STATE SPONSORED POGROM: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF FIRAQ AND PARZANIA

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Abstract: The role of state in safeguarding human life has been recognized across constitutional and legislative settings of all the countries. Particularly in the context of conflict ridden territories the state’s active role in diffusing violence is very critical. This research, through textual deconstruction of two films, Parzania and Firaq explains the role of Indian state in 2002 Gujarat Riots. The existing scholarship is assertive that Indian state played an active part in premeditating violence against Muslim minorities residing in Muslim dominated areas of rural and urban Gujarat. Critical Discourse Analysis has been used to critically analyse Parzania and Firaq. The research explains that the state not only premeditated the communal violence but also exercised brute force, physical and coercive forms of power against Muslim communes with an intention of demolishing the Muslim identity from the politico-religious landscape of Gujarat.

Keywords: CDA, Communal Violence, Firaq, Parzania, State, Violence

INTRODUCTION

South Asian history is marred with violence of different sorts and types which are practiced by the majority who feed on majoritarian and universalizing religious ideology against the minorities residing in different territories. Gujarat pogrom is one of the most recent instances of communal violence which broke out in 2002 in contemporary India. Based on this subject, two films, Firaq and Parzania were produced under the new wave of parallel cinema in 2009 and 3. 2005 respectively. The paper has critically analyzed these two feature films using the tool of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

METHODOLOG

For the purpose of the current research, I have chosen Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2010; Bryman, 2016) for which following factors are important and were followed:

1. The CDA tends to assess the function of discourse in the creation of inequalities in the social structures (Jahedi, Abdullah & Mukundan, 2014). (The dominant discourse of Hindutva ideology created social, economic, political, and discursive inequalities against Muslim minorities as detailed in the subsequent sections of the paper).

2. It is recommended that the CDA should have emancipatory aim to identify the reasons of how a discourse is harming the minorities and disadvantaged and marginalized groups (Jahedi, Abdullah & Mukundan, 2014).

For the current research the discourse of institutionalized coercive state power functioned as a dominant discourse to dominate, subjugate, and marginalize Muslim minorities of Gujarat as detailed in the subsequent sections of the paper. CDA basically draws the meanings from linguistic analysis and tends to relate them with linguistic features to a broader context of social, sociopolitical and socio-economic structures (Jahedi, Abdullah & Mukundan, 2014). (In the textual, social and discursive analyses, certain words and phrases have been deconstructed to explain their contexts on the broader social and discursive fronts as explained in the forthcoming text).

CDA tends to put serious emphasis to study the ways how languages work and learn from broader political and social perspectives of the society (Jahedi, Abdullah & Mukundan, 2014). (This feature has also been explained in the following text where it has been asserted that how language in the context of Sangh Parivar plays out in asserting its political agenda and
absolutist form of Hindu nationalism that tends to create repercussions against the Muslim minorities in the context of Gujarat).

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO FIRAQ AND PARZANIA

Firaq was released in 2009 and was based on 2002 Gujarat Riots and its aftermaths. The film was a directorial debut of Nandita Das, an acclaimed Indian actress of parallel cinema. The film stars, Nawazuddin Sidique, Shahana Goswami, Sanjay Suri, Tisca Chopra, Paresh Rawal, Deepti Naval, Naseeruddin Shah, and Raghuvir Yadav in principle characters. The film follows an anthological format in which four stories each covering people of different socio-economic classes who had been affected by the riots, have been interwoven by Das. Sidique and Goswami’s track is about a Muslim family which was rescued by a Hindu family when the riots broke out. Suri and Chopra’s track is about the identity crisis which the former’s character has been shown facing at the wake of riots, Rawal and Naval’s track focuses on the guilt of a housewife (Naval’s character) who shut a door to a mob-lynched Muslim woman when she cried out to her for help, and Shah and Yadav’s track is about idealism of a Muslim musician at the face of adversity of and havoc created by the riots. The film garnered critical acclaim and ignited public discourses on Hindu nationalism, Minority status in the Indian secular nationalism, State accountability and its premeditation in the Muslim massacre, and Politics of hate and extremism. The multi-narrative structure of the film is about pre-schemed Muslim genocide by the Modi’s government and subtlety with which the aftermaths of the riots have been executed by Das.

Parzania is a critically acclaimed Indian feature film which was released in 2005. The film was directed by Rahul Dholakia. The film revolves around the story of a Parsi family who in the wake of Gujarat riots lost their 13 year old son named Parzan. The story covers the incidents that took place before the riots broke out followed by genocide and post-genocide. The title Parzania refers to the peaceful conception of fairy tale world which was conceptualized by Parzan and shared by him to her sister. The film is a true story of a Parsi teenager named Azhar Mody who was separated from his mother as Parishad goons burnt down the Muslim populated area of Muslim Gulberg Housing Society in Ahmedabad. The massacre took place with the police complicity. The film received two National Awards for best direction and actress, and has been regarded as one of the detailed cinematic depictions of Muslim genocide in Indian cinema. The film is also acknowledged for its sheer anger against the massacre, audacity, and honesty with which the events have been shot pre-, and post-riots. The film centers on the human story and the fact that religious intolerance can create unrest. The film garnered critical acclaim for the antagonistic directorial and textual stance against the Muslim genocide, and in actualizing the fact that those at the lowest socio-economic rung of society are more severely affected as compared to those who have and hence exert coercive and physical forms of power.

ANALYSIS

I have analyzed movies using CDA in which textual, social and discursive analyses were carried out. In the following text words and phrases from both the movies have been textually analyzed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words/phrases</th>
<th>Contextual meaning/s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firaq</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bloody liars/pimps</td>
<td>Here, Sanjay (Hindu Gujarati) calls Indian media liars for depicting the plight of Muslims post-Gujarat riots. The reporter in the backdrop is shown asserting that the region thickly populated by Muslims is primarily</td>
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</table>
backward considering the spatial dynamics of the city and hence have not been reported by the media. The reporter is also shown saying that it is these areas where the security situations are the most critical and in need of immediate State intervention. Lexicographically, a pimp is called a person who heads the institution of prostitution, controls prostitutes and arranges clients for them doing so with procuring a part of their income. Often used derogatorily for someone who is disliked, the term carries negative socio-cultural connotations for those who are called ones. Sanjay calls Indian media as pimps because he thinks that it was not as active when Hindus were killed by Muslims in Godhra attack as it was now when Hindus have retaliated back.

The whole world will give it to these Muslims

Sanjay is shown contended and takes pride in the way Muslim massacre was taking place at the hands of Hindu nationalist parties in the wake of Godhra incident. He universalizes the Hindu retaliation to Muslims by saying ‘the whole world’ and justifies their communal violence against Muslim minority.

Slaughter/butcher/swords

Lexicographically, the term refers to either killing of an animal essentially for food, or to the violent killing of a person, or the indiscriminate killings of a number of people in the form of a genocide, pogrom or massacre. In one of the scenes from Firaq, the woman’s voice over (with Arti (wife of Sanjay) burning her wrist with the hot oil) is heard. Screamingly she pleads for help saying that ‘they’ will kill her, ‘they’ will butcher/slaughter her. The plural subject of ‘they’ reflects the Sangh Parivar, a group of Hindu nationalist organizations. Here, the voiceover is of a Muslim woman who can be heard pleading to Arti for her safety from a violent Hindu mob which is after her to violate her on communal and sexual grounds. Sword is a weapon longer in length to a dagger or a knife, used for cutting or shoving. In another scene the woman is screaming ‘swords’ which highlights that one of the weapons used for killing Muslims was swords other than trishuls and rods.

Beat, stripped, raped, slaughtered and burnt...

‘Beat’, here refers the violent act of striking repeatedly with the intention of hurting or causing an injury to a person. ‘Raped’ refers to an act of non-consensual sexual activity which is carried out against a person by the one who uses physical force, or who coerces or who abuses authority. ‘Stripped’ refers to the act of stripping Muslim women off their clothes after which many of them were raped and then burnt to death by the Hindu nationalists of Sangh Parivar. The woman in one of the scenes recollects her memory of violence perpetuated against Muslim women. She also reflects on the structural and systematic fashion in which the violence was exercised.

Kill them! We don’t want Muslims in India... ...Go straight to Pakistan...

This excerpt has been taken from a Muslim woman’s recollection of violent incidents during Gujarat riots. The Sangh Parivar was exercising structural violence under the sponsorship of Modi’s government to achieve the target of demolishing Muslims from Gujarat in particular and India in general. Firaq is reminiscent of the fact that was internalized in the political and public discourses which signifies that in Gujarat there are many mini-Pakistanis dominated by the Muslim populations. Hence these areas should either be demolished or the Muslims be forced to leave India and go to
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Big brother</th>
<th>By big brother, Anu (a Hindu wife to a Muslim Gujarati) refers to all the organizations of the Sangh Parivar and Bharatiya Janata Party which organized a state mediated genocide in Gujarat.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>In this context fruit can either refer to the body of a Muslim woman who was brutalized through gang-rape or the actual act of forced/coerced sexual intercourse carried out by Sanjay’s friend against a Muslim woman. Cannily Sanjay asked his friend if he derived pleasure by having a fruit to which his friend replied that he was not the only one there, he shared it with others. The contextual meanings refer to the massive gang rapes of Muslim women.</td>
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<td>Honour/Dishonour</td>
<td>In one of the scenes, a Muslim woman survivor is shown saying that the Hindus dishonoured her daughters by raping and killing them. To this, Sanjay’s friend mocks over the notion of Indian Muslims’ honour whereas he believed they never had one. Listening to this remark, Arti questioned his own honour knowing the fact that he was involved in looting Muslim businesses and practicing sexual violence against Muslim woman.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jihadi/ katar</td>
<td>A jihadi is referred to as a person who believes in the operationalization of an Islamic State which should have the power to govern Muslim community in its entirety. In the context of this film, in order to achieve this end, a jihadi may use violent conflicts as a means. In Firaq, Jihadi and katar (fanatics) have been used together. Other terms such as extremists, zealots and militants are also common in this regard. Muslims, in the context of Gujarat, were portrayed as fanatics and jihadis who could do anything at any cost for the widespread of Islam and hence viewed as serious threats to the Hindutva ideology.</td>
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<td>Parzania</td>
<td>Parishad here refers to the group of Hindu nationalist groups based on Hindutva Ideology. Vishwa Hindu Parishad is one of the right-wing political organisations whose workers were active in pre-meditating and conducting the violent attacks in predominantly Muslim areas of Gujarat. In one scene, the Parishad representative has been filmed delivering dialogues that his party workers performed their duties of saving Muslims and controlling the violent attacks. He also brings in the Godhra attack thereby justifying the action-reaction discourse.</td>
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<td>We have no orders to help you</td>
<td>Parzania alludes to the fact that a social control of police was strictly handled by state ministry and as per orders directed from there it was not functioning responsibly. Shernaz’s (a Parsi woman) testimony also starts with the police role outlined by the Hindutva groups. In many of the incidents the police was either a silent spectator, or a smooth operator, or simply a facilitator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEY LAUGHED. YA ALLAH!</td>
<td>One of the testimonies while referring to the acts of violence against women recollects her memories about her daughter who died as a result of massacre. She says that before killing her daughter and burning her body, the Parishad workers induced knives into her private parts and derived pleasure out of this act by laughing loud over it. Nearly towards the end of her narrative, she says in a shaky voice “YA ALLAH!” to articulate her loss</td>
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</table>
and anger. The details of the forms of violence have been analysed in the social analysis in the subsequent section.

| Four truckloads | As part of arranging and launching attack, the Parishad workers showed up to the Muslim grave diggers to dig graves in Muslim graveyards on the evening of 27th February 2002. Next day four truckloads reached with Muslim dead bodies being piled up over each other. This fact has been detailed by one of the male Muslim testimonies (scene from Parzania). Firaq also starts with two men digging graves in a deserted place for the collective burial of Muslim dead bodies. While they were doing so, another truckload reached. These cinematic references can be corroborated by Rakesh Sharma’s documentary titled “The Final Solution” in which two grave diggers were interviewed who shared that Muslim dead bodies outnumbered the burial space, four female Muslim dead bodies reached with torn bellies and unborn babies still dangling by umbilical cord, and dead bodies were purposively burned to remove any mark of identity. |
| Trishuls | Trishul (trident) is a three edged weapon which has paramount religious signification in Hinduism. In Hindu religious traditions trishul is being held by Lord Shiva and Hindu goddesses. Tri in trishuls means three and shul means spear. Three spears are collated into one. The middle edged spear is longer than the other two prongs. Lord Shiva and Goddess are shown holding a trishul who kill demons with it. The Parishad gang has been filmed holding trishuls and attacking Muslim population signifying religious importance of genocide. |

The important themes which can be identified from the scenes as transcribed, translated, and textually explained in the preceding section are as follows:

**Violence against Women and Children:**

One of the identified recurrent themes is the violence against women (Sarkar, 2002; Patel, Nishant, Nath & Sanjay, 2013). The pattern followed in the killings highlight three important factors. Women bodies were the site for infinite violence and hence subjected to innovative forms of torture. Second, their sexual and reproductive organs were systematically targeted. Third, children (both born and unborn) were killed before their eyes. Rape was used as a strategy for collective dishonoring of Muslim community. Based on the narratives of the legends in Hindu mythologies, a Muslim male body is considered a constant threat for luring Hindu girls. This fear is the result of the socio-historical narratives built on the notions of rapes of Hindu women, Hindu queens, and their abductions by Muslims. The unrest, fear and anxiety of emasculation is being capitalized by the Sangh Parivar and translated into doing violent deeds. Therefore, violence for the Sangh Parivar, is the proof of masculinity which is manifested more by killing and raping women (Khanna, 2008). In Gujarat riots men who raped came dressed in khaki shorts, saffron underwear, and tilak on forehead, signifying that rape for them was a religious duty. Muslim male body is also feared because of its capacity to produce more children and female bodies being more fertile than Hindu women. Out of the fear of outnumbering Hindu majority, strengthened community, and bright prospects of future growth, Muslim children were killed. Other aims for massive killings were dishonoring Muslim men and women, destroying Muslim female womb (unborn foetus were torn out) and vagina so as to symbolically destroy the reproduction and
pleasure for Muslim men, punishing the fertile Muslim female and virile male bodies, destroying children to signify an end to Muslim growth, and finally burning Muslim men, women, and children as a way to destroy the evidence and deny them an Islamic burial. The dark sexual obsession with Muslim bodies has been used as a trigger by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad whose leaflets widely circulated was signed by the state general secretary, Chinubhai Patel. The leaflets stated (Sarkar, 2002):

“We will cut them and their blood will flow like rivers. We will kill Muslims the way we destroyed Babri Mosque”.

**State’s Active Role in Gujarat Riots:** Communal violence in India is attributable to the Hindu nationalism which is responsible for attacks not just against Muslim but also Christian minorities. The Hindu organizations responsible for Gujarat riots are Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Bajrang Dal, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and BJP (Akomah, 2009). All these organisations collectively form Sangh Parivar. RSS founded in 1925 mandates its agenda on the belief that in post-independence India has not been able to create a nation based solely on Hindu culture. Therefore, RSS propagates Hindu nationalism in militant forms viewing Islam and Christianity as alien to India. VHP which was founded in 1964 played the most active role in campaigning and publicizing for the construction of temple to the Hindu God Ram at the site of Babri Mosque which was located in the city of Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. They claimed that the site was the birthplace of Lord Ram and the temple in his name was destroyed to build Babri Mosque. In response, the mosque was demolished by the cadres hired in the organizations working under the Sangh Parivar. Bajrang Dal, the militant youth wing of VHP, is a youth based organization which was designed to strengthen Ayodhya campaign. Bajrang Dal in alliance with other Hindutva organizations has been instrumental in violence against Christians in 1998 and also communal violence against Muslims in Gujarat riots. As a retaliatory response to Godhra incident, attacks had already begun by the afternoon of February 27 against Muslims on the command of VHP which had called for a statewide shut down (bandh). Sources from BJP had also validated that police was under the direct control of Narendra Modi who was the chief minister of Gujarat. State’s sponsorship in communal violence (which formally started in an organized way when the group of saffronized Hindu mobs attacked Muslim dominated areas of Gujarat) has been proven by the evidences collected from media, and human rights groups. Eyewitnesses have also corroborated the state-police complicity in directing violence not just in urban but also in rural areas. Police stations despite located in the proximity of the inflicted population stayed silent and as reported in most of the evidential reports spectators. Hindu mobs carried with them computer printouts of addresses of Muslim families, properties, and businesses. This information was obtained from the Ahmadabad municipal corporation. In their murderous rampage the Hindu mobs killed Muslims, looted their properties, raped their women, and destroyed their shrines and mosques. The survivors have also reported the mobs carrying voter lists and businesses in advance for an easy identification of Muslims. The leaders of the mobs were well-connected and coordinated over the cell phones presenting preplanned and organized mob attacks. The police facilitated mobs in gun firing, looting, burning, and killing Muslims.

**State’s response to Gujarat Riots:** As a response to receiving severe backlash regarding apathetic stance to Gujarat riots, the Gujarat government, and in particular chief minister Narendra Modi responded that the riots were either justified or brought under the control. He has stated on various forums that upon realizing the gravity of the situation in the wake of Godhra incident and the subsequent bandh the state took precautionary measures.
According to the Gujarat government’s official report presented to the National Human Rights Commissions the response in Ahmedabad and Baroda were huge and crowds gathered were from middle and higher socio-economic classes due to which curfew could not be enforced. The report further claims that due to ‘timely measures’ major incidents were controlled within 72 hours. The report took a very cosmetic stance and oversimplified the violence and state responsibility. The report remains silent on the role of VHP and Bajrang Dal during riots. Gujarat state commission of inquiry was also set up to look into police and state complicity and administrative failure to control violence during Godhra and post-Godhra incidents. The inquiry was chaired by the retired high court judge and associated with the BJP government which raised serious concerns about validity, reliability, accountability and transparency of the incidents among intelligentsia, activists, and inflicted population.

Rural Gujarat and Violence: Violence in Gujarat has been majorly an urban phenomenon. But in case of Gujarat riots 2002 violence spread to the rural areas where very few Muslim people resided (Yeolekar, 2005). In villages, Muslim minorities constituted mainly of shopkeepers and moneylenders making them a relatively successfully economic elites. This social group was essentially from Khoja, Memon and Bohra castes that owned businesses and were also moneylenders. The peasants became indebted to the Muslim moneylenders. These Muslims were the mob’s main targets. Jaffrelot (2003) states that more than 1200 villages in the districts of Mehsana, Sabarkantaha, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, and Vadodara were adversely affected. In Vadodara, in particular, army had to intervene on March 5. In the evacuation process followed by the army intervention 2500 Muslims and 22 villages were moved to refugee camps.

Gujarat as a Laboratory for Hindutva Ideology: According to Human Rights Watch (2002) Gujarat has turned into a political space for professing Hindu nationalism since the 1990s. The stronghold of Gujarat has been strengthened as a result BJP stayed in power for the longest time which has also reshaped the region’s administration (Varshney and Gubler, 2012). In addition to police, the state machinery has been insinuated by Hindu nationalists (Minority Rights Group International, 2017). During Gujarat riots the rioters had access to documents that could only be ensured from the state administration. The Hindu mobs identified and torched a shop in Ahmedabad that was not given a Muslim name but had ownership of 10% of the capital which was owned by Muslim. The aggressors could not have identified such detailed information unless provided by the state administration. Summarily, power of Hindu nationalism controlled the state apparatus. Hence nationalist control is the most significant factor in explaining Gujarat riots. In addition to institutional control, the Hindutva ideology has also entrenched in the Gujarati society which has triggered a common Hindu man to practice violence against Muslims in the riots. Jaffrelot (2003) while referring to a survey exploring the reasons for the Gujarat riots explains that it is not because of state government, Hindu nationalists, or civil societies of Hindutva ideology but solely because of Muslim fundamentals.

Politics of Hate: Since 1990s the Sangh Parivar has been propagating negative image of the Muslims in the print and electronic media, and also in the revised school curriculum. Among the myths proliferated about Muslims were:

- After partition Muslims have got a separate country, Pakistan. Some Muslims have not migrated to Pakistan and are living in India but their loyalties are still with Pakistan which can be evident in India-Pakistan cricket match when they cheer out loud for Pakistan’s victory.
- In our own country they have more religious freedom than Hindus. They are
not ready to give us land for the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The government of India has been unable to sensitize with us and rather prefer to send Muslims for Haj.

- Due to polygamy Muslims have four wives and have many children so their population will outnumber Hindu population.
- Their education centre is madrassah where they preach terrorism.
- Backwardness in India is due to Muslims. Their women wear burqahs which is a sign of backwardness as opposed to the modernity of the Hindu women.
- Muslims have been aggressors, rapists, and violators throughout the history.
- Muslims are always privileged and Hindus oppressed.

In Rakesh Sharma’s documentary titled ‘The Final Solution’ as well, the instances of hate mandate were:

1. *Trishul Diksha* (Trident Ceremony):
   “Those with trishuls raise your arms! Repeat after me- After adopting the trishul I will worship Shankar and Durga will help build the Ram temple, will help defeat Jihad, will help split Pakistan into 40 parts, and will help make India a Hindu nation. JAI SHRI RAM.”

2. Acharya Dharmendra (VHP) addressing to a Hindu mob, both men and women:
   “Shri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram! Speak up! Raise your voice... That is the main issue! The Hindu voice must resonate throughout the world! Raise both your arms...those who still have their original arms! Don’t show me the hand, clench your fists! The fist that unifies! The iron fist that breaks the jaws of traitors! And say “JAI SHRI RAM”...Keep three things in mind. For any growth or industrial progress you need a nation first! If Akshardham isn’t safe how can your factories or jobs be secure? Where would you seek refuge in the world? There are 850 millions of you! Hence 3 things- vote for the future Mother India and Nationalism. These hurling accusations at the people of Gujarat and defaming it all over the world say there should not have been a reaction! Show the world that Gujarat means more than teas and gathiya or song and dandiya! Prove to the world that a Gujarati never provokes anyone but upon provocation doesn’t spare anyone either! He who doesn’t belong to Ram is of no value to us! Till haram are in the way Ram will stay away! He who represents the Hindu cause shall rule the nation, and thus rule in Gandhinagar, Delhi and even Islamabad!...Tell me is Pakistan our friend or enemy? Enemy. So either let the enemy destroy us or let us finish it off. These are not my words...India’s President Prof. Abdul Kalam reminds us every week, “Don’t wait for Pakistan, do the needful now!” Till Pakistan is recued to rubble sons of Gujarat and Mother India cannot rest in peace. It is simple we have to root out the enemy and we must start right from here. The whole country will follow your example! Say with me, “JAI SHRI RAM, JAI SHRI RAM.”

3. Ramsevak Death Anniversary Meeting (February 27, 2003- Pravagad)
   “Hindus, take a message with you. Hindus should use only Hindu rickshaws. Buy only from Hindu shops. Jai Shri Ram stickers are now available. Put them on your shops and rickshaws. Traders, raise saffron flags on your shops! Take this message to each village, “LONG LIVE MOTHER INDIA, PRAISE BE MOTHERLAND. JAI JAI SHRI RAM.”

In the following text, both films have been discursively analysed. Rahul Dholakia, the director of Parzania, decided to shoot film on Gujarat riots out of the immense anger and dejection of what Muslim minorities had to suffer at the hands of Hindu nationalist groups. Dholakia is from Gujarat and he bases his film on the story of his Parsi friend who lost his son during one of the many attacks on the Muslims residing in one of the Muslim dominated housing localities of Ahmadabad, the largest city of Gujarat. The film got released...
in the nine cities in 2007 but was banned in the director’s home state, Gujarat. The theater owners refused to screen films as they feared that the controversial subject matter of the film may re-ignite communal tension between Hindus and Muslims. The film was approved to be screened by the Indian censor board and before film release when the director sent three prints of the movie to Ahmedabad the multiplex owners responded that they would screen only if the radical Hindu group, Bajrang Dal allowed them to do so. The chairman of the Gujarat multiplex owners association clearly stated that the film may hurt sentiments of the two communities and at a time when people were trying to forget and move on with their lives the film can cause communal disharmony.

Dholakia’s decision to shoot film on Gujarat riots is also driven by stoical stance of his own members of the closed and extended families who believed that the violence was justified and Muslims deserved to be taught the lesson. Another reason that clinched him to make this film was to campaign for the disappeared son of his friend. After being banned in Gujarat, Dholakia held private screenings of the movie in Gujarat.

Nandita Das, the director of Firaq, shared in one of her interviews that making a film on Gujarat pogrom was a challenging process. Das shared that when the pogrom happened in Gujarat, she was shaken by the images of violence in the news channels and for the very first time in her life she watched the brutality against minorities in India in the name of carnage, genocide, and pogrom. She doesn’t believe in calling the severe communal violence as riots as the state and police were part of staging the tension and reaping the benefits of it. The pogrom provoked Das to visit different educational organizations across India and deliver lectures on issues such as identity, the notion of the ‘Other’, feminism, and communalism. During the process of conversing on these issues with academics, activists, students and common people, she was amazed by the polarizing views. Instead of narrating the stories of lives affected by the pogrom individually to people she chose to reach out to the larger audience by making a film. She believes that her film is a work of fiction based on the thousand true stories that she had collected from her personal interactions with the victims, and books, reports and newspaper articles that she had collected, read and dissected. She believes to have made a film on violence without having single scene of violence in it. The relentlessness throughout the film, she explains, is the result of the fact that the social context the film is based on is palpable. She also reasons the anthological format of the film with five stories interwoven into a linear narrative structure. She aimed to construct a perceptual and contextual reality of the pogrom as experienced by each one of the principal characters of the film. Each story ends on a different note. Some end on a rather optimistic note and some are left open-ended to signify the life with all its complexities and unpredictability. She also wanted to trigger the conversation on communalism which she believes exists along the axis of divides typified by class, gender and sexuality.

After having briefly explained the directors’ take on their respective films, the analysis of the conversations generated through these films are discussed in the following texts:

1. One of the conversations shows the contestation of ideas between Hindu and Muslim viewers of these two films which were uploaded on YouTube. The conversation was based on the absolutist notion of nationalism as existing in the political histories of India and Pakistan. The stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists in popular culture is also reflected in this regard. Based on the argument of terrorism, the violence against Muslims has been justified in this context. The references of Kashmir, Kerala, West Bengal, and Rohingyas have also been drawn in one of the responses which show to explain that religious intolerance and hence violence against Muslims is also justified.
2. Another conversation is more explanatory in terms of the open exposition of the forms of violence against Muslim women, the tagging of Hindu government as ‘barbaric’ and calling police who had coopted with the state in producing communal violence. One of the Hindu respondents propounded that India should no longer be the secular state on constitutional level. Again a reference to violence against Muslim Rohingyas of Myanmar has been drawn here. The point of justification, for this commenter, is that religious fundamentalism is the corner store of Islamic assurgency and that madrassa culture has strengthened mujahideen movement.

3. Another conversation is descriptive of the state-police complicity, the killing of ramshevaks in Godhra incident, the lack of empathy for the Godhra victims, the lack of logic for organizing and structuring communal violence, and the destruction of temples in Pakistan and Bangladesh as a retaliation to the abolition of Babri Mosque.

4. The conversation in addition to stating violence against women and exploitative role of media run by Hindutva ideologies also brings in the view that the story is one-sided made with a Muslim gaze and the fact that the films be removed from the YouTube as these can reignite communal violence between the two communities.

5. **CONCLUSION**

   We conclude paper by providing following summation points:
   - The Indian state exerted physical and coercive power against Muslim minorities.
   - The CDA of films has shown that violence against Muslims in Gujarat was structured, premeditated, and organized.
   - The violent attempts were predicated to abolish Muslims from Gujarat, destroy their places of worship, and kill them to weaken their communal strength.
   - The Hindutva groups functioned to manifest their ideology of Hindu nationalism.
   - The women and children were the structural targets of this communal violence on communal and sexual grounds.

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