A VISIT TO SUSTAINABLE VILLAGE, PUNSARI (GUJARAT) : AN IDEAL INDIAN VILLAGE
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**Aim of Visit:**

We visited Punsari village, Sabarkantha, Gujarat to understand how the village has been transformed in all these years. The main aim behind the visit was also to get an insight of how the Gram Sarpanch, Mr. Himanshu Patel has transformed and revamped it since 2006 and what are the next developments he is looking for his village in near future.

**Excerpts from the meeting:**

**About Punsari:** Punsari is located at Sabarkantha Himmatnagar, 85 km from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It has a population of 6000 people (2015) which was then 5100 (2011), having 25 communities residing of majorly consisting of Thakor Community followed by Patels, Brahmin, etc. Of About 98% of the population engage in agricultural activities and rest 2% are either occupied with labour activities or having their own shops etc. In the past few years, there is 0% migration in the village and around 10 families have been Re—migrated to Punsari. The gram panchayat had spent around 12-13 crores for the development of the village and that to with using govt. schemes and from the revenues only (Collecting Taxes), the gram panchayat have zero financing from NRI/NGO/CSR. The Income of Villages is approx. Rs. 5.50 – Rs.6 lakhs and its expenditure is approx. Rs.12 lakhs. The Gram Panchayat also introduces a new scheme every year to motivate the villagers to pay advance tax by providing a gift/kit i.e. this year they have given a dustbin. The Kit also bears a particular number/identity to a particular family, so that the panchayat have a record as to which kit is allocated to which family. Around 30–35 families resides in hut rest all are having their house with all modern amenities. It is also seen that those families who are engaged in agricultural activities are having a good standard of living as compared to that those who are engaged in their own business.

**Basic Amenities and Rural Infrastructure:**

- It has underground Drainage system with three point outlet which gets dumped in a landfill outside the village wherein all the waste get absorb into the soil.
For waste collection, a door to door collection system wherein a tractor trailer which collects waste twice a day i.e. (Morning & Evening) from the village in order to collect the maximum waste. The waste collected comprises of 100% plastic only.

- There is proper sanitization in all houses having a toilet i.e. Safety Tank toilets are installed in every home.
- The village is having all weather road and block road with covered pucca drainage system.
- PA system i.e. Public Announcement system is installed at two places wherein announcements, Bhajans and other news been announced twice a day i.e. Morning and evening.
- 16 point CC TV cameras and monitors linked with mobile application been installed at key locations in order to keep a close watch on the daily activities and around 40 people can view the same on their mobile. Also CCTV cameras are installed in schools and health Centres.
- There is one milk bank, one outpost police station, Two Banks, One Gram Hat, One Post office, One Community Hall and 24*7 primary health Centre, Talod railway station, Block and CC Road with Internal GIS & GPS System etc.
- The Gram Panchayat has adopted 7P Model i.e. Punsari, Public, People, Panchayat, Private, Profit and Partnership.
- Mineral RO plant for clean water costing worth approx. Rs.5.50 Lakhs is installed with no profit and no loss basis. Even RO Plant is also installed in Schools. The Villagers can get the big bottle at minimal cost of Rs. 6-7 and for commercial purpose it is available at Rs. 40/- . Around 10 - 12 Families are associated and earn their livelihood by supplying the water bottles.
- The gram panchayat has also started Internal Bus Service after analyzing one of the reasons of death of infants and pregnant women. The bus undertakes 11-12 trips per day and having 4 pickup stand connecting women with milk banks with low fare of Just Rs. 3/- per trip. This has help in reductions in IMMR and IRMR rate.
- The villagers are also using bank and most of the families are having an account with SBI bank which is also money exchange bank having facilities of ATM cum Debit Card Services for withdrawing cash.
Waste to Energy Plant

- The villagers are using cow dung waste generated in households and farms to generate electricity. The bio-electricity plant is installed, it supplies power to streetlights while the remaining electricity is supplied to the households.

- 400 LED street light has been setup with LED Lights, which runs on solar power and The gram panchayat tied up with GEDA which provides the solar grid at Approx. Rs.7 per unit having 3years maintenance contract and thereby led to 50% reduction in the cost (which was then Rs. 70000/- & Now Rs. 35000/-).

Education:

- There are Five Primary Schools (1 to 8 standard) and One Higher Secondary School (9 to 12 standard). Out of this schools 3 Schools are smart class and CCTV are also installed which is linked to Mobile app. The schools have 100% admission rate and 0% drop out rate. Similarly, there are eight Anganwadi centres running in the village with approx. 450 kids enrolled. The class rooms is having facilities of projectors, audio visual aid and computer laboratories to teach MS Excel, Word, to use the internet. Only 32 children’s are studying outside the village rest all are enrolled in the village only.

- The Primary schools are CCTV camera enabled, which helps Panchayat and parents to monitor student’s advancement and it is also helps the panchayat to keep a watch on teachers.

- The gram panchayat has also set up a Mobile Library with more than 400 books (Mainly of Primary Class). It has scheduled a particular day or time within different locations of the village.

From No Electricity to Internet, Wi-Fi connectivity and Banking:

The village is connected Wi-Fi with unlimited access with 4 mbps speed at just Rs. 50 only which is collected from the villagers. The villagers are using E-gram, social networking, latest farming trends, Mandi prices, online tax payment, mobile app and even the panchayat sent the details of tax payment through
way2sms service. Some villagers are also buying products online through various ecommerce mediums. Online Monitoring of day to day activities of the villages.

**Skill Development Centre (Kaushal Vardhak Kendre):**

Various programs such as vocational training in mechanics, Spoken English, Video Library, Beauty Parlor, Tailoring, Sewing and Stitching Classes and basics computer are offered by the center and Even In near future, The Gram Panchayat along with the other 15 villages is going to start driving school for women.

**Guest Lectures and Employment:**

The gram panchayat occasionally organizes guest lecture, wherein the corporate leaders interact with the youth of the Punsari village via Skype, Also the executives from corporates also visit the village; deliver lectures and interact with the youth of Punsari village. Around 10 to 15 youth got employment in the corporate offices as a security guard or helper etc. The gram panchayat is also organizing Skype presentation in schools and health center.

**Women Empowerment:**

The Gram Panchayat is assisting Women of the village. There are 109 self-help groups (SHGs) (10-15 women per group). At present there are 1300 women’s engaged in SHGs. These groups contribute a minimum amount each month. They receive around 8% interest on their contribution and this self-help group have value of Rs. 32 lakhs. The gram panchayat build a Commercial Building consisting 10 shops and it is given on monthly rent of Rs. 200 – 300 to the women’s family (husband).

**E-Governance:**

The Gram Panchayat has developed a mechanism through which the villagers can pay their taxes online. Biometric attendance system for the government employees. The Gram Panchayat has digitized all land records, which can be easily accessed similarly, the Gram Panchayat facilitates people in paying electricity and other bills. Currently, the Gram Panchayat has a 75 lakh surplus fund against a net debt of 10 lakh in 2006.

The village has its own website containing all the detailed activities and achievements of the village.
**Law and Order:**

The Village has one outpost police station. After 2012 there is no single FIR filed against molesting or rape women excluding accidents and theft.

**Awards, Accolades & Recognition:**

The village received an award for being the best Gram Panchayat from the Ministry of Rural Development in 2011.

**A Way Ahead – Future Needs:**

- E - Auction of Agro products.
- Recycling of drainage water.
- Requirement of an Easy Mechanism for penetration of Ecommerce in rural areas for FMCG/ Electronics/Apparels as the product that are available at local shops are not original also they are buying various home appliances and electronics and apparels online.
- Two Way Public Announcement system enabling to communicate with people and create awareness about new government schemes and planned meeting involving villagers, Grievances Redressal etc.
- Creating an easy data base management for agriculture.
Photo Gallery

- **Exhibit 1: Skill Development Center**

- **Exhibit 2: Mobile Library**

- **Exhibit 3: Primary School**
○ **Exhibit 4: Water Plant:**

○ **Exhibit 5: Waste to Energy Plant**
- **Exhibit 6: Primary Health Centre**

- **Exhibit 7: Banking**
Exhibit 8: Roads with CC TV and Speaker System