



Ghadar Alliance

**FAST TRACK TO TROUBLING TIMES:  
100 DAYS OF NARENDRA MODI**

- A Counter Report -

September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014

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## Fast Track To Troubling Times: 100 Days of Narendra Modi – A Counter Report

Several “100 day” reports have been issued by various media sources about the new Narendra Modi administration in India. While some tend to be little short of adulatory panegyrics for Modi, a few have boldly pointed out glaring flaws and raised troubling questions around Modi’s relationship to Hindu chauvinism. However, even among the latter, the critical tone is balanced by an acquiescence suggesting Modi’s economic policies are well-positioned for success. These concession-granting reports in favor of Modi, on the grounds of “economic revival,” do so based on the assumption that elimination of social democratic infrastructure is necessarily the best policy to clear the pathway for corporate growth.

This report, while being critical of Modi’s sectarian politics, assesses the economy from a realist perspective informed by current life indicators such as: [over 40 percent of India’s population lives below the international poverty line of \\$1.25 per day](#), [four children die every minute](#) from preventable illnesses, [78,000 mothers die in childbirth yearly](#), and one of five children under age five suffer [acute malnutrition](#). This report therefore attempts to assess how Modi’s policies will impact the majority of India’s people — its farmers, auto rickshaw drivers, saltpan workers, teachers, tea stall workers, livestock-rearers, factory workers, fisher people, working classes, mothers, children, etc. rather than its top few ruling percent.

And though 100 days is hardly enough time to cast a full assessment of governance, it certainly functions as a diagnostic especially when framed against Modi’s 12-year tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat, which is where this report claims its predictive license.

In short, this report is our refusal to accept the unacceptable.

[Ghadar Alliance \(http://ghadaralliance.org\)](http://ghadaralliance.org)

*Note: This report is based fully on publicly accessible sources.*



# Modi and the Politics of Culture

## In his first 100 days...

### 1. Writers and Artists faced Policing, Censorship and threats of Violence.

**A**s elaborated in Nobel Prize-winner Dr. Amartya Sen's book "The Argumentative Indian", India has a rich tradition of discussion and dissent, but in Modi's India this tradition is under attack. Even in the brief three months since the BJP's victory in May 2014, there have been disturbing instances of censorship of books and films that challenge Hindu majoritarian nationalism.

In June 2014, Journalist & Filmmaker Shubhradeep Chakravorty's documentary film "En Dino Muzaffarnagar" which investigates [the communal violence that shook the city of Muzaffarnagar](#) (in the state of Uttar Pradesh) [was refused clearance for screening by the Central Board of Film Certification](#). Chakravorty's subsequent appeal to the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal was also turned down. Mr. Chakravorty's first film, "Godhra Tak: The Terror Trail" is an investigation of the 2002 pogrom in Gujarat against the Muslim community, and his other films also explore the politics of "Hindutva" or Hindu supremacy.

Also in June 2014, publisher Orient BlackSwan announced that it was suspending publication of several titles in response to a legal letter from the 'Shiksha Bachao Andolan' ("Committee to Save Education"), an organization founded by Dinanath Batra, a senior member of the RSS. Among the titles being set aside is [Communalism and Sexual Violence: Ahmedabad Since 1969](#), by Indian academic and Rhodes Scholar Megha Kumar whose work looks at the incidence of sexual violence during three communal clashes in that city. In its letter to her, Orient BlackSwan said: "Quite apart from the legal proceedings, [our concern is that our authors, our staff and the families of both, could be exposed to the risk of violence.](#)"

In its capitulation, Orient BlackSwan was following the lead of another publisher, [Penguin India](#), which, [after a three-year legal challenge by Batra had voluntarily decided](#) in April 2014 to withdraw copies of ["The Hindus: An Alternative History"](#) by Wendy Doniger, a professor at the University of

Chicago. Among other reasons, Penguin cited “duty to protect its employees against threats and harassment.” In the interim, Batra has been politically elevated by the Modi administration and he is now an authorized textbook author although his recently mandated texts are full of racist and misogynist content.

## **2. Assaults on Freedom of Religion intensified.**

In August 2014, 72 Valmiki (a section of the Dalit community) who had in the past converted to Christianity underwent a so-called “re-conversion” to Hinduism in Aligarh in the state of Uttar Pradesh, [under the auspices of the ‘Dharam Jagran Vivad’ \(Religious Awakening Forum\)](#). This was a “Ghar Vapassi” (literally, a “return home”) ceremony through which the Sangh Parivar intervenes to claim non-Hindu members of the Dalit and Adivasi communities as Hindus.

The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of religion, allowing for the free exercise of individual choice over matters of faith. However, [“Freedom of Religion” laws enacted in several states presume that individuals are incapable of making their own informed decisions regarding matters of faith](#), and can only be manipulated or coerced into conversion. The language of the Gujarat anti-conversion law enacted in 2003 is telling in this respect. Conversion is viewed as an attempt “to make one person to renounce one religion and adopt another religion.” These laws empower district administrations to oversee and regulate religious conversions, in order to prevent what are referred to as conversions by “fraud” or “force.” Effectively, [these laws target Christian and Muslim communities](#) and provide opportunities for both local officials and Hindu supremacist organizations to harass and intimidate them.

It is worth noting here that the Valmiki community lies at the bottom of India’s caste ladder and is traditionally confined to the occupation of manual scavenging. It is often to escape assignation into such conditions of utter degradation and poverty that many so-called “lower-caste” Hindus choose to convert into Christianity, Islam, etc. Further, it is crucial to note that conversion laws, passed by a number of states, do not apply to such ‘Ghar Vapassi’ ceremonies. [The Sangh Parivar has a singular focus on curbing any conversions out of Hinduism](#), particularly by Dalits and Adivasis. The argument, however, that Hinduism is somehow undermined by such conversions is absurd given the disparity in ideological, economic and political power between caste Hindus and Dalits or Adivasis professing non-Hindu faiths. What is being undermined is caste power, and that is the core of the Sangh’s anxieties over conversions. Unsurprisingly, and tellingly, the anti-conversion laws make conversion a more serious offense if the converts are Dalits, Adivasis, women or children. ([For more on conversion of Christians see \*Minorities\* section of this report.](#))

In April 2013 BJP leader Venkaiah Naidu publicly announced his party’s intention to “bring an anti-conversion law to ban religious conversions in the country if [it is voted to power in 2014 General Elections](#).” Highlighting the primary motivation underlying his party’s anxiety over conversions, he went on to add: “...The country will be safe and sound only when Hindus are in a majority.” Modi, steeped in the same RSS ideology that inspires Naidu, is therefore highly likely to make an effort to fulfill this goal of Hindu majoritarian supremacy.

## **3. Projects of Revisionist History received State sanction.**

One of the most damaging ways in which Hindu Nationalist groups seek to realize the “Hindu Rashtra” (literally, “Hindu Nation”) is through projects of Revisionist History. The BJP’s frontal attack on history proceeds at two levels: changing grade-school textbooks, and secondly, by gaining control of

India's top research, educational and cultural institutions.

The Modi administration has [already begun installing Hindutva ideologues into positions of power in academic spaces](#). One of the early appointments that alarmed many is that of Dr. Yellapragada Sudershan Rao as the head of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). Dr. Rao's main research project is that of proving the historicity of texts of Indian epics such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, a project, it seems, that would involve a revisionist rewriting of Indian history as that centered on a Hindu identity.

Rao's academic credentials have been described as "questionable" by Romila Thapar, India's most respected historian. [Thapar has pointed out that Rao has never been published in any peer-reviewed journal of history](#), and she has also commented on the "little visibility" of his research. What endears Rao to the BJP is the fact that he is president of the "Akhil Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Yojana" (ABISY), an RSS organization that operates out of the RSS office in Delhi. [Rao's Hindu supremacist views are clearly expressed on his personal blog](#), including his praise for the Hindu caste system and his defence of Hindu supremacist demands to build a temple at the site of the Babri Masjid, destroyed in 1992 by mobs led by the RSS, BJP and VHP.

Modi's reference to India's "1200 years of slavery" during his address to the Indian parliament in June 2014 is significant in this context. The British ruled India for 200 years; [Modi's reference to 1200 years therefore includes the 600 years or so when Muslim dynasties and kings ruled India](#) (although Modi's math doesn't quite add up!). Such a reference positions Muslims as outsiders and violent intruders that need to be contained, even as it solidifies the status of citizens that are Hindus as naturally belonging to India.

## Previously, in Gujarat...

### 1. Rampant censorship

Censorship of art, film, etc. by the State as well as the targeting and policing of artists, writers and filmmakers by self-styled custodians of culture is nothing new to those familiar with Gujarat during the Modi years. Here are some examples:

- When the documentary film "Godhra Tak: The Terror Trail" was screened in 2003 in Ahmedabad (the capital city of Gujarat), [the members of the militant group Vishwa Hindu Parishad \(VHP\) disrupted the event](#) and advised the filmmaker, Mr. Chakravorty, to quit filmmaking.
- In 2004, Rakesh Sharma's film, "The Final Solution", which documents how Chief Minister Modi's government was directly implicated in the "riots" that broke out in Gujarat 2002 (resulting in the massacre of more than 2,000 Muslims, and the displacement of over 100,000 Muslims) [was not permitted to be publicly screened because it had the "potential to jeopardize state/national security"](#).
- Screenings of the film "Parzania" (2005), which was inspired by the true story of a Parsi family that was caught in the bloodshed of 2002, [were unofficially banned even though the film had cleared the Censor Board](#), for the reason that it also implicated Modi's government in the violence. Theater owners reported threats of violence from Hindu right-wing Bajrang Dal activists if they exhibited the film.
- In 2006, architect V.V. Doshi's art gallery was attacked by members of right-wing organizations,

- and the paintings of acclaimed artist M.F.Husain (who is also Muslim) were vandalized.
- Screenings of the film “Fanaa” (2006) were [blocked on the grounds that actor Aamir Khan had criticized Mr. Modi’s government](#) for the mishandling of rehabilitation of villagers displaced by the increased height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam.
  - On May 9, 2007, Art student Chandramohan from MS University in Baroda was arrested on the grounds that his religiously- themed painting offended Hindu religious sentiments. Further, [his painting, being exhibited as part of a student art show, was vandalized by members of Hindu supremacist group Bajrang Dal.](#)
  - In August 2009, [the state government of Gujarat banned ex-BJP politician Jaswant Singh’s book “Jinnah- India, Partition, Independence”](#), for “questioning the patriotic spirit” of a popular Gujarati leader, Vallabhbhai Patel. The ban was lifted later by the Gujarat High court in response to a public interest petition by human rights activists Manishi Jani and Prakash N. Shah.
  - In 2011, when Modi was Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat, [he banned Pulitzer-prize-winning writer Joseph Lelyveld’s book about Mahatma Gandhi.](#)

## 2. Assaults on Freedom of Religion

During his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Modi enacted the controversial ‘Freedom of Religion Act, 2003’. The law was critiqued widely by national and international Human Rights groups, but what also prevented its enforcement was objections by the government’s own legal department. Modi finally activated the law in 2007 ahead of the Gujarat assembly elections with an official statement that [it was necessary to stop all religious conversions through inducements or threats in the “larger national interest”](#).

The existence of this law signaled a mainstreaming of Hindu nationalistic discourse, and the states of Himachal Pradesh (2006) and Rajasthan (2008) followed Gujarat with their own forms of the anti-conversion laws. [A 1999 report by Human Rights Watch correlates BJP’s 1998 electoral victory in Gujarat with the violence against Adivasi Christians](#) by the Bajrang Dal and the RSS. In fact, the report states that the attacks against Christians across the country had increased significantly since the BJP’s Central Government electoral victory.

## 3. History on the run

Such political agendas have also characterized grade school education in Gujarat. For example, [Gujarat under Modi never adopted the “National Curriculum Framework 2005”](#) with the result that textbooks by the Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT) have only one paragraph on the 350 years of Mughal rule in India. On the other hand, the chapter meant for the study of Mughal rule almost entirely devotes itself to how Mahmud of Ghazni, an invader from Afghanistan, pillaged and looted Gujarat and India!

Social Science textbooks in Gujarat, prepared by the GCERT and the Gujarat State Board for School Textbooks, which were used for years during Modi’s tenure to teach 6-8 grades [have been shown to be riddled with errors](#), such as, for example, the claim that [Japan launched a nuclear attack on the United States in World War II!](#)

In 2014, [the GCERT added Mr. Dinanath Batra’s books to the curriculum](#). Mr. Batra’s books propose to



ban the teaching of foreign languages in schools, and more dangerously, also [suggest redrawing the map of India to include neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, etc.](#), in line with the right-wing idea of an “Akhand Bharat” a historical fantasy of a greater India, unified by the practice of Hindu religion. Mr. Batra also offers more practical advice for the young students, including prescriptions about the celebration of Birthdays with cake & candles being bad because they are symbols of western culture, and about the continued appropriateness of the use of the word “Negro” to refer to African-Americans!

## Read more...

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# Modi and the Politics of Development

## In his first 100 days...

### 1. Mechanisms of Public Deliberation Suppressed.

The Modi model of development is based on a deeply authoritarian vision that is focused almost exclusively on economic growth while excluding considerations of social inclusion, economic equality or environmental sustainability. This exclusion manifests itself in Modi's policies as a consistent hostility towards Democratic processes of informed consent and public deliberation.

The following changes, in various stages of implementation, have all been proposed since May 2014, and expose a clear and consistent pattern of attempts to diminish the public's ability to participate in decisions about their own development, including by seeking recourse in the Judiciary:

- In July 2014, coal mine projects with capacity above 16 mtpa were [exempted from the requirement of seeking consent](#) from the local communities that are affected by the project. This is a crucial change given that public hearings are often the only occasion when the project-affected are consulted for clearances, and have functioned as important spaces where the local community can organize itself to be heard by the government.
- [The National Board for Wildlife \(NBWL\) was reconstituted in July 2014 by slashing the number of independent members from 15 to just three.](#) This change is in direct violation of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and has been challenged in Court. The reconstituted board met for the first time on August 12, 2014 and has already cleared over 100 projects.
- The Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) is planning amendments to the National Green Tribunal Act that will dilute the powers of the body [by turning the judicial tribunal into an administrative one.](#) This would be unfortunate as the NGT has been working effectively, and on several occasions, it has hauled up environment ministry officials, as well as state authorities, for failing to uphold the law.
- [The need for consent from gram sabhas \(village councils\) before prospecting for minerals in](#)

[forests has been removed](#). The Forest Rights Act (FRA), a landmark legislation which was designed to protect the rights of Adivasi (indigenous) communities, and which made their consent mandatory before any diversion of forest land could take place, has thus been stripped of its powers. [The power of the gram sabhas to certify that their rights had been settled and that they had consented to a project has been transferred to the district administration instead](#). (For more on FRA see [Environment](#) and [Minorities](#) sections of this report.)

## **2. Development agenda remains subservient to corporate interests.**

The Modi election campaign made “development” its public relations centerpiece, [promising to do for India what Modi supposedly accomplished for Gujarat](#). Yet, after coming to power the Modi government has announced a budget that places a higher priority on minimizing government, thereby aiming to reduce investment in public welfare. Given this proposal for further withdrawal of the state, it is clear that what the administration means by “development” more closely approximates what took place over a decade in Gujarat under Modi – [strong state support for private corporate projects with little public oversight on environmental, social and economic impacts](#). While it is too early to be able to measure the actual social and environmental impacts of various development projects that have been greenlit in the last three months (or of the proposed changes to public consent mandates and exemptions to environmental regulations), we can nevertheless anticipate some of the effects of Modi’s neoliberal development model based upon his record in Gujarat.

We engage with this in some detail in the [“Previously in Gujarat”](#) section below. In order to gauge the present government’s approach to development, at least two important observations may be made. One, [Modi announced his intention to dissolve the Planning Commission](#), once the centerpiece of India’s post-colonial development agenda. Despite undergoing a defacto shift towards neoliberal policies under previous UPA and NDA governments, the Planning Commission remained an institution that could still accommodate some popular demands for the redistribution of resources for social programs. By announcing his intention to dissolve the Commission, Modi is effectively denying the public access to one of the most important sites of decision-making regarding the allocation of public resources. This intention also signals Modi’s narrow understanding of development, as a process primarily directed towards the goals of neoliberalism (privatization, liberalization and globalization), and only secondarily towards the social and economic needs of the vast majority of toiling Indians. Despite the fact that the recently announced budget retained UPA initiatives like the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act*, or NREGA (albeit with funding trends that indicate a continued relative diminution of allocations), it is expected that the Modi government will come under intense pressure from its corporate supporters to drastically reduce spending on [popular initiatives that benefit the poor](#).

## **3. Anti-people amendments to Land Acquisition laws proposed.**

On June 27, 2014, barely a month after Modi was sworn into office, the Minister of Rural Development, Nitin Gadkari, proposed a full list of amendments to the *Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act*, or RFCLARR which was enacted in September, 2013 by the previous administration.

The 19 amendments proposed by the Modi administration, it is important to note, [respond to critiques made by the corporate lobby](#) when the law was first passed in 2013. In responding to such concerns, however, many safeguards for the affected communities that were built into the legislation are set to be diluted, deleted or replaced, as follows:

- Currently, the law requires consent of 70 or 80 percent of the affected people depending on whether the acquisition was for public-private purpose, or solely for private purposes. This number has been brought down to 50 percent.
- RFCLARR's definition of an "affected family" recognizes that the livelihood of many people, such as agricultural laborers, tenants, sharecroppers, artisans, forest-dependent communities, fisherfolk, boatmen, etc. depend on land owned by others and on common lands. Therefore, it allows for compensation to [not just the land owners but to all folks whose livelihoods are lost](#). The changes proposed seek an amendment of this important aspect of the law on grounds of its "misuse".
- One of the key features of the RFCLRR legislation was the Social Impact Assessment or SIA process which allowed an assessment of the project's impact on the ground. The amendments propose that since SIAs may delay land acquisition, they should therefore only be confined to either large projects or public private partnership (PPP) Projects.

Loss of land and/or access to water often amounts to loss of livelihood for many in rural India, and therefore land acquisition continues to be the subject of intense conflict. The proposed changes stand to exacerbate these conflicts and increase displacement and impoverishment, all in the name of development.

## Previously, in Gujarat...

### 1. Land Acquisition – criminalizing and repressing protests

Gujarat was the first state to pass the SIR (Special Investment Region) ACT in 2009. Analysts say this was done in anticipation of the passing of the land acquisition act at the federal level, and to preclude its mandates that land cannot be acquired unless 80% of the residents consent to the acquisition.

Farmers, pastoralists and agricultural workers in Gujarat are opposing the state government's attempts to acquire agricultural land for industrial use through formations such as JAAG (*Jameen Adhikaar Andolan Gujarat* = Land Rights Movement, Gujarat) and AVS (*Azad Vikas Sangathan* = Open Development Coalition). However, the groups are finding that their right to protest and their ability to communicate their opposition to the wider public and to the media are being curtailed by the government, as seen in the following examples:

- JAAG had sought permission to hold a public meeting in August and October of 2013, and again in January 2014 but was denied all three times. Further, when leaders of JAAG asserted their right to protest, [they were arrested for defying orders](#).
- The state government gave land to Maruti Suzuki, an automaker, in village Hansalpur without consulting with the affected families. In October 2013, the villagers' plan to organize a cattle rally to protest this deal was denied permission, and [they were lathi-charged by the local police](#).
- Even in instances where environmental regulations are apparently being observed, it is not guaranteed that the people are heard. For example, members of the public in attendance at the Environmental Public Hearing for the Dholera SIR, held in January 2014, [raised several issues about the project but the government officials remained unresponsive](#). Further, the hearing was abruptly concluded by the officials hours ahead of the officially posted time of closing. Farmers have expressed unhappiness with the public hearing process and are challenging the constitutional validity of the SIR Act through the *Gujarat Khedut Samaj*, a grassroots farmers' organization.

## 2. Development for whom? The Gujarat “model” myth

Examining Modi’s record in Gujarat with regard to development is made challenging by the fact that it is [embellished beyond recognition by public relations firms such as Washington, D.C.- based APCO-Worldwide](#) that was hired with public money to sell Modi and Gujarat to the world, and because this record goes largely unquestioned by the Indian media, with a few notable exceptions. As of September 2013, [Gujarat ranks 12th amongst all Indian states](#) on the development Index according to data from India’s Finance Ministry. i.e. [Far from being a “model”](#), Gujarat is doing only a little better than the all-India average in many respects. Analyses by many eminent economists ([Jean Dreze](#), [Maitreesh Ghatak](#), [Jayati Ghosh](#), [Ashok Kotwal](#), [Raghuram Rajan](#), [Sanchari Roy](#), among others) have demonstrated that claims for Modi’s record in Gujarat are misleading in at least three ways.

### 1. First, the record exaggerates Gujarat’s development achievements.

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** [Contrary to the myth that Gujarat is a powerhouse attracting large FDI inflows](#), in 2012-13 its share in FDI was a meagre 2.38%, ranked 6th, compared to Maharashtra’s 39.4%. Analyses of economic data have shown that impact of the much-celebrated “Vibrant Gujarat” conferences is questionable, and that [the fantastical sums of money that were promised in investments didn’t actually come through](#). Far from being the favorite destination for FDI in India, Gujarat, specifically, is way down below Maharashtra, New Delhi and Karnataka and has received less than 1/6th the FDI received by Maharashtra, and less than 1/3rd the FDI received by New Delhi.
- **Human Development Index:** [Gujarat has the lowest human development indices among states with comparable per capita income](#). The state has fallen from 6th position in mid-1990s to 9th position in the second half of 2000s. Even Orissa, which has high levels of poverty, performs better on Human Development Index than Gujarat. The dominant pattern, in data for indicators of poverty, nutrition, education, health or related indicators, is one of indifferent outcomes.
- **High levels of Hunger:** Gujarat has the highest prevalence of hunger in states with comparable per capita income, and [its implementation of NREGA is the worst among large states](#). Gujarat ranks alongside Orissa and Bihar in terms of its population’s high level of hunger with only Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh having higher hunger levels. The co-existence of high hunger levels along with high per-capita income suggests social and economic inequalities and large income disparities among the population.
- **Employment:** [Job growth in manufacturing and services turned negative](#) between 2008-2013, and even prior to that was concentrated in the informal sector.
- **Claims of Prosperity:** Gujarat is also not overall the richest state; Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra and Kerala are all much better off, primarily because they have lower [rural poverty rates](#).
- **Social inclusion:** Poverty among urban Muslims in Gujarat is 800% more than that of caste Hindus; this is almost twice the national average. Urban Muslims in Gujarat are also 50% poorer than that of OBCs and SCs/STs in the state, which is again twice the national average. Further: Despite a large educational disparity between Muslims and caste Hindu population, [Gujarat refuses to implement the Central government’s nationwide scholarship scheme which would allocate 53,000 scholarships to Muslim students](#). While a full examination of the travesty of the 2002 pogrom against Muslims is not possible in this space, it is worth noting that of the over 200,000 people that were displaced in 2002, over 16,000 people were still living in 83 refugee camps 10 years later.

2. **Second, the record fails to note that many of the developmental achievements have little to do with Narendra Modi.**

- In 1991, a full 10 years before Modi became Chief Minister, as many as 17,940 out of 18,028 villages in Gujarat were already electrified.
- The asphaltting of 87.5% of Gujarat roads was also accomplished pre-Modi.
- Between 1994-2001, well before Modi, Gujarat's state domestic product grew at 10%-13%, way higher than the all-India average. These growth rates are based, in part, on Gujarat's share in manufacturing at the national level which went from 16.29% in 1980-81 to an impressive 28.71% by 2000-2001, just prior to Modi became CM.
- Further, well before Modi, Gujarat accounted for 45% of India's petroleum products, roughly 18% of the country's cargo handling, 23% of our total requirement for crude oil and 30% of our natural gas needs from offshore basins. i.e., Gujarat has been a poster child of growth before Modi.
- Port traffic in Gujarat jumped from a mere 3.18 million tonnes in 1981 to 86.17 million tonnes in 2001. In the same period, Gujarat's share of national port traffic increased from 45.36% to above 76% and has stayed there ever since. Modi's decade has not made that percentage grow.

3. **Third, the model casually attributes these achievements to private enterprise and economic growth.**

- **Public Indebtedness:** The growth in Gujarat has come at large expense to the people of Gujarat. One of the best examples of the Modi administration's largesse to corporates are the staggering subsidies offered to Tata for its Nano plant and other projects. Against an investment of 2900 crores, Tata received a loan of 9570 crores at 0.1% interest, to be paid back on a monthly basis after 20 years, in addition to land at much below market rates, with stamp duty, registration charges and electricity paid for by the state. All the rules were bent to provide the Adani Group with a power supply contract costing the state of Gujarat in excess of Rs. 23,625 crores over 25 years, and other companies, including Reliance Industries and Essar Steel, were extended similar favours. These tax breaks mean that the people of Gujarat will not be getting any of this money back in the near future. Not surprisingly, given these economic priorities, Gujarat's debt has increased from Rs. 45,301 crores ((USD 7.475B) in 2002 to Rs. 1,38,978 crores (USD 22B) in 2013. In terms of per capita indebtedness, the situation is even more worrying, given the size of the state: each Gujarati carries a debt of Rs. 23,163 if the population is taken to be 60 million.

The Sardar Sarovar Dam provides one of the clearest illustrations of this pattern of broken promises and social and economic inequality. The project was scripted in the name of the poor, and made specific promises including providing drinking water to drought-prone rural areas of Gujarat such as Kutch, and irrigation for the farmers in the South of Gujarat. In reality, however, water has been diverted to various industrial projects in Special Investment Regions (SIRs) and projects in the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, and about 400,000 hectares of farmland has been taken out of the command area of the Dam and diverted to Industrial uses. Narendra Modi's neo-liberal vision of development where growth has been at the expense of basic human development will only exacerbate the disasters wrought by the neoliberal economics of the last two decades.



### 3. Accumulation by Dispossession – flouting laws to enrich corporations at the expense of the people

To examine the various land deals between industrial groups and the state of Gujarat in the last decade is to observe the neoliberal process of accumulation through dispossession as, for example, when small farmers subsisting on tiny parcels of land, pastoralists that depend on grazing lands, etc. are dispossessed of their land holdings, displaced from their homes, restricted from accessing the commons, etc. through the processes of privatization, commodification of public assets, state redistribution, etc.

- Investigations by Forbes magazine have found that the Adani group has leased land from the Gujarat government for as little as one U.S. cent a square meter; in turn the Adani group has sublet this land to other companies, including state-owned Indian Oil Co., for as much as \$11 a square meter. And in a textbook illustration of crony capitalism, it turns out that this land was also granted to the Adani group without competitive bidding.
- Between 2005 and 2007, at least 1200 hectares of grazing land was taken away from villagers. Villagers in Adani’s SEZ say their grazing land was signed away by earlier village chiefs without their knowledge; this points to the fact that due process, involving public deliberation about the land acquisition in Gram Sabhas (village councils), was not followed. The villagers have filed multiple cases in the Gujarat High Court to contest the government’s actions, but several cases are still pending.
- In another instance, the land given to Maruti Suzuki, an automaker, in village Hansalpur was land that belonged to various underprivileged communities, Maldharis, Dalits, etc. that were landless and had received the land in a grant from the government in 1954. The village wasteland, used by the community as grazing land was also given away to Maruti Suzuki which directly affected the ability of this cattle-rearing community to pursue their livelihoods.
- Villagers from Zarapara, Gujarat, filed a case about a 1000 acres of their grazing lands being given away to the Adani SEZ. When the case reached the Supreme Court of India, Adani agreed to an out-of court settlement where it would offer villagers 400 acres of grazing land. The villagers say they haven’t received any land so far while Adani maintains that it has offered the land.

Following numerous complaints about the Adani port and SEZ in Mundra, the federal government created an investigative committee headed by environmentalist Sunita Narain in September 2012. The committee found that the Adani SEZ had violated multiple green rules at different points of its project, destroying mangroves, filling creeks and causing land and water degradation by dumping fly ash. JAAG is demanding that the government should “declare a moratorium on sale of common property resources and pasture land”.

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# Modi and Economic Policy

## In his first 100 days...

### 1. Public spending under assault to benefit the rich.

**D**espite rhetorical campaign promises of impending prosperity under a Modi administration, the past 100 days establish clearly that the key difference in economic policy from the preceding United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government is one of degree and not of kind. This is evident in the budget which signals a further withdrawal of the state from social investment, increasing privatization, and placing corporate interests at the center of all economic policies. Simultaneously [neglect of the agrarian economy persists](#) while rural India reels under the impacts of two decades of neoliberal policies that have resulted in mass dispossession, immiserization and a wave of farmer suicides.

The Modi administration has announced its intentions to [slash expenditures](#) that benefit the vast majority of the poor (in the name of fiscal responsibility) even while it does its best to transfer massive amounts of public funds to the rich (in the name of stimulating growth), easing the corporate [acquisition of land](#) even as millions face threats of eviction and dispossession as a result. Overall, the economic outlook is grim for the vast majority of Indians who face deprivation and marginalization while the rich have many reasons to celebrate.

### 2. State assets tagged for fire-sale.

The Modi budget uses the much criticized neoliberal formula of privatization to generate revenues. This [budget seeks to raise \\$13 billion from selling state assets](#), which is more than four times what the previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government was able to raise in the prior budget year. While Modi's campaign claimed that its policies would be completely different from those of the UPA government, according to several commentators, most of [Modi's budget was a rehash of the outgoing government's budget](#). While seeking to curb spending, the Modi budget had no problem discovering

two [billion rupees to build the world's largest statue](#) while allocating only three billion rupees for programs for Women's Rights and Safety. While critiques that highlight the [problems of privatization](#) and of the insidiously named "[Public Private Partnerships](#)" are gaining currency in the Global North, the Modi administration has given the green light for [49% Foreign Direct Investment \(FDI\) in defense and up to 100% for high-speed rail](#), in the latter case, if it is implemented as a public-private partnership. The Modi government has also publicly announced its intentions to abolish the Planning Commission, thus effectively concentrating power in the Finance ministry and the Prime Minister's Office.

### **3. Corporate subsidies spared while public subsidies slashed.**

While numerous discussions of cutting subsidies littered the campaign trail, only those subsidies that flow to the 70% of Indians who live on less than \$2/day have been cut, unevenly impacting those already considerably disenfranchised. Corporate subsidies and tax credits for the wealthy, on the other hand, have not experienced cuts. While the election manifesto of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) discussed curbing corruption, the Modi budget did not introduce concrete steps to combat black money. The budget mentions plans for [setting up of Real Estate Investment Trusts \(REIT's\) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts](#), both of which are instruments designed primarily to attract foreign investment in land and infrastructure. Alongside the government's intentions to ease land acquisition in favor of industries, such initiatives will further exacerbate the threats of forcible eviction and lack of compensation faced by millions of ordinary working Indians. Moreover, since REIT's primary function as a tool of tax reduction is acknowledged by even the [most fervent supporters of neoliberalism](#), REITS will further encourage speculation while decreasing tax revenues. The Modi budget is rife with tax credits for corporations and the wealthy, including 10-year [tax-holidays for power generation and distribution](#), and continuing [foreign dividend taxation at 15% concessional rates](#). By the budget's own admission, "[Net Effect of the direct tax proposals to result in revenue loss of Rs. 22,200 crore](#)".

## **Previously, in Gujarat...**

### **1. Low wages, extreme income disparity and growing public debt**

Wages in Gujarat were [lower than the average rates throughout India](#). And though Gujarat's per capita income is 20% higher than that of the rest of the country, [rural wages are 20% lower and urban wages are 15% lower](#), evidence of pervasive inequality. Furthermore, compared to other states in India, wages of male casual labour in Gujarat are at the bottom of the scale in terms of the real incomes they generate. What often goes unmentioned about the Gujarat model is that recorded growth has been contingent on growing debt. The state's debt increased from Rs 45,301 crore (USD 7.475B) 2002 to Rs. 1,38,978 crore (USD 22B) in 2013.

### **2. Privatization**

When it comes to privatization, Modi's Gujarat definitely led the way. The Modi government set up several mechanisms such as Public-Private Partnerships, Special Economic Zones and Special Investment Regions; such privatization has had a negative effect on human development and has been a disaster for the environment as has been well documented in the press as well as in official reports. The recently released Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) [report also castigated Modi's Gujarat for](#)

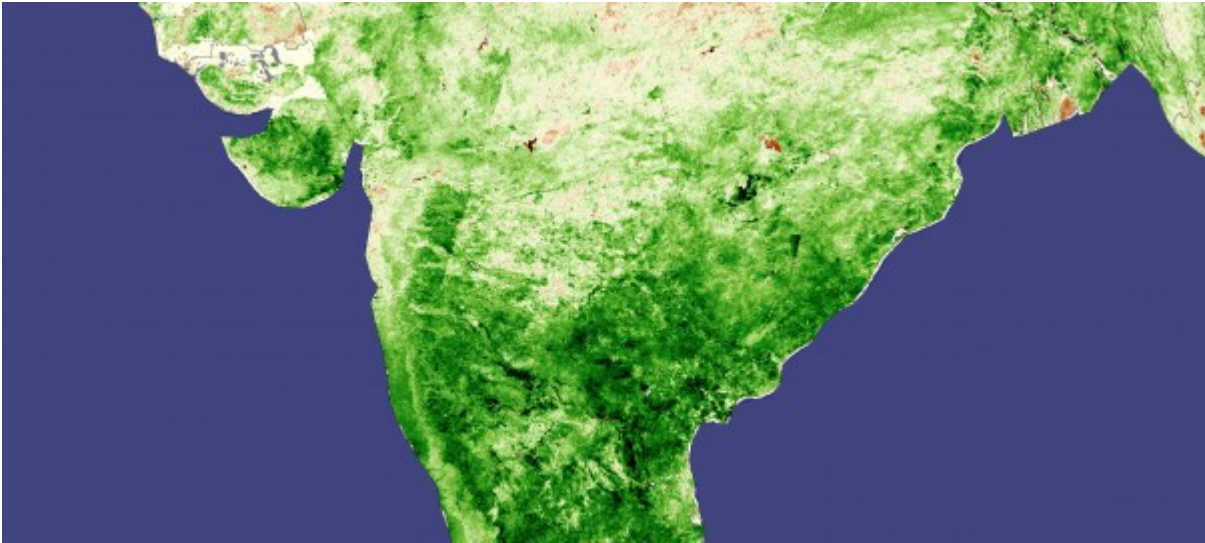
[financial irregularities. \(For more detail on Special Economic Zones see Environment section of this report.\)](#)

### 3. Corporate Largesse

During Modi's reign in Gujarat, multinational conglomerates like the Adani Group, Tata and Reliance accumulated massive profits, destroyed the environment and used concessions from Modi to drain the state of its resources. For e.g. [Adani was given land in Mundhra at a maximum rate of 45c/sq.m. and in turn they leased land to Indian Oil at \\$11/sq.m.](#) which is a profit of 2444%. Modi's more than comfortable relationship with corporations is so widespread that [Adani Group and Reliance stock soared](#) when election results began indicating a Modi win. [\(For more detail on destruction of the environment to support corporate development in Gujarat see Environment section of this report.\)](#)

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## Modi and the Environment

### In his first 100 days...

#### 1. Basic protections to safeguard the environment, that were not particularly strong to begin with, are being wiped out.

In the name of economic progress, the rules and regulations that safeguard India's environment, wildlife, forests, and indigenous rights are under attack. Defense projects are being prioritized, the raising of the Narmada dam height has been approved (another 17 meters) and the [Forest Rights and Forest Conservation Acts have been diluted to quicken economic development in what have been identified as "Naxal-affected" states](#) which comprise the richest forest lands inhabited by the greatest number of Adivasis (indigenous communities). (Further, [environmental clearances have been fast-tracked for Hindustan Copper Ltd.](#) to expand mining in places such as Jharkhand and Malanjkhanda along with unprecedented clearances for Oil & Natural Gas company. It is estimated that environmental damage costs for rushing these projects will cost India approximately [3.75 trillion rupees per year \(almost \\$62 billion dollars per year\)](#) not to mention the innumerable [potential risks](#) (such as control loss of limbs) that will unevenly impact families in these areas (all too often Adivasis, Dalits and religious minorities). After running an election campaign that espoused the importance of participatory governance and development for all, the Modi administration has announced plans to change the rules under the Forest Rights Act in a way that will no longer require mandatory consent of affected forest communities before diversion of forests lands for non-forest uses takes place. For more on Forest Rights Act and raising of Narmada Dam height see [Development](#) and [Minorities](#) sections of this report.)

[A special committee has been put in place to suggest "changes" to environmental laws which will be the primary mechanism through which key provisions in existing laws will be weakened.](#) In just three months, according to the Government of India's [Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change](#), the Modi administration has given clearances to: (1) seven different entities in the coal sector including the expansion of open cast projects, (2) sixteen different entities in the industrial sector (3) nine entities in the mining sector (4) one Special Economic Zone in Andhra Pradesh, and (5) seven thermal power



projects. And despite talking about solar, Modi's government [has exempted coal mines from public hearings for the expansion of a large swatch of coal mines.](#)

While in general, faster moving transparent government processes facilitated through online technology are required and desired, the Modi government's predilection for protecting private corporations at the expense of the welfare of the public, does not bode well for the environment nor the well-being of the majority of India's peoples.

## **2. Environmental officials change pollution measuring index and lift previous moratorium [on factory projects within 8 of India's most polluted industrial areas.](#)**

Modi ran on a platform of development promising to expedite environmental clearances in its service. On June 10, 2014, Environment and Forests Minister Prakash Javadekar, suspended the former United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's September 17, 2013 [order that had re-imposed a moratorium on several Critically Polluted Areas \(CPA\)](#). These are defined as those with Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index (CEPI) scores greater than 70. The CEPI is a metric devised by Indian Institute of Technology (Delhi) that is used by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to rate and compare pollution in industrial clusters across India. The previous UPA government had asked the CPCB to review the CEPI and the Modi government used a delay in the review as an excuse to suspend the moratorium. While the Modi government is allegedly all about efficiency, it has [given the CPCB an entire year to review the index.](#)

The [BJP 2014 Election manifesto](#) promised that "decision-making on environment clearances will be made transparent as well as time-bound," but the decision to suspend the moratorium has neither been defended nor has the decision-making process been made transparent. When it comes to the word "environment," the Modi government simply means environment for investment and rapid growth at the cost of the natural environment including plants, animals, and rural populations.

## **3. Climate Unchanged.**

Modi's response to the threat of global warming is dismal at best. He recently remarked, "[Climate change? Is this terminology correct? The reality is this that in our family, some people are old ... They say this time the weather is colder. And, people's ability to bear cold becomes less.](#)" Further, he has [refused to attend](#) the United Nations Special Summit on Climate Change, making it even more unlikely that the US, China, and India (the 3 biggest climate polluters), will forge a global agreement. The Modi budget is filled with a growth agenda that appears to be committed to pollute even more and make the green agenda subservient to the corporate agenda all buried under the rhetoric of sustainability. While there is much talk about supplying potable water infrastructure, there is no discussion about risk mitigation for the [shrinking of Himalayan glaciers](#) that supply water to rivers in North India. This is not just a threat to the water supply but also to energy, which is supplied by hydroelectric projects.

## **Previously, in Gujarat...**

### **1. Protecting private corporations at the people's expense**

- Multiple articles, reports and [research briefings](#) have documented the [havoc wreaked on the environment by the Adani group](#) especially in the Mundra Special Economic Zone (SEZ),

where India's largest private port is operated by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. Although the Adani group has [clearly violated environmental rules and clearances](#), they are yet to be held accountable. [Modi's relationship with the Adani conglomerate](#) continues to be ubiquitous since his election.

- Gujarat, one of India's most highly industrialized states has paved the way for Special Economic Zones advancing its development vision under the banner of economic revival that has widely circulated as "Vibrant Gujarat." This development trend has utilized innumerable SEZ's (over-privileging free-market principles of increased trade and investment) to [takeover ecologically-distressed coastlines in Gujarat](#), seriously impacting already marginalized communities including farmers, fisher people, saltpan workers and grazers.
- The majority of Industries operating in Gujarat do so without environmental clearances or continue to work illegally. One of Modi's senior ministers in Gujarat, [Babubhai Bokhiria](#) was sentenced to three years of jail by a court in Porbandar for illegal limestone mining in June 2013.

## 2. Pollution and Gujarat

- In 2010, India's Central Pollution Control Board of India proclaimed [Gujarat the most polluted](#) state of India because it accounts for 29% of all of India's hazardous waste.
- The Sabarmati River in Gujarat has the dubious distinction of being one of India's most polluted rivers in India; a [recent scientific study](#) confirms the extent of the pollution. The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, heralded as the project that will "reconnect Ahmedabad to its river," has done nothing to alleviate its pollution, but instead has [led to the destruction of people's homes, sometimes in violation of Gujarat High Court orders](#). In 2012, the Central Pollution Control Board announced [three Gujarat rivers to be the most polluted in India](#).
- Since 2009, the [Vapi and Ankleshwar industrial areas in Gujarat have consistently topped the CEPI scores](#) in the critically polluted area list, i.e. with CEPI scores over 80. Due to these serious pollution levels, the Ministry of Environment and Forests banned all Gujarat new projects and expansion projects in 2010 in the industrial cluster of Vapi in Southern Gujarat. In 2011, the ban was lifted after the Gujarat Pollution Control Board promised to implement actionable plans to improve air quality, [but no action was taken](#) and in 2013 the pollution index was only reduced marginally (85.31). Gujarat remains on the top of India's pollution chart; the ban was re-imposed in September 2013.
- Independent sources such as the Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti (Environmental Protection Committee) have documented the extent of pollution in Gujarat's "Golden Corridor."

## 3. Gujarat unable to produce statewide climate action plan

- After [winning international praise](#) for establishing a Gujarat Climate Change Department, Modi's government was [unable to produce a statewide climate action plan by 2013](#), even as 25 other states in India were able to follow through.

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See [here](#) for more details of the projects that have received environmental clearances.

\*Note however that the MoEF website is not consistently updated. An article posted [here](#) claims that 92 projects received forest clearance in June and July.



## Modi and Women, Sexual Minorities

### In his first 100 days...

#### 1. Rhetoric versus Reality

Contrary to the Prime Minister's women-friendly public rhetoric, his government has failed to allocate any significant portion of the budget to change living and working conditions for women. Modi's speech on August 15th, the anniversary of India's Independence Day, contained many references to women. He referred to India's disturbing sex ratio and said families should "stop killing girls in the womb." He also called for the need for girls and women to have access to safe toilets, and connected it to violence girls and women face additionally due to the lack of sanitary facilities. However, so far the progress on women's rights has been slow. In this year's budget, women's safety programs [merited a measly Rs. 200 crores](#) (about \$32.8 Million USD) which is about the same amount allocated for the construction of a statue of India's first Home Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel.

In a [recent speech](#) Modi claims to have donated generously as chief minister for girl-child education, but there is not a substantial investment in girls' education in the latest budget. There are two schemes introduced for girls/women – [one to increase public safety in big and small cities](#) and the other is the introduction of a savings scheme for girls: [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#) program. A closer look at the figures, however, shows that these schemes [are grossly inadequate to the task of challenging deep-rooted structural inequality](#) that girls and women face. India's Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, was also recently criticized for his [offensive comments](#) about rape in India. He was quoted at a tourism ministers' conference saying: "One small incident of rape in Delhi advertised world over is enough to cost us billions of dollars in terms of global tourism."

## **2. “Love Jihad” – the Demonization of Muslim communities in the name of women’s “honor”**

With an eye on the (just concluded) by-elections, Modi and some ministers in his cabinet have [stoked communal tensions in the state](#) of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) through inflammatory rhetoric accusing Muslim men of seducing and raping Hindu women. BJP politicians accuse Muslim men of “love jihad,” a term they have coined to describe what they claim is a strategy on the part of Muslim men to increase the Muslim population in India. Many non-BJP ministers are against this tactic for fear of inciting violence in the state but their fears have been disregarded. Yogi Adityanath, a BJP Minister from U.P. [announced at a campaign rally](#) that forced conversion of Hindu girls to Islam can be prevented only by a BJP-led government in the state. Not only does this incite Islamophobia, but such tactics also [reinforce patriarchal and regressive views of women](#) where women’s bodies, understood to be property, are used by men and communities to avenge each other. Such accusations of “love jihad” have however proved to be an utter failure as borne out by the results of the by-elections which spell nothing short of [a major defeat of the BJP’s communal politics](#) in U.P. and Rajasthan.

The idea of “love jihad” basically reinforces the idea that women have no caste or religious identities of their own – an upper caste woman loses her caste “status” when she marries outside her religion or caste. Such dangerous frames further posit women as bearers of culture and communities and sanction moral policing of women and the need to inflict violence against women if they “transgress” i.e. marry outside their community, drink, smoke etc. In 2013, this trope of the “love jihad” was deployed by the Sangh Parivar in Muzzafarnagar against the Muslim community, and as a reason to target and attack Muslim young men. Hindu men are being urged to “reclaim” their masculinity and prevent Hindu women from seduction by Muslim men. Furthermore, Hindu women are recruited to mobilize and lead these attacks against Muslim men in the name of “saving Hindu women’s honor.” Such a framework erases women’s agency and condones the use of violence to suppress their freedom. Even though the National Crime Records Bureau does not recognize honor killings as a separate category, the Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives, a Lucknow-based feminist advocacy group, has found that patriarchal crimes that punish women for their supposed sexual transgressions are quite prevalent in Uttar Pradesh. For all the talk of protecting women, the “Love Jihad” propaganda and the specter of the predatory Muslim man actually exposes women to the threat of violence by their own families and communities.

## **3. Homophobia Continues to Hurt India**

The overall nationalistic and patriarchal narrative of Narendra Modi’s BJP party is of grave concern for those who support the rights of sexual minorities. BJP is the only major party to support the re-criminalization of homosexuality under section 377 (please see note about section 377 below). Modi has remained silent on his stance on Section 377 and LGBTQ rights. In the aftermath of the Supreme Court decision, [several human rights organizations including the Alternative Law Forum](#), activists, progressive academics and parents of gay youth spoke out about the regressiveness of the decision, and the backlash it could unleash, but to little avail. Modi’s political and cultural philosophy is rooted in Hindutva, a hardline form of Hindu nationalism, and it remains to be seen what he will do to propel or regress LGBTQ rights. Following the Supreme Court decision in December 2013, [BJP chief Rajnath Singh](#) famously told journalists: “Gay sex is not natural and we cannot support something which is unnatural.” Though there have been many [public blogs](#), [personal stories in the media](#) and [narratives by bravely out and proud gay individuals](#) and their [family members](#), the struggle to strike down this regressive legislation continues, and remains a stark challenge under the BJP, which touts

homosexuality as anti-Hindu! According to a [new study](#), homophobia could be costing India \$30.8 billion every year.

The culture of homophobia in India continues to hurt disproportionately those who are already affected by systemic and societal injustices—women, lower caste and class communities. Whereas out gay men have been the most visible aspect of queer movements in India and the mobilizations against Section 377, queer women are highly invisible in a social context that denies agency for women’s sexuality. [Queer women thus remain additionally marginalized](#) within LGBTQ communities, and criminalizing homosexuality would be a further step back for queer women from being able to claim their identities openly.

Note: Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code is the legacy of an archaic British colonial law that deemed homosexual sex as “unnatural.” On December 13, 2013, the Supreme Court of India re-criminalized gay sex by setting aside the 2009 judgment by a Delhi High Court that deemed section 377 as unconstitutional with regards to sex between consenting adults.

## **Previously, in Gujarat...**

### **1. Dismal conditions for women throughout the state.**

Overall, Modi’s track record in Gujarat with regard to women’s rights is dismal. The 2011 census revealed only 918 women per 1,000 men in Gujarat — a ratio that’s well below the abysmal national average of 940. Reports indicate that in Gujarat’s tribal areas, upper-caste men desiring an heir will buy low-caste teenage brides. According to Oxfam India, more than 1 in 3 married women in Gujarat is a survivor of domestic violence. An op-ed in the New York Times by Sonia Faleiro revealed that “despite this, Ahmedabad, Gujarat’s largest city, was found this year to have just one officer to register complaints of spousal abuse, provide legal aid, monitor cases and take victims to shelters, as required under a 2005 national law. At one point, this officer was handling some 800 cases.”

The horrifying scale of brutality of the violence experienced by Gujarat’s Muslim women at the hands of the Sangh Parivar’s mobs in 2002 has been well documented by national and international human rights groups including [Human Rights Watch](#) and Amnesty International. Gruesome accounts of horrific brutalities inflicted upon pregnant Muslim women’s bodies were documented and reported in the media. [Amnesty International’s 2005 report on the state of women victims of the Gujarat riots](#) documents that [scores of women who were brutally raped](#) continue to fight for justice and in key cases, the accused have been acquitted. An estimated [98,000 people](#) lost their homes during the riots [still await compensation and/or rehabilitation](#), more than a decade later.

India’s National Human Rights Commission, a government agency, found that Modi’s administration failed “[to control the persistent violation of the rights to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the people of the State.](#)” Modi was accused of being unwilling to proactively prosecute the rapists in the years following the violence. In 2013, there were concerns raised about Modi’s handling of the stalking of a woman in 2009 by senior Gujarat police officials on the behest of “saheb” or “boss,” who the Congress Party alleged was Modi himself.

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# Modi and Human Rights

## In his first 100 days...

### 1. Free Speech and political expression under attack.

Three weeks after Mr. Modi & his right-wing Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), won the elections in May 2014, a college principal in Kunnankulam, Kerala, was arrested following a complaint by a member of the BJP. The principal, with some of his students, had featured Modi's picture in the college magazine under a list of "negative faces" along with that of Osama bin Laden, Adolf Hitler, George W. Bush, etc. [The Police seized the printing press and computers](#) used to design the magazine, along with hundreds of copies. Those arrested were later released on bail but face charges of defamation and criminal conspiracy. Conviction could bring stiff fines as well as prison terms.

In the weeks following the elections of May 2014, there were [several instances of such criminalization of dissent](#):

- In Bhatkal, Karnataka, an MBA student, Syed Vaqas, was arrested along with four of his friends for sending a message that caricatured an election slogan of the BJP.
- Also in May 2014, police in Bangalore arrested a man for sending a photograph on his phone depicting Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a funeral pyre.
- In Goa, Devu Chodankar, a 31-year-old naval engineer was arrested for his alleged inflammatory comments against Mr. Modi posted on social media.

All of these men were arrested for "cyber defamation" under the draconian section 66A of the Information Technology Act. Such repeated threats and police actions are, predictably, leading to self-censorship in political dialogues. Amnesty International, in a statement dated June 26, 2014, deplored what it described as "[a growing trend of intolerance towards dissent and criticism](#)" ... "especially when it concerns the new Prime Minister."

In one of the more tragic outcomes of such sanctioned intolerance on the streets, members of a radical Hindu group, the Hindu Rashtra Sena ("Army of the Hindu Nation"), [attacked and killed](#) Mohsin Sadiq Shaikh, a 24-year old Muslim IT professional, in the city of Pune. Claiming outrage over morphed pictures of right-wing Hindu political leaders and Hindu gods which were shared on social media, activists of radical Hindu groups indulged in violence and arson damaging more than 200 public transport buses and private vehicles. Mr. Shaikh was completely unrelated to the morphed pictures- his only "crime" was that he was wearing a skullcap and sported a beard, sartorial choices that are commonly associated with members of the Muslim community.

[Prominent citizens and activists have called on Mr. Modi](#), in the name of constitutionally guaranteed rights to Free Speech and Expression, to stop the use of repressive legislation and have demanded the deletion of such legislation. However, there are no reports to date of any response by Mr. Modi on the subject.



## **2. State security apparatus and judicial system deployed to target rival politicians, journalists, judges and activists.**

Modi's ascension to power in May 2014 has [delivered a jolt to civil liberties](#). Arvind Kejriwal, the founder of the Aam Aadmi Party, and a political rival to Mr. Modi was arrested on May 21, 2014, under charges of criminal defamation for exposing alleged corruption in land deals by Nitin Gadkari, former president of the BJP. Again, on July 17, the BJP [served Mr. Kejriwal a defamation notice](#) demanding Rs. 10 million (over \$160,000) as damages for his claim that the BJP was "horse- trading" parliamentarians to form a new state government in Delhi. (As of September 2014, Mr. Kejriwal has produced a video through a sting operation where Delhi BJP vice-president Sher Singh Dagar and his aide Raghuraj Dahiya are [seen offering a bribe](#) to a member of Parliament from the AAP party).

Another case that raises concerns about the [Modi government's assault on judicial independence](#) is that of Gopal Subramaniam, a former solicitor general of India. Subramaniam enjoyed an impeccable reputation and was specially invited by the Chief Justice in June 2014 to become a judge of the Supreme Court; the other judges in the collegium were unanimous in their choice of Subramaniam. However, following a campaign of innuendoes by the CBI (India's foremost investigating police agency) and the Intelligence Bureau (India's internal intelligence agency) against him, including malicious leaks to the media, Subramaniam voluntarily withdrew his candidature. But he also went public with his claims of a character assassination by the Modi government, charging that the CBI had been asked to "dig up dirt" about him for his display of "independence and integrity". Subramaniam claimed that he was being targeted in retaliation for his role as *amicus curiae* in the trial of the Sohrabuddin case where Mr. Amit Shah, a close aide of Mr. Modi, is one of the accused in the extrajudicial killing of Sohrabuddin, a Muslim youth from Gujarat. (Amit Shah was Mr. Modi's home minister in Gujarat, and since has been promoted to the influential position of the party president of the BJP). [Mr. Subramaniam's claims were supported by Justice R.M. Lodha](#), the Chief Justice of India, when he declared publicly that the decision to drop Mr. Subramaniam from consideration was made unilaterally by the government without his own "knowledge and consent".

The [shocking coda](#) to the Gopal Subramaniam story is that in July 2014, Mr. Amit Shah's lawyer, Uday U Lalit, was elevated to the position of a Supreme Court judge. These chain of events have been described by the media as the "[Gujaratization of the highest judiciary](#)," a reference to the use of political power by the executive during Mr. Modi's tenure in Gujarat, and the subsequent erosion of public confidence in the judiciary such that the Supreme Court has transferred several key and critical cases out of the state.

## **Previously, in Gujarat...**

### **1. Suppression of dissent**

Gujarat has earned a sordid reputation for the violent suppression of all forms of dissent, including that of workers, religious minorities (particularly Muslims) and other exploited and oppressed sections of society. Dissenters who have challenged the Modi government, including former BJP minister Haren Pandya and Right to Information activist Amit Jethwa, [have been mysteriously killed](#). With [only 5% of India's population, 22% of the murders and 20% of the assaults of RTI activists in recent years have occurred in Gujarat](#), which has only two RTI (Right to Information) Commissioners compared to eight in Maharashtra and nine in Tamil Nadu.

## 2. Harassment of those defending victims of Hindu chauvinism

Activists like Shabnam Hashmi from the group ANHAD (Act Now for Harmony and Democracy) who are involved in organizing against Hindu chauvinism have been repeatedly targeted and harassed. In January 2012, [Hashmi was detained by the Gujarat police](#) when she was on her way to a public meeting in Godhra where she was to address a gathering. Again, in April 2014, Hashmi was attacked in the city of Rae Bareilly by BJP workers. [She was threatened and manhandled](#) while she and her associates were distributing leaflets about Modi's development record in Gujarat. The BJP party workers also grabbed the leaflets but no action was taken against them although the whole incident took place barely 100 metres away from the Gadaganj police station!

Human rights defenders such as Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand, with the organization Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) which has been at the forefront of the struggle to secure justice for the victims of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, have been harassed and intimidated by law enforcement with trumped up charges.

Mr. Modi's [targeting of whistleblower cops](#) such as Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer Sanjiv Bhatt and ex-DGP R. B. Sreekumar, and human rights activists such as Fr. Cedric Prakash, have been well-documented and are further examples of attempts to derail the efforts to deliver justice to the victims of Gujarat 2002.

## 3. Rewarding mass murderers

One of the worst episodes of mass killing and brutality during the 2002 anti-Muslim pogroms conducted by the RSS and its affiliates with the support of Modi's state administration was in [Naroda Patiya, Ahmedabad](#). The individual who led this carnage which resulted in not less than 90 dead men, women and children, [Maya Kodnani](#), was a BJP politician close to Modi. She incited the mob to rape women and murder men and children, reportedly egging them on by distributing swords. Unperturbed by the enormity of her involvement in the brutalities, [Modi appointed her Minister for Women and Child Development](#) in 2007. It was only after a painstaking investigation (that supported the brave struggle of human rights activists on behalf of victims and survivors) brought charges against Kodnani that she was subsequently imprisoned, facing first a death sentence which was then commuted to a life sentence. With the ascent of Modi at the center, [Kodnani was granted bail for reasons of "ill health"](#) by the Gujarat High Court. Similarly, [Babu Bajrangji, who gloated on camera about enjoying the brutal murder of Muslim men, women and children](#), was sentenced to life in prison and after Modi's election, [granted temporary bail ostensibly for health reasons](#). As if these two cases of mass murderers being rewarded weren't enough, yet another individual close to Modi was also granted bail in the months following Modi's election. [Swami Aseemanand, one of the most high profile RSS leaders is under investigation for a series of terrorism charges involving bombing trains, marketplaces, shrines in multiple sites across India](#). He had originally become a highly respected RSS leader as a result of his efforts mobilizing RSS mobs to carry out anti-Christian pogroms in the Dangs district of Gujarat in the late 1990s.

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## Modi and the Media

### In his first 100 days...

#### 1. Prominent journalists were pressured to avoid criticizing the government.

Even during the run-up to the elections there were several instances of senior journalists being coerced by media owners to restrain their critical reporting on Modi, resulting in multiple firings and resignations. Siddharth Varadarajan resigned from his senior editing position at *The Hindu* after refusing to submit to demands by paper owners to place then prime minister candidate Modi on the front cover in October 2013. [Varadarajan posted on Facebook that “four thugs” attacked his apartment’s caretaker leaving this message “Tell your sahib \(boss\) to watch what he says on TV.”](#) [Varadarajan’s wife also reported threats.](#) Political analyst Thiru Veerapandian’s prime-time debate show “Vibhada Medhai” was canceled following a 17-year run shortly after Veerapandian offered cautionary warnings about voting for Modi at a public event in late 2013. Also in late 2013, journalist and editor [Hartosh Singh Bal was reported to have been fired](#) by his employer “Open” magazine as a result of publishing a critical piece on Modi. Sagarika Ghose, host of “Face the Nation” on CNN-IBN and deputy editor of the English-language news channel was strongly instructed from Network 18 channel’s owner to refrain from posting tweets that might be critical of Modi just after the mass media company was acquired by Mukesh Ambani’s Reliance Industries ([with known ties to Modi](#)) at the end of May 2014. Ghose, along with editor-in-chief Rajdeep Sardesai both quit Network 18 in refusal to [compromise integrity and autonomy.](#) The same management [pressured Nikhil Wagle,](#) editor of IBN Lokmat, Network 18’s Marathi-language channel, to also abstain from posting critical comments about Modi. In July 2014, the newspaper [DNA removed an article from its website by Rana Ayyub](#) because it was critical of Modi’s appointment of Amit Shah to lead the Bharatiya Janata Party, specifying murder charges and other crimes for which Shah is still on trial. ([For more on Amit Shah see Human Rights section of this report.](#)) Further reports of journalists being asked to muffle anti-Modi stories on the one hand, and cutting to live Modi speeches are becoming common place.

## 2. Media denied access by Modi.

As a candidate, Modi spared few opportunities to appear on television in an unprecedented re-branding effort to recast himself as a “man of the people.” However, since his election Modi has been far more selective in his interactions with the media, insulating himself and his administration increasingly from media scrutiny, aided in no small part by an increasingly pliant corporate media that is foreclosing critique of the Modi administration. In an unprecedented move Modi declined employing a media advisor and instead has [appointed an aide as a Public Relations officer](#). In addition, Modi has ordered his ministers to avoid speaking directly to the media unless required to amplify an official position expressed by the Prime Minister (PM); behind closed doors his [authoritarian style](#) of governance is being reported to ruffle feathers. In a sharp break from conventions governing diplomatic trips, Modi [declined to invite journalists to accompany him to the BRICS \(Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa\) summit in July](#), overturning a long-standing practice followed by previous prime ministers. Such changes do not bode well for India as they insulate the PM and his cabinet from the sort of media access and scrutiny required in any healthy democracy.

## Previously, in Gujarat...

### 1. Targeting journalists

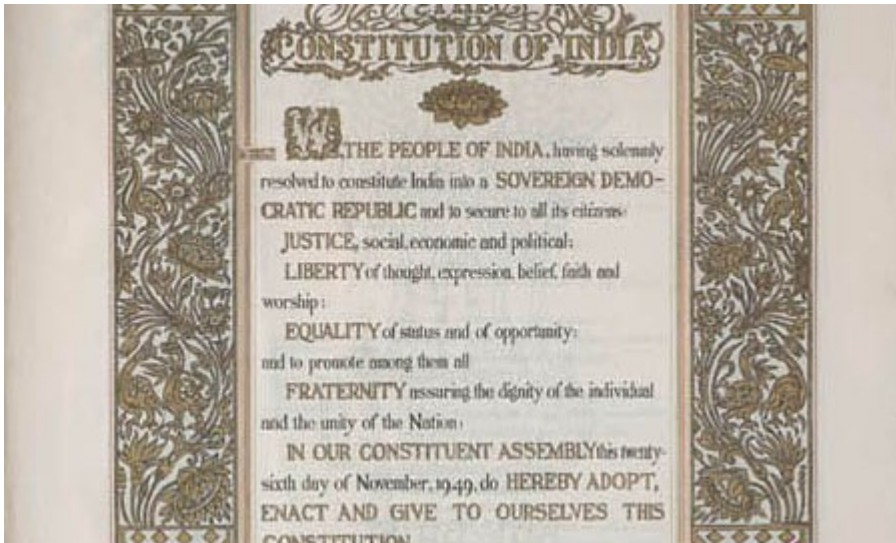
- Under Modi’s tenure in Gujarat, [journalists were targeted with sedition charges](#), as well as harassment and denial of entry into the state Assembly.
- In 2006, Modi’s administration brought sedition [charges against Gujarati-language daily editor, Manoj Shinde](#), for his criticism of Modi’s mishandling of a flood.
- [Sedition and treason charges were also brought against Times of India editor, Bharat Desai and crime reporter Prashant Dayal along with photographer Gautam Mehta at Gujarat Samachar](#) due to an investigative series on crime questioning high-ranking police officers.

### 2. Curbing media

- In late 2002, responding to a reporter’s question regarding the insecurity experienced by Muslims in the state, Modi lambasted the media for its coverage, publicly threatening the reporter with: “People like you should apologise to the 5 crore (50 million) Gujaratis for asking such questions. Have you not learnt your lesson? If you continue like this, you will have to [pay the price](#).” During the same interview, senior journalists had to climb out of windows to escape the violent mobs gathered outside the building in support of Modi.
- As the atrocities committed by RSS-led mobs mounted in early March 2002, Modi [banned the telecast of Star News](#) because it refused to comply with the Gujarat government’s demand that all media refrain from naming the religious identity of Muslim victims of the genocide.
- [Leading Gujarati newspapers such as Sandesh and Gujarat Samachar served as bullhorns](#) for the RSS led massacres of Muslims, going so far as to even defend and incite further violence. In late March 2002, Modi congratulated the heads of *Sandesh* and *Gujarat Samachar* among others for their “restrained” coverage of the violence.

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## Modi and Religious Minorities, Dalits, and Adivasis.

In his first 100 days...

### 1. Modi promised an end to financial “untouchability” but is ushering in a new era of financial exploitation.

Modi’s recent announcement of plans to bring about “banking for the poor” has been promoted as a bold step towards addressing poverty. “Financial inclusion” has been the buzzword describing plans to enable the most disenfranchised to open and administer bank accounts, and avail of financial services such as an ATM card, credit, and receive direct government aid instead of through intermediaries. While this does appear to represent an important concession for the “poor” there are serious problems to consider. First, 93% of India’s workforce is largely informal, including contract labor, construction labor (78% unorganized), casual labor, manufacturing labor, sweepers and scavengers, shop workers, and agricultural workers (predominantly unorganized). Second, India’s population is overwhelmingly impoverished, with [more than 800 million living on less than Rs. 20 per day](#). The official minimum wage [remains as low as Rs.115 \(\\$2\)/day](#). With such low wages and without protection from clearly regulated banking legislation the means for maintaining a functioning bank account are non-existent.

Moreover, Modi’s stated aim to reduce inequality stands in stark contrast to the overwhelmingly pro-rich orientation of his economic policies. The slogan “financial inclusion” invoked by Modi is in fact the same slogan used to justify the ongoing [rapid expansion of private banks](#), including those associated with some of the biggest corporate houses in India such as Reliance. A cursory look at the results of privatized banking since 1991 shows that it brought about more financial exclusion of rural and semi-urban Indians than otherwise. With a heavy urban bias, concentrating its activities in three metropolitan centers, privatized banking alongside the rapid withdrawal of state investment in rural development contributed to both the immiserization of agricultural populations and the rapid return of



parasitic moneylenders as the primary source of rural credit. In sum, the banking initiative presented by Modi, founded on the premise of private bank expansion, is a recipe for another disastrous chapter of immiserization and economic strangulation of the lowest waged and unwaged populations.

## **2. Constitutional safeguards circumvented, threatening displacement of hundreds of thousands of Adivasis.**

Adivasis (India's indigenous communities) predominantly live on resource-rich lands in states such as Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and as such have been increasingly targeted by state and corporate interests. In less than 100 days, the Modi administration has pushed for the [rapid dilution of environmental clearance norms and requirements](#), by enfeebling the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and Forest Conservation Act (FCA). These changes will not only allow for a quickening of development that will account for displacement of Adivasis, but it will also bypass community consent processes required under the FRA. (For more on Forest Rights Act see [Development](#) and [Environment](#) sections of this report.)

The government has given its approval to the [raising of the height of the Narmada Dam in Gujarat by another 17 meters](#), signaling its disregard for the decades long struggles of Adivasis and small farmers that are facing submergence or violent dispossession of their villages resulting from the dam project. Once the new dam height goes into effect, it is projected that [more than 250,000 will be displaced](#), mostly Adivasis, living in the densely populated villages in Nimad of Madhya Pradesh, submerging houses, farms, shops, temples, mosques and crops.

On May 28th, 2014 the Modi government put in effect the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization (Amendment) Ordinance that has allowed completion of the [Indira Sagar Polavaram Irrigation project](#). This ordinance has provisions for circumventing constitutional safeguards meant to protect Adivasis. The dam is projected to submerge 74 gram panchayats (local governance councils) and 193 villages in Khammam district in Telangana and is projected to displace 200,000 (mostly Adivasis) while also submerging 3,500 hectares of forest land.

These are some stark examples of policy initiatives of the Modi government that are clearly intended to benefit corporate interests, under the guise of "stimulating economic growth," inevitably [intensifying the violent displacement of Adivasi communities from their lands](#). Such policies completely contradict Modi's campaign promises of "inclusive development," and will intensify the ongoing war being waged by the government on behalf of the corporate sector on India's poor and most disenfranchised.

## **3. Organized violence against Muslim communities orchestrated by Modi's party.**

While vowing through campaign promises that his Hindu nationalist beliefs would not interfere with his ability to govern on behalf of *all* Indians, Modi has remained silent on anti-Muslim violence since coming to power. Urban Development Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Azam Khan, recently said that the new [Modi government has asked Indian Muslims who oppose Modi to move from India to Pakistan](#). Within 10 weeks following India's May 2014 general election, [over 600 "communal incidents" against Muslims](#) were documented by police in Uttar Pradesh (UP) [primarily close to places by-elections would be held](#). The strategy of polarizing Hindu and Muslim votes in UP seems to have backfired for now as the [BJP lost seven of its eleven seats](#) in the September 13, 2014 by-elections.

Modi seems to remain resolutely anti-Muslim. His inaction indicates no fear of state reprisal for anti-Muslim activities. This emboldens his BJP support team and hardline affiliates. His stance in 2002,

during the mass killing and displacement of Muslims in Gujarat was highly controversial. Yet within his first 100 days, he remains silent as violence against Muslims continue. If Modi planned to demonstrate his ability to govern for all Indians, these days would have been the time.

Since Modi came to power, hardliner Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) -affiliated groups have launched a vitriolic campaign against Muslims of what they have claimed is an effort to end a phenomenon they call [“love jihad.”](#) an alleged Muslim strategy for converting Hindu women to Islam through persuasion of marriage or money. Many Indian progressives point out that “love jihad” is nothing more than a fabricated discourse being used to legitimize forced conversions to Hinduism. (For more on “love jihad” see [Gender](#) section of this report.)

What is significant in the spate of attacks on Muslim and Christian communities is the centrality of the dynamics of caste underlying the issue of conversion. Hindu supremacist (Hindutva) groups foment communal unrest in areas where Dalits (erstwhile ‘untouchables’) have converted to either Islam or Christianity and coerce local Dalits to “reconvert” and then convince family and community members to do the same. Dalits who refuse “reconversion” are targeted more intensely by such organizations, and state-level “anti conversion” laws are employed by the authorities to further persecute them. Remarkably, Hindutva organizations enjoy impunity even when they engage in outright acts of violence. Dalits who convert, often to escape the tyranny of the Hindu caste system, are witnessing the outright denial of their right to search for an escape. The same Hindutva organizations that seek to deny autonomous religious legitimacy to Dalits have little to offer by way of addressing the continuing oppressive exclusionary practices of caste Hinduism. For instance, [Dalits who were converted forcibly to Hinduism from Islam](#) still find that they cannot draw water from wells claimed by caste Hindus in their village in Madhya Pradesh.

#### **4. Modi has remained silent on forced conversions of Christians.**

Inspired by Modi’s rise to power, several Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders have launched so-called “re-conversion” drives targeting Christian communities. RSS Hindu activist, Rajeshwar Singh [recently declared](#) while converting a Christian family to Hinduism in Hasayan (140 km south of Delhi in the state of Uttar Pradesh), [“We will cleanse our Hindu society. We will not let the conspiracy of church or mosque succeed in Bharat \(India\).”](#) On August 26, 2014, [72 Dalit Christians were converted to Hinduism](#) at a Seventh Day Adventist church in Asroi, Uttar Pradesh. Rumors continue to circulate suggesting Christians were forcibly converted and the church has also been refashioned into a Shiva temple. A fact-finding team is currently pursuing an investigation.

These conversion efforts are directed primarily at Adivasis and Dalits, but also Christians, informed by a caste politics that drives Hindutva anxieties over conversion. The basic claim that all Christians, like Muslims, are converts, empowers Hindutva groups to deny the religious legitimacy of Adivasi and Dalit Christians. Moreover the claim that conversion to Hinduism is merely “re-conversion” rests on the fallacious notion that all Adivasis are “Hindu” by default, denying the legitimacy of their own distinct and autonomous religious traditions that have little to do with Hinduism. In BJP-ruled states like Chhattisgarh, draconian laws specifically target Christians, as in the recent case of the Bilaspur High Court [banning “all non-Hindu religious propaganda, prayers and speeches in the villages”](#) in Bastar district. The message is clearly that the only religious identity permissible is Hinduism. Tellingly, the Modi administration has remained silent on the growing atmosphere of repression threatening Christians in India. (For more on (re)conversions see [Culture](#) section of this report.)

## Previously, in Gujarat...

### 1. Over 45% adults in Gujarat don't have bank accounts

According to a [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation supported India-wide survey](#) of 45,024 adults from October 15, 2013 to January 8, 2014, over 45% adults in Gujarat have never had access to a bank account, worst than 10 out of 19 major Indian states. While Modi is pushing for “financial inclusion” on a national level, in his own home state, almost half the adults don't have bank accounts. The same study also points out that despite these statistics, an increase in the number of bank branches and accounts hasn't resulted in operative use. Nearly half of the accounts are inactive, only 54% of the population use their account once in 90 days and among the poor, that number drops to 45%.

### 2. Rampant exploitation of Adivasis and Dalits

Adivasis and Dalits make up more than 1/5th of Gujarat's population yet their lands and children are not protected. Gujarat's economic success depends on the [exploitation of cheap Adivasi and Dalit labor](#) which extends to children. Gujarat has a terrible track record when it comes to [stopping child labor](#).

Gujarat, under Modi, has also not supported Adivasis in regards to property ownership. Under the Forest Rights Act, Adivasis were to be offered titles for land their families had been living on for many generations. Under British colonization control of Adivasi lands were taken and then transference of land was given to the national Forest Department through the decolonization process. But the Modi government in Gujarat was slow to enforce this legislation. The [Modi Government began offering individual revenue records for establishing property ownership](#) to 15,000 Adivasis in October 2013 only after Gujarat High Court ordered that the FRA had to be honored. However, even that action has been insufficient. The community rights mandated in the FRA have not been enacted, leaving thousands of Adivasis without their property rights.

### 3. Muslims in Modi's Gujarat

During Modi's tenure, ultra-nationalist Hindus attacked and killed more than 2,000 Muslims and forced 150,000 out of their homes. [It has been widely reported that Modi both encouraged and failed to stop the violence](#). In the aftermath, Modi refused to help return displaced Muslims to their homes and neighborhoods, instead amplifying his public anti-Muslim rhetoric in election speeches later that year. Early in his political career, Modi rose in the ranks of the RSS with his involvement in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) student wing, and also by participating in activities linked to 1992 communal violence where Hindu mobs demolished the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. He also, not surprisingly, has not denounced the attacks on Muslims in Uttar Pradesh earlier in 2014.

### 4. Christians in Modi's Gujarat

During the National Democratic Alliance government, in 1998, a series of attacks were launched against tribal Christians in [Gujarat's Dangs district](#) led by the RSS and its cultural wing, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). Also, anti-conversion laws have been used to target and harass Christians. For example, Gujarat law [requires permission from the district magistrate](#) for anyone seeking conversion to a religion other than Hindu. This law not only infringes on the right to one's own religion, but also to one's own privacy. This state law violates Indian constitutional law and international law

simultaneously.

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