this Bajrang Dal under the instigation and provocation of Janubhai. A. Pawar attack the Adivasi Boys Hostel of the Deep Darshan High School run by the Carmelite Sisters of Charity. The window panes and roof of the Hostel Building were very badly damaged. The wanton destruction caused is estimated about Rs.70,000/-. Besides, several provocative slogans were made against the religious Sisters with threats even to kill them.

5. Dolera (Vyara Ta., Surat Dt.)

A group of Hindus under the leadership of the BJP Sarpanch of the Karenchkhed village held a meeting with inflammatory statements and slogans made against the Christians. Later, he tells several Christians of the Karenchkhed village not to hold Christmas celebrations since it would be attacked.

The night of 25th-26th December, 1998

1. Gadhvi (Dangs Dt.)

About 200 persons led by Mr. Baburao Kalu Gangurde, Mr. Janu Navsu Pawar and Mr. Jemsu Navsu Pawar damaged the house of a Christian, Mr. Lakshu Kolga and looted materials worth Rs. 10,000/- Around 9.00 p.m., they damaged the Church in Gadhvi and set it on fire.

2. Subir (Dangs Dt.)

The Navjyot High School run by the Jesuit fathers was attacked by around 150 persons led by Mr. Sanjay Wagh (Sarpanch of Subir), Mr. Motilal Sonu Gamit, Mr. Ramja Sayaju, Mr. Seetharam Shingu and Mr. Shiv Motare. The jeep and the motor-cycle belonging to the mission were totally burnt. Fr. Anthony and Fr. Osborne who were

- resident there were also beaten up. A portion of the Subir Adivasi Boys Hostel was also burnt.
3. *Jamlapada (Dangs Dt.)*
Apparently the same crowd went to Jamlapada village and set the church there on fire. One of the main leaders Mr. Janu Navsu Pawar robbed Rs. 1500/- from Mr. Sumanbhai.
 4. *Divan Temrun (Dangs Dt.)*
The mob went next to the Divan Temru village around 12.30 in the night and started pelting stones on the houses of the Christians there and also on the Church causing much damage to the tiles.
 5. *Galkund (Dangs Dt.)*
Mr. Devdan Pawar of Galkund village was attacked by around 50 persons around midnight. He somehow managed to escape.
 6. *Nadagkhadi (Dangs Dt.)*
Around 60 to 80 persons damaged the tiles of the Church around 8.30 p.m.
 7. *Pailalkhadi (Dangs Dt.)*
A huge mob tried to damage and set the Church on fire.

26th December, 1998

1. *Waki (Dangs Dt.)*
Around 500 persons armed with Trishuls, heavy sticks and iron bars went to Waki village in the night and set the Church on fire. A jeep belonging to the Dangs forest department (No. GRD 7443) was used by the mob. The Galkund Sarpanch, Mr. Dinkar Gawli's house was damaged and they tried to set it on fire. In order to protect himself as an act of self-defence, he opened fire in the air with a licensed gun. While he was doing so, he was hit on the chest by a stone which resulted in some pellets getting sprayed on the crowd.
2. *Kuradiamba (Dangs Dt.)*
The church was attacked and badly damaged by a huge mob.
3. *Behdun (Dangs Dt.)*
The church was attacked and badly damaged by a huge mob.
4. *Galkund (Dangs Dt.)*
Mr. Anandbhai Varde, his family and relatives were beaten up by a mob.

27th December, 1998

1. *Mulchond (Dangs Dt.)*
A mob attacked the Church in Mulchond and set it on fire.
2. *Lahankadmal (Dangs Dt.)*
A mob attacked the Church in Lahankadmal and set it on fire.
3. *Barda (Dangs Dt.)*
A mob attacked the Church in Barda and set it on fire.
4. *Baripada (Dangs Dt.)*
A mob attacked the Church in Baripada and set it on fire.
5. *Raochand (Dangs Dt.)*
A mob attacked the Church in Raochand and set it on fire.
6. *Pipalaymal (Dangs Dt.)*
A Christian, Mr. Gamaj Pandu of Pipalaymal village was tied and beaten up.
7. *Dongiamba (Dangs Dt.)*
A Christian, Mr. Goma of Dongiamba village was tied and beaten up.
8. *Karenjpada (Dangs Dt.)*
The Church was damaged by a mob.
9. *Pipaldaghad (Dangs Dt.)*
The Church was damaged by a mob.
10. *Gougen (Dangs Dt.)*
The Church was completely destroyed by a mob.

11. *Umarkhadi (Mangrol Ta., Surat Dt.)*

An Anti-Christian rally organised by the Hindu Jagran Manch takes place. Several inflammatory speeches are made and slogan shouted against the Christians. Earlier, vehicles carrying outsiders to the rally shout provocative slogans against the Fathers and Sisters outside the mission campus in Zankhvav. After the rally, a group of tribal women of the village of Umarkhadi are abused and threatened by some of the rallyists. Some stone-throwing follows late in the night. Four Christian tribals are arrested in spite of the violence being created by the followers of the ex-BJP MLA from Wadi.

12. *Maninagar in Ahmedabad City*

A group of Bajrang Dal youth go around Maninagar in a truck (the license plate is smeared with mud/ dung) and shout provocative slogans against the Christians of the area and literally terrorized the whole locality.

28th December, 1998

1. *Divan Temrun (Dangs Dt.)*

Two-hundred persons went round the village shouting anti-Christian slogans. The mob was led Mr. Janu Navasu Pawar of Gadhvi village and Mr. Babu Rao Kalu Gangurde.

2. *Behdun (Dangs Dt.)*

The people who lodged a complaint regarding the damage on the Church of Behdun village were threatened by communal forces led by Mr. Sonu Chowdhry.

3. *Motikasad (Takiamba, Vyara Ta., Surat Dt.)*

Two houses owned by Mr. Sonubhai were damaged by a group of persons led by Mr. Chandu Master and Mr. Laloo Boye of Savardakasad.

4. *Unai (Valsad Dt.)*

Fr. I. Galdos (of Jivan Jyot, Unai) who was returning from the village of Takiamba Dadadi, is way-laid by two strangers who block his jeep; they move aside and immediately attacking the vehicle with stones. The glass windows of the jeep are broken.

5. *Karenchkhed Aakar (Vyara Ta., Surat Dt.)*

A Christmas celebration in this village had to be stopped because a mob came shouting and started throwing stones on those gathered.

The night of 28-29th December, 1998

1. *Takiamba Dadadi, Vyara Ta. (Surat Dt.)*

The Church in this village was attacked and set on fire. The people managed to stop the whole Church from being burnt but they could not prevent the destruction of the crib which was totally burnt.

2. *Besunia (Vyara Ta., Surat Dt.)*

The Church in this village was attacked and set on fire. Once again, the people managed to stop the fire from spreading and from causing great damage.

29th December, 1998

1. *Mathalhari (Dangs Dt.)*

The Church was severely attacked and damaged by a mob.

2. *Hathijan (Vatva, Ahmedabad Dt.)*

A Christmas star by the side of a chapel of a Christian community is attacked and burnt. Christmas stars and decorations from at least six families are destroyed by a mob.

30th December, 1998

1. *Dharampur (Valsad Dt.)*

Inflammatory pamphlets for an Anti-Christian rally are distributed among the tribals of the Dharampur area. The rally is planned to be held on Tuesday, 5th January, 1999.

2. *Jalsod (Dangs Dt.)*

A mob attack the village and set fire to the Church at Jalsod village. The mob of over 200 is led by Divse Waral Pawar belonging to the Hindu Jagran Manch. Among the Christians injured are Somrao Warabhai, Seetharanbhai Diveshbhai, Shantiyabhai Sukumar, Sonaben Warabhai, who had to be hospitalised in the Ahwa District Hospital

The night of 31st December, 1998-1st January, 1999

1. *Maninagar (Ahmedabad City)*

Whilst Christians are in Church, in the Maninagar area of Ahmedabad, a mob goes around pelting some Christian houses with stones and also damaging at least one shop owned by Christians.

3rd January, 1999

1. *Divan Temrun (Dangs Dt.)*

The Christian Congregation on their way to Church for Sunday Service is stopped not once but twice by followers of the Bajrang Dal and others and prevented from worshipping.

2. *Kosadhari (Dangs Dt.)*

A mob belonging to the Hindu Jagran Manch attacks and sets fire to the Church in Kosadbari.

3. *Natyanuvat (Dangs Dt.)*

A mob belonging to the Hindu Jagran Manch attack Christian houses in Natyanuvat village and also attacked the village Church.

The above, are some of the incidents which have taken place since December, 25th, 1998. However, apart from what is mentioned, what is unleashed is a terror against the Christians. The systematic and planned campaign includes :

- Christian tribal women not being allowed to fill water from the village wells
- Groups of youth and other men, going around villages terrorizing Christians and telling them that for their survival, they must re-convert to Hinduism (most of them sport orange headbands or orange body banners)
- Tribal Christians, being forcibly taken to the Unai hot-springs for their "re-conversion" to Hinduism
- Tribal Christians not being allowed to board public buses
- Inflammatory pamphlets, speeches, slogans etc. constantly being made on Christians
- A Christian priest in Ahmedabad is denied permission to use an STD booth unless he takes out his cross
- registering false complaints by instigating tribals
- spreading false information in the vernacular press
- constant and consistent attacks on Church personnel and property or of those belonging to Christians

The purpose of all this is evidently clear :

- terrorize the Christians as much as possible
- raise the "bogey of forcible conversions" to legitimize these terror tactics
- ensure that there is fear and insecurity among the Christians
- drive them away from their home-place hoping that the HINDUTVA agenda will succeed

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A GUJARATI CIRCULAR SENT BY THE DIRECTOR POLICE (Intelligence), GUJARAT STATE

FAX MESSAGE

To : All DSPs and Police Commissioners of Gujarat State Police,
For
Information : Police Ahmedabad; IGP's of all Ranges (Thru;Ds.Pol. Control)
From : Director of Police (Intelligence), Gujarat State, Ahmedabad
Ref : No. : D.2 : Hindu-Christi/83/99 Date 02.02.1999 (1058)

DETAILS :

Presently, the incidents of class-conflicts between Hindus and Christians are increasing very much. It is very necessary to stop these activities.

In your District :

- 1) What is the total population of Christians ?
- 2) Which all places do they live in?
- 3) At which places are their missionaries located? (Alongwith the number and name)
- 4) They are encouraged by which foreign countries?
- 5) From which foreign countries and how much amount for grant do they get? How do they make use of it?
- 6) Population of Christians in your district, taluka-wise and village-wise. You are requested to give information about the name, address and telephone numbers of their main leaders.
- 7) In the last five years, how many cases of class-wars between Hindus and Christians have been registered in your district? What was their result in the court?
- 8) How many Christians are involved and in which all offences? You are requested to certainly send the name, address and the case registration number of the offender along with their dossiers.
- 9) In your districts, what type of trickery is being used by the Christian Missionaries for their defilement activities ? How are they increasing it?
- 10) How many and what types of vehicles do they possess? You are requested to inform the number of vehicles.
- 11) Amongst them, how many have got what all type of licenses for keeping weapons? When were these licenses issued to them?
- 12) What all arrangements have been made by you for their security? You are requested to inform the number and the approximate amount of expenses incurred after their security.
- 13) You are requested to send the dossiers of all such Christians who are involved in criminal activities and having criminal attitude.

Note : You are kindly requested to send the above information after completing the necessary procedures before 15.02.99.

Signed/
P.B. Upadhyaya

To,
All Police Commissioners
All District Police Officers
&
For Information : Police Ahmedabad
All range IGPs/DIGPS
From : Director of Police (Intelligence)
Gujarat State, Ahmedabad

Ref. : D.2/2, Com/Muslim/Activity/84/99 of 1/2-2-99

- (1) You are asked to intimate the details of persons (Muslims) involved in communal riots which occurred in your city/dist during last five years viz (a) offence registration No. (2) Section (3) Place (4) What judgement by court? (5) How many times the person is booked under CRPC Section 107, 151, 110 or PASA, NASA
- (2) Please submit the dossier of criminals and persons with communal mental
- (3) Please prepare the complete dossier and send with special messenger about branches of Students Islamic Movement of India located in your District/Cities with the names, addresses, telephone number of the office bearers and active workers. The details addresses of offices also be given.
- (4) Please intimate how many Darul Ulams are functioning in your Dist/Cities where the same are located.
The boys & girls studying there belongs to which Country/State/District their number.
Details and types of degrees awarded. Whether the same are recognised by Govt. and from which foreign countries they receive financial assistance and quantum of the same.
- (5) Please intimate the details of existing muslim organisations in your Dist/ with their address and who are leaders working for these organisations, their names, addresses, total members, telephone numbers etc.
- (6) Please intimate the places where Istemas are organised by Muslims in your Dist/cities, and total number of persons attending the Istemas. Name of participating religious leaders and the names of persons actively involved in the activity with addresses.
- (7) Please intimate about the number of Pakistani Nationals in your Dist/cities when came. How may went back, how many got the nationality? What are the activities at present?
- (8) Please intimate the details of muslims in your cities who are involved in narcotics & smuggling activities. How many times detained under COFEPOS PASS, NASA, and deported, Prepare the dossier with names and other complete details.
- (9) Please open the dossier of muslims individuals who are often involved in the offence of knife scissors, rioting and murder with their names and the copy same may be sent here.
- (10) Please intimate the names of political leaders, with their names & their party. Who are supporting these criminals and assist them for release from poll.

SECRET

FAX MESSAGE

To : All CsP, All Dispols including Westpol
Info : Police Ahmedabad
All Range IsGP/DisGP
From : Director General of Police (Int.), Gujarat State, Ahmedabad
O.No. : D-2/1/CR/IGP/174/99

Dt. 2.3.99

Text :

Refer this office Fax Message No. D-2/Hindu-Christi/83/99 dtd. 2.2.99 : No. D-2/2/COM/Muslim Activity/84/99 dtd. 1/2-2-99 and No. d-1/1/Bajrang Dal/VHP/RSS/99/170 dtd. 1/2-2-99 under which the information pertaining to Christian Community, Muslim Community and Hindu Community was called for is not required. No action should be taken with regard to the above messages and in this regard all action should be stopped immediately. All should take note of it.

Sd/-
(N.K. Bhandari)
Special Inspector General of Police (Int.)
for Director General of Police (Intelligence)
Gujarat State, Ahmedabad.

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE FOR GUJARAT
AT AHMEDABAD**

SUO MOTU SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION NO. 1000 OF 1999

Vs.

The State of Gujarat and Others.

Coram : Hon'ble Mr. R. Calla, J.

Date : 8.2.1999

Order :

On the basis of a news item dated 5.2.1999 (By Deepal Travedie) with the headline, 'Gujarat orders census on Christians' on the front page and continued on page 2 as published in Daily News Paper 'The Asian Age' weekend special dt. 6.2.1999, Mumbai, this Court Suo Motu takes notice of the Circular (document 2, Hindu/Christian/83/99) as reported to have been sent by the Office of Director General of Police (Intelligence) to all Police Commissioners and district Superintendents of Police on Friday. It appears from the contents of this news item that the details sought to be gathered include the compilation of dossiers on criminally bent Christians. The news paper claims to have the proof that such Circular had been issued, although the Government denies that any such census has been commissioned. It has been reported that 13 queries raised in the Circular include a query regarding the types of criminal activities and the number of Christians in the District involved in it as also the type of vehicles possessed by Christian Missionaries and the number and type of arms and licences issued to Christians alongwith its date of issue. Related news items have also appeared in the Ahmedabad issue of the same news paper dated 7.2.1999 with the heading, 'Stop census, it is creating fear : Bishops' and in 'The Gujarat Age' Sunday dated 7.2.1999

If at all such a circular had been issued, this Court would like to consider the constitutional validity, legality and correctness of the same because the issue involved is an important issue with legal consequences and public importance - precisely;

- (i) Whether such a Circular has been issued by the State of Gujarat or any of its functionaries?
- (ii) Whether its contents are in conformity with the object of securing liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship as given to ourselves through the preamble of our Constitution?
- (iii) Whether the contents of this Circular withstand the test of right of equality as enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution?
- (iv) Whether this circular does militate against Article 15 (1) of the Constitution of India?
- (v) Whether this Circular does not interfere with the protection of interest of minorities as provided in Article 29 (1) of the constitution and their rights under Article 30 of the Constitution of India?
- (vi) Whether the census of any particular section/class/ community/social milieu/ group/ tribe instead of a defined local area is permissible under the Census Act, 1948?
- (vii) Why only Christians have been subjected to this Census and whether this Circular has the sanction or approval of the Central Government?
- (viii) If this circular is acted upon and given effect to what will be its impact on the question of communal harmony?

This Court therefore, suo motu takes notice and directs the Registry that this matter may be registered as a suo motu Special Civil Application on the basis of the contents of the news items, as aforesaid. The copies of these news papers be included in the record and the photostat copies of the contents of relevant news items be separately prepared as other sets for the Court and for sending it to the concerned parties.

Notice alongwith copy of this order and the photostat copies of the relevant newspapers, as aforesaid, be sent to the following parties returnable on 11.2.99 :

- (1) The State of Gujarat, through Chief Secretary to the Government of Gujarat at Gandhinagar.
- (2) The Home Secretary to the Government of Gujarat at Gandhinagar.
- (3) Director General of Police (Intelligence), Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar.
- (4) The Asian Age, Ahmedabad. Sambhav House, Op. Judges Bungalows, Bodakdev, Satellite, Ahmedabad-15.

The Parties are also directed to produce the aforesaid Circular before the Court on 11.2.1999 and to answer the questions which have been formulated herein in this Order. It will be the duty of the Registry to get the parties served before the returnable date i.e. 11.2.1999

Dt. : 8.2.1999

(M.R. Call, J)

IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

Special Civil Application No. 1000 of 1999

Suo Motu	.. Petitioner
v/s	
State of Gujarat and Other	.. Respondents

AFFIDAVIT IN REPLY
ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS

I R.N. Bhattacharya, Director General of Police, C.I.D. Intelligence, State of Gujarat, do here by solemnly affirm and say as under :-

1. I have read a copy of the order dated 8th February, 1999 passed by Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.R. Calla and in response to the notice issued by this Hon'ble Court initiating suo motu proceedings by way of Public Interest Litigation, I may be permitted to file this affidavit in reply. I am conversant with the facts loading to the initiation of the suo motu proceeding before this Hon'ble Court and am in a position to depose to what is stated here under.

2. The State Gujarat State Intelligence Branch deals, inter alia, with the collection, collation, dissemination and record of intelligence of political importance or of security nature and all other matters having a bearing on law and order. Its primary function is to supply prompt information on all such matters, with its own interpretation and appreciation of such information to the Director General and Inspector General of Police and State Government. Such information can relate to matters or events which have already taken place but also includes the trend in respect of maintenance of communal

harmony, communal tensions, political, labour and agrarian spheres. It undertakes secret enquiries into matters affecting national interest and law and order situation prevailing in the State. The State Intelligence has also to pay particular attention to the prompt collection and supply of intelligence in respect of items like existence of strong and wide spread popular feelings of political, communal or labour matters of importance; collection of rumours, propaganda likely to disturb public peace or lead to communal disturbances, foreigners found under suspicious circumstances, and such other matters leading to security of the Nation and the State.

3. It is the duty of the Police Officers to collect and communicate intelligence affecting public peace, to prevent the commission of offence and public nuisance. The police force has to be more efficient instrumentation for the prevention and detection of crime. It is the duty of the police force to maintain peace and tranquility, protect citizens of all the communities within the State and to maintain communal harmony within the State. I further submit that having regard to the aforesaid duties and functions, the Intelligence Agency collects information about all communities. The information so collected is collated and analysed by the Intelligence Branch, so that it can advise the concerned to prevent all communal disturbances.

4. I submit that having regard to the fact that in Gujarat incidents of Hindu Christian clashes started in the middle of 1998 similar incidents are reported from other parts of the country, like Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The Hindu Christian clash is a new phenomenon. So the data-based information is required to be maintained for maintaining peace and protecting the minority community. In the wake of the Hindu-Christian clashes, a Special Bench of the National Minority Commission visited Gujarat and it also sought information like the number of Christians in Gujarat and whether the number of Christians has increased by conversion or any other means.

5. I submit that the newspaper report, on the basis of which the suo motu proceedings have been initiated is inaccurate. The Gujarat Government has not issued any circular, as alleged in the said report. The report also is inaccurate inasmuch as it has not taken care of the preamble to the alleged circular. The said fax message is not published by the department.

6. I submit that having regard to what I have stated hereinabove, I was of the opinion that it is my duty to seek information in respect of the item that is subject-matter of controversy before this Hon'ble Court. I submit that thereupon a message was communicated to the Commissioners of Police and the District Superintendents of Police to collect information in respect of the subject-matters mentioned in the fax message. It is submitted that the message is only a correspondence between the Departments inter-se. I submit that, as Head of the Intelligence Department of the State of Gujarat, I am of the opinion that I must have the information sought for so as to assist the maintenance of communal harmony between the two communities. I submit that I would be failing in my duty if I do not have in my command the relevant information. I submit that I have the information having regard to the incidence occurred prior to 1998, but I do not possess the information which has now become relevant in these days to maintain communal harmony and to protect the law and order situation in the State.

7. I submit that seeking information or making discreet inquiries cannot and does not encroach upon any of the liberties guaranteed in favour of the citizens of our county. The entire attempt made by the Press is to exaggerate and to have their own version of the contents of the said message. I submit that for seeking information or making inquiries nobody can enter the house of any citizen without the authority of law nor can anybody make in roads into the privacy of the

concerned citizens. I submit that while collecting the information, the question of intimidating members of a particular community never arises nor is any one required to knock the doors of the individuals concerned or enter into somebody's house. The entire version of the Press is highly exaggerated. I submit that intelligence is to be gathered by the Department of the Police Force by making discreet inquiries.

8. I also submit that there is no breach of any of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 19 or Article 15 of the Constitution of India. I have not directed by my message to the concerned Police Officers to encroach or restrain any of the freedoms guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution of India. The fax message does not prevent the members of the Christian community to exercise their right guaranteed under Articles 26 to 29 of the Constitution of India. The fax message is not discriminatory in nature since I am bound to have the information in respect of all communities for maintenance of communal harmony and protection of the minority, including Christians, the information in respect of many of the items are information to be gathered from public record only.

9. I may now be permitted to deal with the subject-matter of the information sought for from the Police Department pursuant to the impugned fax message :

- Items No. (1) - Total Number of Christians.
(2) - Places of their residence.
(3) - Number of Christian Missionaries, their names & places of residence:

I submit that the number of Christians is a matter of public information and can be gathered from the Census. The information about the residence of Christians is readily

available from the Taluka Panchayat Office. I submit that in view of the burning of Australian Missionary and his two minor sons in Orissa in a station wagon, the information as regards the missionaries have become imperative. This information is available from the District. Nobody is required to go to anybody's house. The information sought for on all the three aforesaid subject-matters is necessary in order to provide security and protection to the community. The identification of the locality is of utmost importance while providing for protection and security.

- Item No. (4) - Which country they belong to?
(5) - The annual grant received by them from other countries - utilisation of such grants.

The attacks on foreign missionaries have international ramification. The information is most relevant to categorise the level of security needed to be provided to foreign Missionaries, i.e. Indian Missionaries. The annual grant received by the Missionaries from other countries and utilisation of such grant is also of relevance. It is a mandatory requirement of all religious and social organizations to provide all information to M.H.A., R.B.I., etc.

- Item No. (6) - Taluke-wise and village-wise Christian population, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of their main leaders.

The names and addresses of the leaders are required to be maintained as they are required to be contacted while there are communal disturbances and they are required to give the leadership in formation of peace committees for pacifying the feeling and redressal of the grievances of the communities.

Items. No. (7) - The number of Hindu-Christian conflict registered during the last 5 years and the disposal of these cases in the court.

(8) - No. of Christians involved in offences, their names, addresses along with their dossiers and CR Note of the cases.

The Hindu-Christian conflict registered during the last five years is also relevant in the context of the recent Hindu-Christian classes,. This is routine information available with the Police and it was sought to ascertain the areas which are more affected by such clashes, so that necessary preventive measures can be suggested in particular areas.

Item No. (9) - The type of conversion activities by the Christian Missionaries with the methods employed to intensify such activities.

The information as regards the type of conversion activities is not irrelevant. That is so because the tension between the two communities has risen on the ground of conversion and reconversion. It is necessary to know the extent of the charges about forced conversion by seeking information, so that effective steps can be taken to contain communal classes arising from this point and remedial measures if required can be taken. As explained earlier, even the Minority Commission has sought for such information.

Item No. (10) - No. and types of vehicles in their possession.

The information regarding the number and types of the vehicles in their possession is collected to provide protection to the Christian Missionaries in view of the incidence of burning of vehicle in Subir Village in Dangs district and burning of an Australian Missionary along with his two sons in his vehicle in Orissa.

Item No. (11) - Arms licences issued to whom and when?

This information can be obtained from the Arms Licence Register kept in every police station. The purpose of this information is to ascertain the discrimination if any to the minority community in providing weapons for self-defence, compared to other community and to suggest remedial measures, if required to issue more weapon licences to minority community for self-defence. This is a usual practice as is being done in Bihar, Orissa, Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir for self protection from the attacks from other ethnic majority groups and militants.

Item No. 12. - The arrangements made to provide protection to them. The No. of them so protected and the amount of expenditure involved in providing such protection.

This is in order to review the protection and suggest adequate security to the Christian. The expenditure involved is being ascertained for use in the context of the provisions of the Bombay Police Act.

Item No. 13. - To send dossiers of those Christians criminally inclined and involved in criminal activities.

This information is collected in respect of all the religious groups and is kept handy so that in case of disturbance of public order preventive action under Cr. P.C. Sec. 107, 108, 109, 110 to 121 and Bombay Police Act sections 55, 56 and 57, PASA and NSA can be suggested after due scrutiny. Even this information is collected in respect of all religious groups.

10. From the aforesaid elucidation of facts, I further submit as under :-

- (1) The informations sought for are routine in nature.
- (2) These informations are collected in respect of all religious groups in order to have adequate remedial measures.
- (3) The fax message is not a document issued by the State Government and it is an intra-department communication. Intra-department communication cannot prejudicially affect any of the rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India to the citizens of our country. It is not a resolution or circular issued by the State Government.
- (4) Several of the informations on the aforesaid subject are available from public record.

The Govt. of India has also prepared Model Scheme for Special Branches. Communalism and religious fundamentalism in addition to sectarian and inter-caste conflicts are thrust areas of national security and intelligence coverage, High priority has been given for control by special Branches for demographic polarisation on communal lines. The new features of the body politic in India have considerably enhanced the potential for sectarian and inter-caste conflicts. I, there-fore, submit that this Hon'ble Court may not interfere under Article 226 of the Constitution of India in respect of duties and obligations to be carried out by the Intelligence Department of the State. In absence thereof, the Intelligence Department can be said to be defaulting department not carrying out its duties.

11. I submit that having regard to what is stated above, I

may be permitted to precisely answer the queries raised by this Hon'ble Court :-

- (1) No circular has been issued by the State Government. It is a fax message by the Intelligence Department to the Police.
- (2) Contents of the fax message cannot prejudicially affect any of the rights guaranteed under the Constitution, including the right to freedom and right to religious worship.
- (3) The information sought for is not violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India. It is only information collected for remedial measures. The information sought for is in respect of all communities prone to communal disharmony.
- (4) Article 15 (1) is not violated.
- (5) Article 29 (1) and Art, 30 are not violated.
- (6) No provision of the Census Act is invoked. The information gathered from the Census has to be utilised by the Department through the Police agency.
- (7) It is an intra-department communication. It is denied that it is only Christians who are subjected to census, as alleged, as no census is carried out by the Police Department.
- (8) The information sought for is in order to protect the minorities and to further promote communal harmony.

12. I assure this Hon'ble Court that no police officer can intimidate or harass any Christian on the ground that he is required to give such information to the Department. If such incident is reported to me, strict action will be taken in accordance with law. I submit that this suo motu proceeding is required to be dropped.

Solemnly affirmed at Ahmedabad on this 14th day of February, 1999.



R. N. Bhattacharya 14/2/99
(R. N. Bhattacharya)
(Deponent)

Identified by:

UR-1007-1999

P. K. Patel
P. K. PATEL
NOTARY

FEB 1999



BOLEMNLY AFFIRM
BEFORE ME

P. K. Patel
P. K. PATEL
NOTARY

14 FEB 1999

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

St. Xavier's High School
Zania Pirno Tekro,
Vatva,
Ahmedabad

4.12.98
Time : 12.10 P.M.

Show cause Notice
Emergency
Hand Delivery

To,
The Principal / Manager
St. Xavier's High School
Zania Pirno Tekro,
Vatva,
Ahmedabad.

**Subject : With regard to the withdrawal of the grant-in-aid
as the school was closed during the visit.**

Respected Sir,

Today, when Mr. Mr. H.N. Chavada, the Educational Inspector from District Education Office, Ahmedabad (Rural), visited the school, the school was closed, and the teaching staff and the students in the school were totally absent. On enquiring about the matter at the boarding (Hostel) attached to the school, the Boarding in-charge, Sr. Magdalene informed me that the school was observing a Bandh in response to the call of the Bandh by the United Christian Forum for Human Rights. She also said that the students were asked not to be present in the school. You have not taken the prior permission for observing the Bandh in the school. Besides by rejecting the Government notification, you have included the students and the Staff in the call of the Bandh. Thus, you have trespassed the grant-in-aid rules, the Gujarat Secondary Education by-laws-1974 and the Government notification. Therefore you are hereby asked to clarify the matter in person with the district Education Officer tomorrow as to why your grant-in-aid should not be withdrawn. Failing to do so it would be understood that you have nothing to defend and in that case we shall take action accordingly in taking the decision against your institution. And for that action, note that the responsibility for this action lies solely with you.

The Educational Inspector

H.N. Chavada

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE

St. Mary's High School
Nidhrad,
Sanand Taluka,
Ahmedabad District

5.12.98

Show cause Notice
Emergency
Hand Delivery

To,

The Principal / Manager
St. Mary's High School
Nidhrad,
Sanand Taluka,
Ahmedabad District.

**Subject : With regard to the withdrawal of the grant-in-aid
as the school was closed during the visit.**

Respected Sir,

On 4.12.98, when Mr. K.S. Raval, the Educational Inspector from District Education Office, Ahmedabad (Rural), visited the school, the school was closed, and the teaching staff and the students in the school were totally absent. On enquiring about the matter at the boarding (Hostel) attached to the school, the Boarding in-charge, Sr. Ritaben informed me that the school was observing a Bandh in response to the call of the Bandh by the United Christian Forum for Human Rights. She also said that the students were asked not to be present in the school. You have not taken the prior permission for observing the Bandh in the school. Besides by rejecting the Government notification, you have included the students and the Staff in the call of the Bandh. Thus, you have trespassed the grant-in-aid rules, the Gujarat Secondary Education by-laws-1974 and the Government notification. Therefore you are hereby asked to clarify the matter in person with the district Education Officer tomorrow as to why your grant-in-aid should not be withdrawn. Failing to do so it would be understood that you have nothing to defend and in that case we shall take action accordingly in taking the decision against your institution. Note that the sole responsibility for this action lies with you.

The Educational Inspector

K.S.Raval



Carmelite Sisters of Charity
 Deep Darshan High School,
 Ahwa Dangs-394 710
 Gujarat-India,
 Phone No. : (02631) 253

10th January, 1999

**Memorandum to Honourable Prime Minister Of India,
 Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee**

Hon. Prime Minister,

We feel deeply honoured by your visit to Deep Darshan High School. We extend our hearty welcome to you with hearts filled with gratitude for the concern you have expressed for us by your visit to the Dangs district and in particular to Deep Darshan High School.

We would like to draw your kind attention to the following events which have deliberately hampered the smooth functioning of our educational institutions and traumatized the Christian community in the Dangs.

On the 25th December, 1998, at about 4 p.m., the Adivasi Boys' Hostel of the Deep Darshan High School was attacked by a mob of about 120 people. They pelted stones on the roof, damaging it and broke the window panes. As this occurred on Christmas day, the hostel inmates (all of them belonging to the tribal community) were away on holiday. The stoning would otherwise have caused grievous injuries to our students. We find it hard to accept this as the reward of our important contribution to nation-building by giving quality education to the future leaders of the community over the last three decades (a brief history of the school is appended). The majority of our students belong to the deprived and marginalised section of the society.

Being identified as an integral part of the wider Christian community in the Dangs, we do indeed share in the anguish and hurt too deep and fresh to be appropriately expressed, inflicted on the tribal Christians in the remote villages of the Dangs. Over the week following Christmas, about 30 churches and prayer halls were burnt/destroyed in as many villages. The Christian community of these villages were heckled, harassed and threatened. All these unfortunate events have led to a deeply traumatized psyche which will take a long time to heal.

As if this were not enough, it has been brought to our notice that a sustained "re-conversion" campaign is afoot in villages in the Dangs. Members of the Christian community are forced into jeeps which take them to Unai where they are ritually pronounced as Hindus reconverted from Christianity. Those who resist these attempts at forced conversions are threatened with withdrawal of utilities accorded to them, such as ration, ST certificates and gainful labour employment. In other words, they are threatened to be henceforth treated as non-entities and their future obliterated. As much as we would like to, we cannot imagine their trauma and have tried hard to empathize with these helpless tribal Christians.



Carmelite Sisters of Charity
Deep Darshan High School,
Ahwa Dangs-394 710
Gujarat-India,
Phone No. : (02631) 253

We feel shocked to read anti -School campaign in the vernacular press. On the occasion of our annual day on the 22nd Nov. 1998, the students had put up a play for the promotion of national unity and integration . The then district Collector Mr. .B.N. Joshi, Panchayat President Ms. Jayaben, D.S.P incharge Mr. Rajanbhai Gaikwad, Govt. Publicity officer Mr. Rajput, Gandhian Mr. Ghelubhai Naik and other officers were present on the occasion. All of them liked the play and congratulated the students for the meaning it conveyed. But some fundamentalists who had not even seen the play, with a clear intention to malign and create hatred against the school, falsely blamed the school as anti- Hindu. The vernacular "Sandesh" daily, without even bothering to clarify with the school authorities published the version presented by the Hindu fundamentalists on 6-12-1998. The malicious intention of the press became evident when the same story appeared again in the same newspaper on 8-1-1999, that too, when communal tension is prevailing in the Dangs. (The script of the play is appended. We are also in possession of the Video recording of the play and we are prepared to be judged by any sane nationalist after watching the play).

Over the last few days even after your announcement to visit Dangs district, inflammatory statements in the media have only further terrorized us and confirmed our feelings of insecurity. Anti- Christian statements by the president of the Hindu Jagaran Manch Janubhai Pawar (Sandesh 8-1-1999) and VHP (9-1-1999) are indeed aimed at terrorizing the minorities. (Both reports are appended)

It is in this context, that we would like to mention that we are defenceless religious ladies living alone in this remote district. All these years, we have never felt the need for protection as the environment was friendly and safe. The malicious propaganda against us/Christians, we fear, can lead to situation like the one which happened in Jhabhua district of M.P.

A nation cannot be built by destroying members of its own community. We beseech you to accordingly intervene in the current state of affairs rife with communal hatred. We beseech you to help restore peace and amity to enable us to continue with our enterprise of providing quality education with total dedication and commitment to nation-building and national integration.

We thank you once again for your visit to Deep Darshan High School and we sincerely hope that you will do the needful to promote a sense of security and peace.

Sr. Carmen Borges
(Principal, Deep Darshan High School)

Vanitaben Lakshubhai Bhoje
Husband of Laksubhai Koladhabhai,
Gadhvi Village
Ahva Taluka, Dang District
Date: 5-3-99

Hon. Collector and
District Magistrate
Collector's Office
Ahva, Dang District

Regarding Conversion by Force

Jai Bharat from the women of Gadhvi village who have signed/thumb-impressed this. By this we inform that we the women of Gadhvi village are among the people who are affected by the violence, attack, threats and demolition of the Churches on 25th December of Christmas season and the conversion activities after that.

For approximately, last 15 years without any force or pressure but with our own personal experience we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Saviour and have been living absolutely happy life. And our relationship with out family members is marked with unity and happiness. We have never felt any sort or aversion bitterness or separation from the people of other religions. With every person of the village we have been living in fraternity and shared in their joys and sorrows. Even today the same feeling continues to exist.

Inspite of this on 22-2-99, at about 8 in the morning the Bajarang Dal people who hail from Gadhvi village (1) Janubhai Avshubhai Pawar (2) Babhurav Kalu Gangude (3) Sakharam Balbard (4) Gorubhai Manyabhai (5) Somabhai Manabhai (6) Pandyabhai Soniravna came to our house stopped the jeep and threatened us and aggressively told us "you become Hindus again. We are taking you to give you bath." Since we did not yield to them the above mentioned people thrashed us. They forcefully try to make us Hindus from being Christians. We women who are simple and who have signed/thumb impressed are very poor and so they allure us by offering each one of us Rs. 125. But we did not accept. Therefore they attacked us and severely thrashed us. Due to their threat and fear of them we are not able to go to any place to register our complaint. *Therefore we with the condition of not being produced the court in the presence of any officials, we give our sign/thumb impression on this court-stamp paper with our full consciousness and without any sort of compulsions and this is true.*

No matter whatever the circumstances and whatever the cost may be we are not ready to leave Christianity and will never leave too. This is our final word.

Yours Truly

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) (Vanitaben Laksubhai Bhoje) | (Thumb impression) |
| Age 35, Ghadvi village, Dang District | |
| (2) (Shakuben Kakdiya Pavar) | (Signed) |
| Age 28, Ghadvi village, Dang District | |
| (3) (Miraben Yashwantbhai Pavar) | (Signed) |
| Age 20, Ghadvi village, Dang District | |
| (4) (Parsuben Sitaram) | (Thumb impression) |
| Age 30, Ghadvi village, Dang District | |



Carmelite Sisters of Charity
Deep Darshan High School,
Ahwa Dangs-394 710
Gujarat-India,
Phone No. : (02631) 253

8th January, 1999

Memorandum to Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, President, Indian National Congress

Dear Madame,

We would like to draw your kind attention to the following events which have deliberately hampered the smooth functioning of our educational institutions and **traumatized the Christian community in the Dangs.**

On the 25th December, 1998, at about 4 p.m., the Boy's Hostel of the Deep Darshan High School was attacked by a mob of about 120 people. They pelted stones on the roof, damaging it and broke the window panes. As this occurred on **Christmas day**, the hostel inmates were away on holiday. The stoning would otherwise have caused grievous injuries to our students. **We find it hard to accept this as the reward of our important contribution to nation-building by giving quality education to the future leaders of the community over the last three decades.**

Being identified as an integral part of the wider Christian community in the Dangs, we do indeed share in the **anguish and hurt** too deep and fresh to be appropriately expressed, inflicted on the tribal Christians in the remote villages of the Dangs. Over the week following Christmas, about **30 churches** and prayer halls were burnt/destroyed in as many villages. The Christian community of these villages were **heckled, harassed and threatened**. All this unfortunate events have led to a **deeply traumatized psyche** which will take a long time to heal.

As if this were not enough, it has been brought to our notice that a **sustained "re-conversion" campaign** is afoot in villages in the Dangs. Members of the Christian community are forced into jeeps which take them to Unai where they are ritually pronounced as Hindus reconverted from Christianity. Those who resist these attempts at forced conversions are **threatened with withdrawal of utilities** accorded to them such as ration, ST, certificates and gainful labour employment. In other words, they are threatened to be henceforth treated as non-entities and their future obliterated. As much as we would like to, we cannot imagine their trauma and have tried hard to empathize with these helpless tribal Christians.

In this context we would also like to mention that we are **defenseless religious ladies** living alone in this remote district. All these years we never felt the need for protection as the environment was friendly and safe. The malicious propaganda against us/Christians, we fear can lead to situation like the one which happened in Jhabhua district of M.P.

A nation cannot be built by destroying members of its own community. We beseech you to accordingly intervene in the current state of affairs rife with communal hatred. We beseech you to help restore peace and amity to enable us to continue with our enterprise of providing quality education which is a crucial contribution to nation-building.

Thanking You

A MEMORANDUM TO THE HOME MINISTER OF GUJARAT

Honourable Home Minister of Gujarat:

We, the Sisters of Deep Darshan Carmelite Sisters of Charity Society are writing this Memorandum to you with a deep sense of pain, anguish and uncertainty at the attacks made on the Deep Darshan boys hostel causing great damage and destruction estimating to Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 70, 000 by about 100 to 120 hooligans of the Bajrang Dal under the instigation and provocation of Janubhai A. Pawar, the President of the Hindu Jagran Manch.

Besides, the great damage done to the hostel, the unruly crowd clad with saffron scarves round their neck and armed with axes, sticks, spears stones etc. had rushed to the Deep Darshan School cum residence gate of the religious sisters but the police chased them away. Meanwhile, the 7 sisters of the Deep Darshan school, remained inside locked doors in fear and trembling and experiencing great insecurity as the hooligans were shouting provocative slogans threatening to kill us.

I like to bring to your kind notice the fact that Deep Darshan School, and the hostel for boys and for girls is run by 7 sisters who reside in the Campus of Deep Darshan School. As we are only women residing here our lives are at stake. The attacks by the hooligans were aimed at the sisters but finding no access to the campus they had destroyed the Deep Darshan hostel for the Adivasi boys of the Dang District.

Deep Darshan Carmelite Sisters of Charity run a minority school having about 840 children, mainly Adivasis. I like to draw your attention that of these 840 children only 100 children are Christians, the rest are non-Christians. The Institution is mainly for the poor tribal children of the District. With our tireless efforts we have been doing good work by transmitting good education to the tribals who are close to our heart. We have always obtained good results at the S.S.C. level. For the all round development and the betterment of our students we have many other extra curricular activities.

Despite such sincere and honest service to the society for the last 25 years we have been singled out and attacked and harassed because we are Christians.

Such incidents of violence and malicious slogans threatening the security of the Management who are religious women. It also destroys the good spirit of work that we are doing for the poor tribals of Dangs.

I therefore humbly request you,

1. To assure the Minority Management who are religious women complete security enabling us to carry out the good work of education we are doing and will continue doing for the tribals.
2. To take to task the leaders of the Hindu Jagran Manch:
 - i) Janubhai A. Pawar (the President of the Hindu Jagran Manch)
 - ii) Rameshbhai Chaudhary
 - iii) and Pradeepbhai Sambhajibhai Patil.
3. To take immediate steps to stop attacks on innocent Christians all over Gujarat and especially in Dangs.

All hell was let loose on Christian institutions in Dangs District, South Gujarat, on December 25 (Christmas Day). The boarding section of the Deep Darshan School, Ahwa, run by the Carmelite Sisters of Charity (Vedrina) was destroyed by hundreds of hooligans belonging to the Hindu Jagran Manch. Simultaneously, the Navjyot High School, run by the Jesuit Fathers at Subir, Dangs District, was also burnt down. The attacks were the result of the provocation of the President of the Hindu Jagran Manch, Janubhai A. Pawar, at an anti-Christian rally held at Ahwa earlier that day.

The Hindu Jagran Manch had been active in Ahwa during the past week, distributing pamphlets that contained vicious lies against the Christian nuns and priests and announced the anti-Christian rally that was held with the permission of the Collector of the Dangs District, B.N. Joshi. At the rally itself, Pawar called for an awakening of the Hindus and branded all priests and nuns "Robbers" who had misused Government funds to build schools for converting the tribals. He further instigated the mob to drive out all Christians from the tribal areas. At the end of the rally, hundreds of armed youth went across to the Deep Darshan School and destroyed the boarding building. The roof, the doors, the water pipes and pumps and all the glass panes were totally smashed. The hooligans also threw stones at the sisters' residence and destroyed the roof. No arrests have been made.

The Principal of Deep Darshan, Sr. Carmen Borges said, "We had been threatened that our school would be targeted. Hence, the DSP, Gaikwad, was requested to provide police protection during the rally. Only two policemen were sent. The protection granted was utterly inadequate." The school, with 850 students, is run by six sisters who have the service of tribals at heart. "We have been serving our students for more than twenty years and will continue to do so despite all threats and harassment," said Sr. Borges.

More than 100 youth wearing Bajrang Dal headbands entered the Navjyot High School, Subir, late on Christmas night and cut off electrical connections. Hurling abuses at the priests, they set the garage and godown containing grain on fire. A motorcycle and a Jeep were charred beyond recognition. All the grain was also burnt. The school building was then set on fire causing extensive damage. The Principal, Fr. Osborne Ferrao and the Manager, Fr. Anthony Mailadompara suffered injuries by the stones thrown by the miscreants.

The pernicious planning and the savagery of the attacks on the Christians on the feast of Christmas, festival of peace and goodwill, is deplorable and a blot on democracy and secularism held sacred in our country.

(As reported by Francis Gonsalves)

The Violence in the Dangs district in South Gujarat

REPORT OF THE UNITED CHRISTIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS/ CBCI FACT FINDING TEAM TO GUJARAT (DANGS, BARODA, SURAT, AHMEDABAD AND GANDHINAGAR) FROM 1 JANUARY TO 6 JANUARY 1999

ABSTRACTS from the Report of the Fact finding team of the UCFHR (Mr John Dayal, Convenor, and Mr Shailesh Mark) being submitted to UCFHR President Archbishop Alan de Lastic:

1. The year 1998 has been a traumatic year for the Christian community in Gujarat. The state saw an unprecedented anti-Christian campaign of calumny and hate right from the beginning of 1998, and by the middle of June '98, there had been at least three major incidents -- the exhumation of a body at Kapadwanj, the burning of 400 Holy Bibles at Rajkot, and a spurt of violence in South Gujarat, including Surat and in particular the Dangs.
2. In the Dangs, in sharp violence in June, July and November 1998, as many as 10 Churches of various sizes were burnt, demolished or damaged. To the best of information available with us, no one has been punished for that violence so far. Instead, in that violence, as in the present rash of church-burning since Christmas Day, the constant effort of the state government, the political leadership, the senior administrators and police officers has been to dismiss the violence as minor, to describe the places of worship as 'wood and mud structures' and to point out that there have been no deaths among the Christian tribals so far. The constant effort has been to make it seem like a communal clash between communities.
3. Evidence that has been made available to this team, and to the National Commission for Minorities and others, goes to prove that the attacks were unilateral -- excluding one case where a man defended himself from a mob -- and that the poor and unarmed tribals were subjected to intimidation and violence by large mobs. These mobs consisted of people from outside the Dangs -- they were identified because of the language they spoke, Gujarati, and not Dangi which is the main language of this tribal region. The mobs also had youth from neighbouring villages.
4. The mobs were working to a pattern from 25th to 31st December 1998. Many of them were mobile, riding in tempos and in one case in a forest jeep. They were also very well informed of the location of the churches/ places of worship and of the homes of the Christian families. This is not surprising. Throughout the autumn, the local administration, including the civil, police and forest authorities have been trying to survey the Christian presence in the district. This survey still continues. While in the first phase, no explanation was forthcoming from the government exercise, the collector claimed that the second survey was to identify the churches and families in order to protect them.
5. The violence (details given in the executive summary) continued with impunity even while senior officers were in the Dangs, including some ministers of the state government.
6. The police refused to register complaints by Christian victims. The police on the other hand went out of its way to ensure that there were counter complaints by the aggressors and leaders of the mob. Since then, an effort has been deliberately on to establish 'parity' between the Christians and the aggressors both in the number of cases and in the number of protests. The collector and the police superintendent have

not been able to explain that even after nearly 30 major cases of violence, the number of aggressors arrested is so small compared to the number of Christians arrested.

7. The role of the Collector, Mr Joshi, the deputy superintendent of police, Mr Gaikwad and the superintendent of police has been highly suspect. All three officers are proved to be deeply involved in the giving of permission to the aggressive Hindu Jagran Manch to hold provocative rally on Christmas day in direct confrontation with the Christian festivities. The collector attended the rally, allowed himself to be garlanded, and by his actions, made it clear to the Christian community where his own sympathies lay.
8. The collector had been given four memoranda by the local Christian community to warn of the designs of those who wanted to hold provocative rallies. He was also fully aware of the preparations that had been made by the Manch to precipitate violence. The collector was aware of the Manch and others distributing virulent statements and literature, of distributing trishuls and holding deeksha ceremonies at which they made inflammatory statements against Christians. Despite four written memorandums, the collector permitted the rally with disastrous consequences.
9. The collector says the Dy SP's secret report said there was NO danger of violence. Events have proved both of them wrong. It is said in Ahwa that at one time the collector did not want to give permission for the Manch rally, but was under political pressure to permit the Manch rally. The fact finding team could not find any evidence to either prove or disprove this argument.
10. The behaviour of the state home minister and the public utterances of this and other ministers however leave no one in any doubt that they are not willing to punish the guilty responsible for these acts of violence. The changes in the police structure also lead one to raise questions on their motives. One superintendent of police posted temporarily to take charge of the district is in fact the brother of a senior BJP politician who is involved in another incident of anti Christian violence in the area of Zhankvav in the neighbouring district.
11. Coercion and intimidation still continue. Tribals and others who have filed complaints and FIRs with the police are being threatened to withdraw their complaints, particularly to withdraw the names of specific Manch activities who they have named.
12. A myth is being propagated that the places destroyed are not churches, chapels and prayer halls, but just temporary structures. A physical verification reveals the care, love and reverence that the tribals have brought to the making of these places of worship. There is no doubt that for those who worshipped in these places, these were places sacred to them and dedicated to God. The aggressors also recognise these, and as places of worship, targetted them for destruction in cold blood and with malice aforethought.
13. The damage is less only in urban, elite terms. In the villages of Dangs where everything is made of wood, and where people are poor, each place of worship involves major investment of money, labour and love. It is adding insult to injury, and hurting the people's simple faith, to minimise the damage purely in terms of money.
14. Provocation also continues in the form of forcible conversions in the so called 'shuddikaran' programme organised by the Parivar in the hot springs town of Unai just north of the Dangs. These alleged re-conversion functions are being held with great pomp and are supported by the authorities. Saffron flags have been forcibly put on houses and shops, and also across the roads from many of the burnt churches, as a visible sign of defiance to the rule of law.

Report on the Violence in the Dangs district in South Gujarat

Executive Summary

Number of Churches burnt/destroyed in 1998 in Gujarat:	22 (16 in December 1998)
Number of Churches damaged	12 (8 in December 1998)
Number of schools/hostels damaged	2
Number of attacks on individual	11
Number of Christians arrested	43
Number of Hindus arrested	54

Districts affected: Dangs, Valsad, Surat, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Kheda

The Hindu Jan Jagran Manch consists of members of the BJP, RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, Vanvasi Kalyan and others.

The schools/hostels/institutions are of the Catholic diocese of Baroda. Churches destroyed/damaged are affiliated to the Church of North India and several Evangelical churches

1. Phase -I of Violence (Before 25 December 1998)

Churches burnt : 6

1. Shinghana	21 June 1998
2. Lahankadmal	26 June 1998
3. Borigaotha	4 November 1998
4. Gadhavi	5 November 1998
5. Kamath	5 November
6. Lahanchariya	14 November 1998

Churches damaged: 4

1. Nirgudmal	4 November 1998
2. Dhavlidol	7 July 1998

Violence in 1996. Churches damaged : 2

1. Dona
2. Halmodi

PHASE II OF VIOLENCE :

Violence from 25 December 1998 to 1 January 1999

A. Church-prayer halls Burnt/demolished/destroyed

1. Gadvi village	25 December 1998
2. Nadagkhadi village	25 December 1998
3. Jamlapada village	25 December 1998
4. Bhedun village	26 December 1998
5. Karadiamba village	26 December 1998
6. Vaki village	26 December 1998
7. Bordel village	27 December 1998
8. Bhondvahir village	27 December 1998
9. Saverpada village	27 December 1998
10. Gougen village	27 December 1998
11. Mulchond village	27 December 1998
12. Lahankhadmal village	27 December 1998
13. Bharipada village	27 December 1998
14. Raochond village	27 December 1998
15. Jhalsod village	30 December 1998
16. Kasadbari village	3 January 1999

B. Churches damaged/attacked:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Padalkhadi village | 25 December 1998 |
| 2. Nadagkhadi village | 25 December 1998 |
| 3. DiwanTemrun village | 25 December 1998 |
| 4. Karadianiba village | 26 December 1998 |
| 5. Pipaldhad village | 27 December 1998 |
| 6. Karenjpada village | 27 December 1998 |
| 7. Mathalbari vilage | 29 December 1998 |
| 8. Natyanuvat village | 3 January 1999 |

C. Schools, institutions destroyed/attacked

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Ahwa town: Deep Darshan school and boys' hostel damaged | 25 December 1998 |
| 2. Subir village: Navjyot high school and boys' hostel attacked, | 25 December 1998 |
| 3. Jeep and motorcycle torched, | 25 December 1998 |

D. Houses/ shops damaged/ looted:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Ahwa: Shops of Christians and Muslims damaged | 25 December 1998 |
| 2. Gadvi village: Lashubhai's house destroyed, looted | 25 December 1998 |
| 3. Jamlapada village: Sumanbhai's house looted | 25 December 1998 |
| 4. DevanTembrun village: Christian houses stoned | 25 December 1998 |
| 5. Vaki village | 26 December 1998 |
| 6. Motikasad village: Two houses of Sonubhai damaged | 28 December 1998 |

E. Tribal Christian individuals attacked/ beaten up/ injured:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. Ahwa town: | 15 Christian tribal women stoned by mob | 25 December 1998 |
| 2. Subir village: | Fr Anthony and Fr Osborne | 25 December 1998 |
| 3. Galkund village | Devdan Pawar attacked by mob | 25 December 1998 |
| 4. Galkund village | Anandbhai Varde family beaten up | 26 December 1998 |
| 5. Pipalayamal village: | Mr Gamaj Pandu tied and beaten up | 27 December 1998 |
| 6. Donkiamba village: | Mr Goma beaten up | 27 December 1998 |
| 7. Unai village: | Fr I Galdos ambushed, jeep damaged | 28 December 1998 |
| 8. Katis village: | Christian tribals assaulted | 30 December 1998 |
| 9. Karanjkhher village (Surat) | Mob stones Xmas gathering | 28 December 1998 |
| 10. Jhalsod | Mob of hundred attacks and critically injures 5 | 30 December 1998 |
| 11. DevanTembrun vilage: | Church service stopped | 3 January 1999 |

SURAT DISTRICT

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Umarkhadi village (Mangrol Taluka) | Christmas meet stoned | 25 December 1998 |
| 2. Takiamba Dadari (Vyara Taluka) | Church burnt | 28 December 1998 |
| 3. Besunia (Vyara Taluka) | Church burnt | 28 December 1998 |

AHMEDABAD DISTRICT

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. Hathijan (Vatva) | Christmas celebrations attacked | 29 December 1998 |
| 2. Maninagar | Christian shop destroyed, houses stoned | 31 December 1998 |

(Incidents of intimidation, threats and abuses by Hindu Jagran Manch activists, confrontations have not been included in this list of major acts of violence and atrocities in South Gujarat.

Also not listed are acts of violence against Christians elsewhere in Gujarat in 1998)

Demography: Dangs in south Gujarat on Maharashtra border is a deeply forested hilly area of 311 villages populated by the Dangi, Bhil, and Kukanas and a few Warlis. According to the 1991 census, the total population is 1,44,091. Christian tribals were only 7,824. Others were Muslims (2,117) and a small number of Jains, Buddhists and others. Non Christian and non Muslim tribals were lumped with Hindus.

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