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A Case Study of Punsari Gram Panchayat in Gujarat State, India

Dr. R. Ramesh
Prof. P. SivaRam



Centre for Rural Infrastructure
National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030, India
www.nirdpr.org.in

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Authors: **Dr. R. Ramesh & Prof. P. SivaRam**

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ISBN: **978-81-952482-5-4**

First Edition: March 2021

Published by:

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ
(Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030, India
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PREFACE

We think it would be very appropriate to share the premise for this study as a prefatory note. The story goes like this. We happened to read in the ‘message’ given by the Prime Minister to the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) Guidelines, where he has stated: Punsari is often referred to as the No.1 Village in the country. This encouraged us to visit Punsari Gram Panchayat, the next time we happened to be in SIRD Gujarat on a training assignment. We did make it to Punsari. As we had only a vague idea of the time it would take to reach Punsari, we thought we’d better start early from Ahmedabad. We had reached Punsari Gram Panchayat Office a little before 9.00 am.

The sanitation worker who was cleaning up the Gram Panchayat Office said: the Sarpanch arrives at 9.30 am. Since we had already informed the Sarpanch about our visit to his village, we chose to wait. Our usual way of waiting is to slowly move over, reading the notice boards we found around when we found local people arriving in the Panchayat Office one by one, one after another. Initially, like any development professional does about the villagers, we assumed that they might have been called to be present at the Gram Panchayat Office for us (NIRDPR faculty) to interact with them about the village. Curiosity plus our understanding of PRA Principles made us ‘ask them instead of assuming things’. Prof. Robert Chambers is still right, that they were arriving not for us, but with some issue or the other, for the Sarpanch to solve for them, or guide them. By the time the Sarpanch arrived at 9.30 am, we found almost 25-30 local people sitting at the wooden benches and cement benches at the corridor to meet him by turn as called out and shown in by the Panchayat Secretary - on first-come-first-serve-basis.

We [being outsiders to that village] looked into each other’s eyes in surprise – that Panchayati Raj as an institution of local governance to solve the problems of the local people seems to work here. Then, during our meeting with the Sarpanch, we enquired: Is it almost regular that local people come to meet you at the Panchayat office? His reply, indeed, was riveting.

Yes, they do. They have elected me to work for them. If I let them go to Block Development Officer or the District Magistrate, then the election will become meaningless. I am here to solve their problems and if required to present their cases to appropriate government offices and to get things done for them. If I don't deliver, is it not belittling the position I am holding here. If I don't solve their problems, they may have to either suffer cursing this village s/he is born in; or approach a broker to take his/her case to the BDO or District Magistrate, which is demeaning my position as Panchayat President. They have elected me as their leader. I should live up to it. (Excerpts from a personal discussion held with Mr. Himanshu Patel, Panchayat President, Punsari on 22nd June, 2015 at the Punsari Gram Panchayat Office).

Our proposal to conduct a case study of Punsari got approved at NIRDPR, Hyderabad. We made use of the services of students from Gujarat Vidyapith in data collection. We held two rounds of semi-structured discussion with the Panchayat Sarpanch, school teachers and others. It was a great learning experience being at Punsari and interacting with a set of people who have really been involved in creating a model Village Panchayat widely spoken about as an exemplar. We have approached understanding and reporting about Punsari from varied angles. The reader shall understand as you go into the report.

Involving ourselves in this exercise greatly enriched our understanding of model villages. More than anything else, it corrected the misconceptions we had about model villages. In fact, we had only three objectives when we initiated this study. We added a fourth objective, viz. *providing 'a framework for reference', which can be of use to development researchers proposing to study model villages in India'*, especially to share the confusions we went through and the clarity, we suppose, we got during the course of executing this study, and writing up this report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We must place on record many wonderful people who have been very much helpful in conducting this study. First of all, we must mention Dr. B H Patel IFS, Director, SIRD Gujarat, and his able Core Faculty Members Mr. Anil Patel, and Ms. Dipti Parmer; and Mr. Janak M Odedra, Programmer. Their support was immense during the field work. Dr. Hitesh N. Jagani, Assistant Professor at Gujarat Vidyapith and his students deserve a mention for their help in collecting the primary data. We must thank Mr. Himanshu Patel, Panchayat President, Punsari, other Panchayat functionaries, school teachers and others who spent their time sharing their views and experiences. In NIRDPR, at the CRI faculty, we must appreciate the research assistance provided by Mr. M Jagdish and Ms. L Sudha, who are very passionate about perfection.

P. SivaRam

R. Ramesh

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CHAPTER – 1

THE CONCEPT OF A MODEL VILLAGE

I

Introduction

The idea of the model village is old, whereas the question of what elements make up a model village is still anew - and perplexing. It is new because development is a process of continuous change in a variety of aspects of human society. This change process has a tendency of always continuing from one outcome to another, encompassing a multiplicity of elements in an overlapping manner. Therefore, it is perplexing to determine or explain in categorical terms, that a given society has reached the pinnacle of development. This is the complexity of understanding and explaining development. Yet, there is a way to get out of this complexity. That is there are certain desirable standards of common facilities and quality of living that every society aspires to achieve. Often, these are official standards normatively fixed by the State¹ or by a global body like the UN Millennium Development Goals or Strategic Development Goals/Human Development Indicators, etc. Reporting development using these normative scales is a commonly accepted practice of measurement.

This scale used for measuring ‘a model village’ necessarily has to be varying depending on the other factors that come into play such as the size of the village, community composition, location-specific advantage and disadvantage, the presence or absence of external inducement and so on. The implication is: a universal scale can become confounding due to the error of some extraneous variables coming into play such as the ones mentioned above – importantly external inducement through special project

¹ These include National Development Goals at the macro level; Outcome Budget in any given sector; and at the grassroots level norms for drinking water supply per person per day; teacher-student ratio; section-teacher ratio; doctor-patient ratio; Body Mass Index; standard height and weight chart for boys/for girls and so on.

assistance, socio-political forces, and location-specific advantage and disadvantage a village experiences. That means that a given village if it has almost reached the stage of becoming a model for others to emulate or some indicators, falls short by some measure can be expressed only with certain delimitations, and it cannot be presented in widespread terms. Therefore, development practitioners and professionals have developed a variety of scales/multiple set of indicators that provide a framework for measurement.

One framework that professionals consider ready to fall in place is the disciplinary perspectives such as Economic Perspective, Sociological or Anthropological Perspective; Local Governance Perspective and so on. Some frameworks claim to be holistic or ‘almost holistic’; others are ideology-based, e.g. Gandhian concept of Gram Swaraj indicators or Marxist’s tradition of social analysis based on social structure and class analysis, and a third set could take a normative perspective such as in the popular Human Development indicators (HDI) of the UNDP. One can choose depending on the world view one believes in, and what elements of village development one considers vital. Thus, the concept and approaches to the study of a model village can be perplexing unless one delimits within the safety of a framework. This study holds ‘rural infrastructure as dominant perspective’ – and deliberately so, especially because this study is carried out by the Centre for Rural Infrastructure of the NIRDPR, Hyderabad.

II

Early Rural Development Experiments

Rural development experiments in India started even before India got Independence. That means India today has more than a century of rural development experience. The early development experiments can be listed as follows: Brayne’s Gurgaon Experiment in Punjab (1920); Tagore and Elmhirst’s Shriniketan Experiment in West Bengal (1921); Spencer Hatch’s Marthandam Experiment in erstwhile Travancore State, Kerala (1921); Rural Reconstruction Project in Baroda (1932); Mahatma Gandhi’s Sewagram Experiment

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in Wardha, Maharashtra (1933); Firka Development Scheme in Madras (1946); Etawah Pilot Project in Uttar Pradesh (1948); Nilokheri Experiment by S K Dey; and Community Development Programme (1952-53). A brief account of each of this experiment can be read in the book 'Administration of Rural Development in India' by Hoshiar Singh (Singh, 1995).

The Minimum Needs Programme (MNP): One of the earliest programmes that came on the lines of model villages in India - not full-fledged though - was Minimum Needs Programme, which was introduced in the first year of the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974 -79). The objective of the programme was to establish a network of basic services and facilities of social consumption in all the areas up to nationally-accepted norms, within a specified time-frame. The programme was designed to assist in raising living standards and in reducing the regional disparities in development. The basic needs of the people identified for this programme were Elementary Education, Adult Education, Rural Health, Rural Roads, Rural Electrification, Rural Housing, Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums and Nutrition.

Strategies of rural development have been changing depending on how one approaches the issue. The country has traversed across almost a century or three quarters of it since the early experiments. The situations and conditions of Indian villages are vastly different at the moment compared to what they were when these early experiments were conceived and implemented. Therefore, trying to draw detailed lessons from these past experiments might or might not have contemporary relevance. Nevertheless, what deserves to be noted is (i) the postulate or the basic premise behind these experiments; and (ii) to see if any of these experiments still have some validity that can be used in today's context.

Recent Concepts of Well-being and Development

Human Development Approach: Human development approach is about enlarging

human choices, which is linked to two issues: (i) capabilities and functionings on the one hand, and (ii) opportunities on the other. The functioning of a person refers to the valuable things the person can do or be (such as being well-nourished, living a long time and taking part in the community). The capability of a person stands for the different combinations of functionings the person can achieve. Enlarging choices for a person implies formation or enhancement through the development of human resources: good health and nutrition, education and skill training, etc. Opportunities must exist [or must be created through appropriate policy to use those capabilities] to use them for leisure, productive purposes or participation in social, political or cultural affairs. Economic opportunities can be created through better access to productive resources, including credit, employment, etc. (Sen, 2007). The nuances of National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) are derived from the human development approach. Prof. Amartya Sen calls it Capability Approach to human development.

Microcredit Model: Loans to poor people without any financial security had appeared to be an impossible idea. From modest beginnings three decades ago, Muhammad Yunus has, first and foremost through Grameen Bank, developed micro-credit into an ever more important instrument in the struggle against poverty. Across cultures and civilisations, the microcredit model of development has shown that even the poorest of the poor can work to bring about their own development. Poor are poor not because they were stupid or lazy. They worked all day long, doing complex physical tasks. They were poor because the financial institution in the country did not help them widen their economic base. When we want to help the poor, we usually offer them charity. Most often we use charity to avoid recognising the problem and finding the solution for it.

Muhammad Yunus was not the first one that came up with the idea of small loans to the poor, but he was the one who showed the world that they could work on a large scale. He was the one who demonstrated that the people at the bottom of the economic pyramid could be brought into the mainstream of financial services. And, he was the one whose work at Grameen provided the major model and the impetus for a worldwide microcredit

movement (Muhammad, 2008).

PURA Model: Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam conceived and convinced the Government of India to implement a scheme called PURA, meaning Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas. PURA is a socio-economic development tool that aims at economic development and social empowerment of people. In other words, PURA is a model of customised connectivity with integrated action leading to the sustainable development of the rural complex. PURA focuses on evolving four forms of connectivity along with action on the core competences of the rural village complex for the attainment of sustainable development goals. PURA is a cluster-based development approach. The basic premise says empowerment is the sustainable solution to the problems of the urban-rural divide, societal bias and poverty. Dr Kalam envisaged that India – taken as an entire country – needs 7000 PURA clusters covering more than 600,000 villages. The essential constituents of PURA are (i) Physical Connectivity; (ii) Electronic Connectivity; (iii) Knowledge Connectivity; and (iv) Economic Connectivity (Kalam, 2011).

The Hubs and Spokes Model: This is a model developed and implemented by the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation in Chennai and Puducherry. Through an Information Village Research Project, the MSRRF developed internet connectivity with specially designed interactive modules for use by rural community and agriculturists. These are called Village Knowledge Centres. It includes different components like food security, farming, energy management, weather and demographics and so on (Vedavalli, 2005). The main aim of the programme is to empower largely unskilled, resource-poor rural farming and fishing communities towards making better choices and achieving greater control of their own development through skills and capacity building for improved livelihoods, and generally, for an improved quality of life through access to relevant information and knowledge (Zollman, 2008).

The central idea of the Village Knowledge Centre is that information can become a potent force, which has the capacity to transform the community, both socially and

economically. Knowledge Centres facilitate information/knowledge empowerment and technology empowerment by providing access to a variety of information, thereby enabling the community to develop in different areas like education, employment, government schemes and in developing and enhancing computer skills and so on. This is a model M S Swaminathan Research Foundation follows in Puducherry villages to bring about the overall development through information empowerment.

Gandhian Model: An ideal Indian village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have a cottage with sufficient light and ventilation built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it.....The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells according to its needs and accessible to all. It will have houses of worship for all; also a common meeting place, a village common for grazing its cattle, a cooperative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial education will be the central fact, and it will have Panchayats for settling disputes. It will produce its own grains, vegetables and fruit, and its own khadi. This is roughly my idea of a model village. (Harijan, 9th January 1937; Vol.64 Pp.217-18).

My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus, the first concern of every village will be to grow its own food crops, and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then, if there is more land available, it will grow useful money crops, excluding ganja, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks, ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible, every activity will be conducted on a cooperative basis. There will be no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability. (Harijan, 26-7-1942; Vol.76 pp.308-9).

There are admirers of Mahatma Gandhi who argue that Gandhi is still more relevant

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today. In order to draw strength and contemporary relevance to their arguments, they cite Schumpeter's ideas of small is beautiful, and being contented with frugality or frugal economic order (in other words, Buddhist Economy) is still argued by some development professionals as the only prudent option for sustainable development. A recent idea that is very similar is 'circular economy' where no waste is generated, contrast to the current world order of 'linear economy' where sustainability lingers on as a big question demanding answer.

Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY): The Government of India has launched this model village programme in order to translate the comprehensive and organic vision of Mahatma Gandhi into reality, keeping in view the present context. The SAGY guidelines say: An Adarsh Gram should evolve out of people's shared vision, using their capacities and available resources to the best extent possible, duly facilitated by the Member of Parliament, the Gram Panchayat, civil society and the government machinery. Naturally, the elements of an Adarsh Gram would be context-specific. However, it is still possible to broadly identify the important activities. They would include (i) Personal Development; (ii) Human Development; (iii) Economic Development; (iv) Social Development; (v) Environmental Development; (vi) Basic Amenities and Services; (vi) Social Security; (vii) Good Governance. The indicators under each of this area of development can be found in SAGY guidelines (Government of India, 2014).

III

Unpacking ‘Model Villages’ from Practice

This is a review of existing literature on rural development practice, and how some Village Development Models (or Model Villages) are spoken about as a model for replication, and where they stand today as far as replication is concerned.

Midnapore Model: The first model to promote sanitation in the country was initiated by the Ramakrishna Mission Lokasiksha Parishad (RKMLP), one of the most revered social organisations in the state of West Bengal. It was implemented in the Midnapore district of West Bengal and is commonly known as the Midnapore model. It was actually a Government of West Bengal initiative, supported by the UNICEF. Midnapore is a large district with a population of about eight million (about one-eighth of West Bengal's population) and in 1991, only 4.74 per cent of the population had access to a sanitary toilet (The Hindu, 2003). Intensive work made it possible in 2001 to announce Nandigram II block in East Midnapore district as the first block in the country to have 100 per cent access to sanitary toilets. East Midnapore district achieved 100 per cent coverage status during the fiscal year 2001-2002. West Midnapore achieved the same in 2003-2004. Since then, both the districts have maintained their status as model Open Defecation Free (ODF) districts or districts with complete coverage of household toilets (Mandal, 2012-13).

The programme remains as one of the biggest success stories in rural sanitation and was cited all over the world. It's more than a decade Midnapore reported this success story. Nevertheless, not many other districts in West Bengal have emerged successful, and very few states in other parts of the country have emerged successful in the last more than a decade. Banerjee & Kasturi (Mandal, 2012-13) have studied Midnapore in comparison to the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), and report that the success of the Midnapore Model stands on three pillars, namely (i) an excellent network system that connects the end-user in the village with the programme implementation authorities, (ii) a group of dedicated

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volunteers who worked at different tiers of the network to make the project a success and (iii) maintenance of low-cost sanitation hardware that made the system viable and affordable to the end-user.

Creating an elaborate network as was used in the case of Midnapore district, would require substantial time, money and workforce. In Midnapore, the network already existed. The intention behind setting up and running such a huge network was to fetch returns for a larger purpose, namely to implement several religious, socio-economic and cultural development projects of the Ramakrishna Mission for the rural youth and underprivileged, and was not limited to the sanitation project itself. To establish such a network for the sanitation project [paying regular wages to people for generating such network] and to make it perform desirably would require substantial investment and therefore is likely to increase the cost (Mandal, 2012-13). This is one of the main arguments of the researchers who have worked on ‘why Midnapore Model could not be replicated.’

Amul Model: Amul (Anand Milk-producers Union Limited), formed in 1946, is a well-known dairy cooperative movement in India. Amul is a household name today because of the range of milk and milk products that Amul has brought to the market. Amul's product range includes milk powder, milk, butter, ghee, cheese, curd, chocolate, ice cream, cream, shrikhand, paneer, gulab jamuns, basundi, NutrAmul brand and others.

Amul now is a brand name managed by an apex cooperative organisation, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GCMMF). GCMMF today is jointly owned by some 3.3 million milk producers in Gujarat, India. Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) is India's largest food products marketing organisation. It is a state-level apex body of milk cooperatives in Gujarat which aims to provide remunerative returns to the farmers and also serve the interest of consumers by providing quality products which are good value for money. It is based in Anand town of Gujarat and has been a sterling example of a cooperative organisation's success.

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The Amul Model is a three-tier cooperative structure. As the above structure was first evolved at Amul in Gujarat and thereafter replicated all over the country under the Operation Flood Programme, it is known as the 'Amul Model' or 'Anand Pattern' of Dairy Cooperatives. The milk producers of a village, having surplus milk after own consumption, come together and form a Village Dairy Cooperative Society (VDCS). The Village Dairy Cooperative is the primary society under the three-tier structure. The Amul Pattern has established itself as a uniquely appropriate model for rural development. Amul has spurred the White Revolution of India, which has made India the largest producer of milk and milk products in the world. Millions of rural women and small farmers in the state of Gujarat in India have attained gainful employment as well as remunerative livelihood.

The following are some key message from AMUL's success found by Pankaj Chandra and Devanath Tirupati of the IIM, Ahmedabad (Tirupati, 2003): firms in these environments need to simultaneously develop markets and suppliers to synchronise demand and supply planning, develop or become a part of a network of producers (i.e. cooperatives in this case) to obtain scale economies, focus on operational effectiveness to achieve cost leadership to enable low price strategy. Besides these, Amul provided education and training to around 650,000 women members and 550,000 male members along-with the management committee members and staff of the village societies. Early promoters of Amul, because of the admiration of political leadership they enjoyed, could get all the support they needed for setting up Amul while keeping the government away from Amul's establishment and functioning. A few other studies (Shah, 1996) argue that this self-governance was critical for cooperation to take roots at Amul. Amul model is sort of a business model developed with an effective institutional framework and leadership. Several other small business models have emerged successfully for scaling up in this country. These include the HPMC model, the Pepsi model, the E-choupal model, the Nestle model, the Heritage model, the Suguna model, the Reliance model and more. For a brief analysis of these models, one can refer to Vasant P Gandhi and Dinesh Jain's works on Institutional Innovations and Models (Jain, 2011). It will be of use to SRLM-based rural livelihoods promotion ventures.

SARVAM Model: ‘SARVAM Integral Rural Development Model’. SARVAM – a unit of Sri Aurobindo Society in Puducherry has experimented with an innovative concept in rural development called: ‘integral rural development’. It is based on human consciousness and desirable family-values. The approach is to begin any development intervention with children in any given village, move on to get the mothers of those children involved in development initiatives of SARVAM, and then slowly get the man (male head) in the family to involve himself by making them believe that it is through educating the children in every family that poverty cycle can be broken down. For children to do well in studies, parents should demonstrate desirable family- values. This is enabling positive energy to become catching and transmittable from children to mothers; from mothers to men in the family; and from one family to another and thus to the neighbourhood. SARVAM has experimented this idea in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry villages, and the concept being tried in another set of villages at the moment. They call it a sustainable model, which never slips back to underdevelopment or change in an undesirable direction (Ramesh, 2015).

IV

The models of rural development reviewed so far clearly fall under two broad categories, although several other classifications can be brought about within the two. One category is that there are mental-models of development (a dream or a vision) constructed. It could be a *minimal and normatively desirable* development consideration like in Minimum Needs Programme, or comprehensive ones like the PURA Model or the SAGY Model. There are others such as Midnapore model, Amul Model and SARVAM model, which have come about ‘after putting together and putting through a series of small plans’; and then report how it led to achieving certain standards of development in a desirable direction. What we can infer here is that (i) in the case of the former, *the model got ready mentally even before grounding it*, which was later put through in action on the ground; and (ii) in the case of the latter, a series of plans led to arriving at some desirable point, which *we inductively constructed as a ‘rural development model’*.

Secondly, what constitutes the fabric of development in each of this model is another issue to look into.

- The Microcredit model tells us to enable money flow into households and make sure that it goes on in an uninterrupted manner into all the households, rural socio-economic development shall take place automatically. Simply put, this is household economics oriented.
- Provision of Urban Facilities to Rural Areas (PURA) Model: This is about local capacity building by enabling rural areas to gain access to basic amenities. At the atomic level of implementation of PURA is the individual village household. The basic proposition is achieving an increased income and better human resources through Economic Connectivity for rural people out of Physical Connectivity, Electronic Connectivity, and Knowledge Connectivity.
- Amul's is a household economics-centred model that can be in a way fit into the conceptual framework of PURA. In the sense, milk producers (any producers) who are distressed of selling milk for a non-remunerative price are organised into a cooperative society/federation, avoid middlemen and transact business. This required knowledge connectivity for processing milk, and physical connectivity for transporting milk to the point of sale, etc.
- SARVAM is a more human consciousness-centred model, unlike Amul which can be viewed as being more mechanical and business-like. SARVAM model prescribes starting any intervention from children; move on to their mothers, and then it should be possible to rope in every one of the members of the family. The dealing here is more with human sentiments, soul, and the spirit. It is more personal than mechanical. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons, why SARVAM is very slow in expanding activities to the neighbouring villages.
- The Hubs and Spokes model of Prof. M S Swaminathan tells us that it is information asymmetry that blocks development. Educate the people on the power of information to change the socio-economic fabric of rural life; and enable in all possible ways right pieces of information reach the rural poor at opportune moments

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- and when people are knowledgeable enough to put information for the right use, they start deriving economic benefits, which eventually results in rural development.
- Human Development: The concept of human development entails expanding opportunities and enlarging human choices. Enlarging choices for a person implies the formation or enhancement of capabilities. Human capabilities can be enhanced through the development of human resources through good health and nutrition, education and skill training, etc. Capabilities cannot be used unless opportunities exist to use them for leisure, productive purposes or participation in social, political or cultural affairs. Economic opportunities can be created through better access to productive resources like credit. Human choices are enlarged when people acquire more capabilities and enjoy more opportunities to use those capabilities, which will naturally result in human development (Sen, 2007).

The review of development models done so far gives a fairly good idea of how to go about analysing rural development in practice. In other words, it gives the possible directions the analysis may take us while analysing the data with our central question in mind, viz. what constitutes a model village?

CHAPTER – 2

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study has used the Case Study Approach taking a single case for analysis. Punsari Gram Panchayat has been taken as a case for systematically unpacking it to be able to understand and explain what constitutes a model village. This is a holistic single unit analysis. The reason for selection of Punsari GP is the typicality of ‘model village’ Punsari supposedly has, which is widely spoken about, and referred to by Prime Minister of India also as a model village.

There are two ways of determining if a village is worthy of being addressed as a model village. One is going by the level of achievement in terms of certain normative standards, and the other is by comparing it with a neighbouring village of similar characteristics. With regard to the latter, there are many studies (Vijayalakshmi, 2003; G Palanithurai, 2005; 2008) that have come out with the result that keeping everything else nearly constant; one factor that has invariably contributed to the successful emergence of Gram Panchayats is the leadership provided by the Panchayat President individually or along with a small team of supporters. The current study has taken the former approach, i.e. going by normative standards in terms of availability of and access to facilities and services, and the community perception about the significance and usefulness of those facilities and services. Going by the common facilities related records available in the GP Office, and the orientation of the GP President and functionaries, it was understood that enhancing the common facilities has been given top priority in Punsari GP that it is spoken about as a model village today. The study framework also takes the same perspective to capture local development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To capture those aspects of change, which make Punsari Gram Panchayat distinct and recognisable at the national level as a ‘model village.’

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2. To conduct an inquiry of the facilities [available] and the services [offered] that people of Punsari enjoy as inhabitants and their assessment of such facilities and services.
3. To inductively construct through an engagement with the people of Punsari Gram Panchayat ‘what elements constitute a model.’
4. To arrive at ‘a framework for reference’, which can be of use to development researchers proposing to study model villages in India.

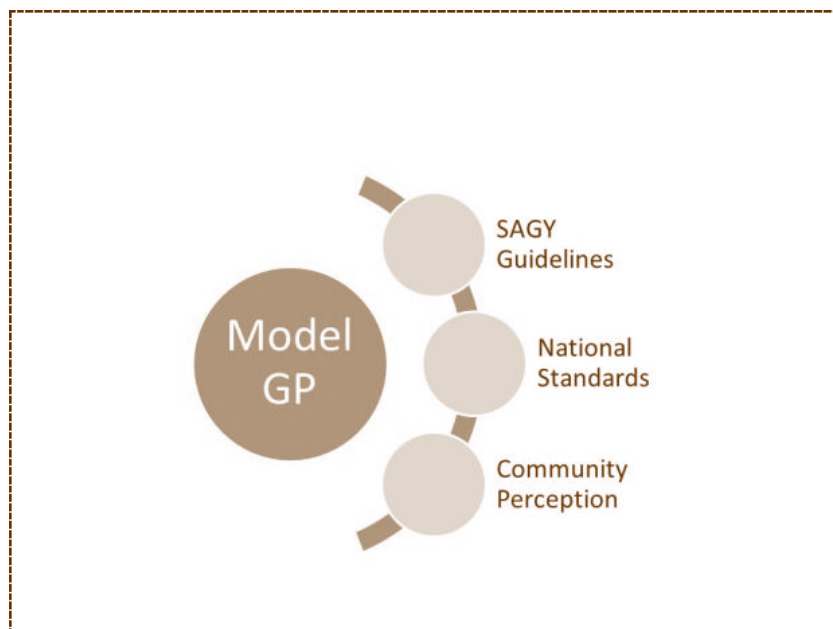
Framework of the Study

A bulk of literature has been reviewed in the previous chapter. First, for a comprehensive listing of the rural infrastructure facilities a model village should aspire for, SAGY guidelines remain as the reference point. Secondly, wherever national standards (norms) are available², they have been kept as a reference point for comparison with the actual and interpret the situation. Thirdly, *going by research ethics, against whose norms should a village be judged ‘model’ or a practice be judged ‘best’?* Ideally, it should be the users who make this judgement. They are the ones who know their needs, and they are the ones who have to use the facilities or live with the consequences of a particular intervention (Oyen, 2002).

Therefore, (i) the normative underpinnings of the SAGY guidelines; (ii) the community interpretation of what Punsari is known for, and how beneficial the facilities are; (iii) the have been given considered weightage when we designed the framework of this study. Within this design, the users could sufficiently voice their opinion on the functioning of the facilities created in Punsari and their usefulness. Likert’s scales have been extensively used for measuring community views on the usefulness of the facilities is intuitive. Constant comparison is also made to the SAGY guidelines because it is widely

²Such as (i) Indian Public Health Standards for measuring health infrastructure; (ii) MDWS standards for drinking water supply; (iii) Service Standards under the ICDS Mission for Anganwadis; (iv) The Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education Act, 2009 pp.12&13 for school education; (v) ODF Survey format under the Swachh Bharat Mission for village sanitation standards, etc.

recognised not only by MoRD, but also among development practitioners as a comprehensive framework of a model village.



Research Methods

Sampling Method: Punsari GP has 1560 households, which is our universe/population. It was determined that households would be our sampling units. The Gram Panchayat Office maintains a complete list of households in Punsari GP, which it requires for various purposes including collection of house tax, water cess, etc. That list was obtained from GP and it contained our complete sampling units. The aggregated list of all the households as found in the Register maintained by the Panchayat Office along with their serial numbers served as a sampling frame to select our respondent-households. From the sampling frame to select our sampling fraction, we used the web-based sample size calculator. The decision that the sample size calculator suggested was to go for 140 households, to be able to talk about our results with a 95 per cent confidence level at a 5 per cent margin of error. One hundred and forty households (our sampling fraction) were identified using the Microsoft Excel-based random number generator. The other sources of data and methods of data collection are presented below.

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Sources of Data: We went for multiple sources of evidence to establish facts. The institutions within Punsari Gram Panchayat, viz. the Gram Panchayat Office, local school, local childcare centre, Skill Training Centre, and the individual households in Punsari provided the data needed for this study. Besides this, existing literature on model villages from various published sources has been referred to – both of Punsari GP and others. There were also semi-structured interviews conducted with the GP President, school teachers, Head of Skill Training Centre, and the caretakers at the childcare centre.

Methods of Data Collection: Two different schedules were prepared - one for collecting data and information from the Gram Panchayat Office, local school and from the local childcare centre; and the other for collecting data from individual sample (140) households. Under the guidance and supervision of the faculty members from NIRDPR, Hyderabad and SIRD, Gujarat, trained enumerators from Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad were used for data collection. The secondary data required for this study have been collected from Punsari Gram Panchayat Office, from local schools, Skill Training Centre, and local childcare centre. Local households provided the data relating to the importance they attach to each facility and service; and their usefulness in terms of providing an improved standard of living.

Data Analysis & Presentation: The data collected from 140 households were fed into Excel spreadsheets, and it was imported into SPSS. After data cleaning, tables and graphs were generated for easy reading and grasp. This study has extensively used Likert Scale with four and five-point scales. During data analysis, the common facility norms that a Gram Panchayat must possess have been used as a reference point (See Annex 1.1 to 1.7). The study has put to use rural infrastructure perspective in analysis and presentation.

Delimitation

This study views the model village through ‘rural infrastructure’ lens. The presence and functionality of the basic rural infrastructures, plus the secondary infrastructure, and

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their outcome are considered. The study has measured the availability of and access to facilities but has not gone to measure the change in the quality of life of people. Instead, the community views of services offered by various facilities have been captured. The change in the quality of life of people is beyond the scope of this study. Put it differently, this study does not aim at assessing the impact of infrastructure on the quality of life of the residents.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in determining the elements that constitute a model village in the case of Punsari Gram Panchayat. This study has attempted to identify the facilities; uncover the community understanding of those facilities and to what extent they use those facilities. When facilities become excessive, in a way, it introduces an additional financial burden on the GPs in terms of maintenance and upkeep of those facilities (Narayanasamy, 2008). The steps taken by the GP to manage and maintain the facilities are covered as well. Finally, the researchers' deep engagement in this study has enabled them to come out with 'a framework for reference', which can be of use to development researchers proposing to study model villages in India.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
.806	.833	73

Cronbach's Alpha is a widely used reliability test, especially when the Likert Scale is put to use. Reliability test was conducted on the data with 73 items included. The Cronbach's Alpha is 0.806, and the Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items is 0.833. This confirms that the data being dealt with, and the scale being used is statistically reliable, and proper data cleaning has also been done so as to ensure internal consistency.

CHAPTER – 3

PROFILE OF THE STUDY VILLAGE

Society

Punsari is a Gram Panchayat in Sabarkanta district of Gujarat state in India. Punsari has a population of 6000 that make up 1560 households. Hindus constitute the vast majority (98 per cent) and there are a few Muslim families as well. The village has 23 communities. About 75 per cent of the families belong to the backward community; 15 per cent belong to forward community; and 10 per cent of the families are Scheduled Caste (SC). Majority of the households live in concrete houses, and others live either in tiled houses or in tin-sheet-roofed houses, which in most of the cases are personally owned, i.e. very few families live in rented houses. There are no huts found in Punsari. The village has an area of 1.5 square km.

Education & Health

Adult literacy rate reported is 83 per cent. Punsari has two primary schools with 406 students, one high school with 368 students, and one higher secondary school with 233 students. For more than five years, all children in school-going age are enrolled in schools (100 per cent enrolment). However, there is a slight dropout found during the transition from primary to secondary; and from secondary to higher secondary levels. Primary schools have also been equipped with audio-visual aids for teaching. The schools have RO Plant to supply safe drinking water for consumption, and safe water is used for cooking mid-day meals for children. All the schools have separate toilet facility for boys and girls - with running water. There is also a community RO plant that supplies water to the community. All households have individual water supply connections. There is a Primary Health Centre nearby. The Village Health Nurse visits the village regularly and takes care of ANC and PNC cases. The children at the childcare centre are under regular monitoring of growth.

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There are no waterborne diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, malaria, etc., except one case of dengue fever reported in 2014.

Employment & Income

Agriculture and animal husbandry are the mainstays of the people. Rearing of milch animals is a secondary occupation for the majority of the families. The number of milch animals in Punsari exceeds the number of households, indicating that some households own more than one or two animals. Reportedly, there are 1700 cows in this village. However, there are also agricultural wage earners, and the number of families living below the poverty line is 328 as per the records of the Gram Panchayat. There are 109 self-help groups (SHGs) with a membership of 1300 women. There are two youth clubs, and an NMAET club (National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology Club). There is a branch of the State Bank of India (SBI) with ATM facility. Additionally, there is also an SBI-authorized customer service centre run by a private individual.

Social Security

Every family has a family ration card. There are 600 MGNREGA card holders, 70 old age pension holders and 37 window pension holders. About 80 aged persons get food from the mid-day meal scheme under the AAY. The GP has paid and insured every one of the family under PMJY. There are 328 BPL families but only 286 of them have BPL card and the total number of family ration card reported is 883. Although too few in number, some do not have Aadhaar Card and there are a few individuals who do not have voter identification card.

Facilities in Punsari

Availability of and access to various facilities is an important indicator of the standard of living of the people. The following is a complete list of facilities available in Punsari.

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Primary Rural Infrastructure	Secondary Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anganwadi • Primary Schools • High School • Drinking water for schools/anganwadis • Toilet at schools/anganwadis (separate for boys and girls) • PDS (Ration Shop) • (Piped) Water Supply for households • Individual Household Latrines - IHHLs • Pay & Use public toilet near bus stop • Underground drainage facility • Primary Health Centre – PHC • Post Office • No huts in the GP (All houses are either tiled or concrete) • Crematorium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Secondary School • Skill Training Centre • Library • Internet Facility • State Bank of India • SBI - Customer Service Centre • ATM Facility - State Bank of India • Biometric attendance at GP Office • (Special) Bus Service (Atal Express) • Playground with facilities • CCTV camera – GP/streets/school • Wi-Fi Facility • Public Address System with 120 speakers (for <i>bajans</i> announcements) • Police Station

CHAPTER – 4

CONSTITUENTS OF A MODEL VILLAGE

(Results, Discussion & Conclusion)

In this chapter, we shall take an overview of various infrastructure facilities available in Punsari - how do they compare with the official standards (norms) one generally tends to compare with; and the community perspective of the facilities.

The programme framework of SAGY has become the reference point for model villages in India. Therefore, this study broadly follows the SAGY framework, as Punsari is also often referred to as an exemplar case for a model village in the lines of SAGY. SAGY is a normative check-list, which is comprehensively indicative of rural development elements a GP needs to consider to make plans for the overall development. From the SAGY perspective, the contours of a model village can be viewed, in the order as presented below:

- (A) Identity of citizenship to be able to make entitlement claims;
- (B) Common [basic] facilities; (In other words, Primary Infrastructure Facilities)
- (C) Facilities towards higher standards of living or Secondary Infrastructure

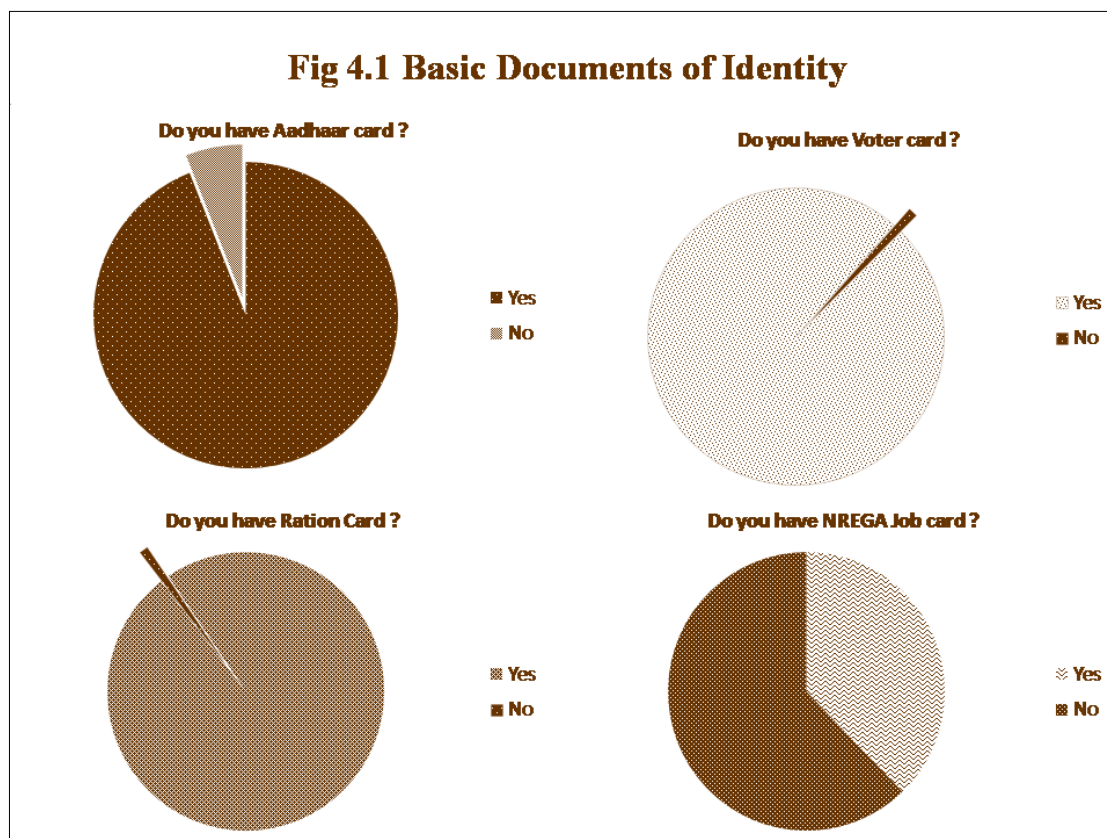
It's like saying: 'Basic – Level - 0; 'Primary – Level – 1; and 'Secondary – Level - 2'.

A. Basic Identity of Entitlement-Claims

The three basic identities of citizenship one can think of in the Indian context are (i) Aadhaar card; (ii) Voter ID Card; and (iii) Family Ration Card. The possession of these three IDs, besides providing identity for an individual/family, can enable entitlements - including social security - of several types. Some studies have established that the ration card and the job card given in the MGNREGA serve as the lifeline of some families in rural areas (Ramesh G. P., 2015). Therefore, there is a direct negative correlation one can

draw between non-possession of Aadhaar card and to the chances of a person being denied certain citizenship entitlements and the social security entitlements.

There are no MGNREGA job card holders in Punsari. The GP President stated that there is no unemployment in Punsari to make use of the provisions of MGNREGA.



It was found that out of the 140 sample households interviewed in Punsari GP, 94 per cent of them possessed Aadhaar card whereas 99 per cent had Voter ID cards as well. Almost all the families have Family Ration Card. Possession of the Family Ration Card makes a family eligible to have access to certain commodities like rice, lintels, sugar, oil, and other essentials for daily consumption. It ensures minimal food security of every family. The voter ID is an entitlement to participate in the democratic governance at the grassroots, provincial and national levels.

Common Facilities/Basic Infrastructure

Basic facilities like childcare centre, school, drinking water supply, healthcare facility, roads, light, transport, PDS, etc., are basic facilities that any community needs to have in order to lead a decent standard of living. For one thing, it helps families meet their daily basic needs, and the other is it sets that community in an ascending direction of development. Availability of such facilities and the satisfaction of the community with such facilities in Punsari were arranged on a five-point scale. Before we get to know the community satisfaction, it is good to take a look at the facilities in comparison with the national standards. The complete list of (primary and secondary) facilities in Punsari Gram Panchayat is presented at the end of Chapter 3.

Primary Infrastructure

- Anganwadi
- Primary Schools
- High School
- Drinking water for schools/anganwadi
- Toilet at schools/anganwadis (separate for boys and girls)
- PDS (Ration Shop)
- (Piped) Water Supply for households
- Individual Household Latrines - IHHLs
- Pay & use public toilet near the bus stop
- Underground drainage facility
- Primary Health Centre – PHC
- Post Office
- Approach road to the village & internal roads within the village
- Street lights
- No huts in the GP (All houses are either tiled or concrete)
- Crematorium

How does it compare with the ‘national standards in terms of rural infrastructure?’

Going by the national standards/officially established norms (See Annexures 1.1 to 1.7), a verification of the common and individual facilities available (in schools, anganwadis, PHC, drinking water supply, sanitation facilities at household and community levels) reveals that Punsari GP has all the primary infrastructure a Gram Panchayat is expected to have as per Indian standards. We can take an official view *on the upside and the downside of these facilities* before we hear what the community has to say about them.

The Upside and the Downside

In fact, on the upside, we must state that certain facilities in the schools such as computers with software that help play way learning for children, TV with a VCD player, CCTV camera are additions, which go beyond what the official standards/norms require. Similarly, pay and use toilet at the bus stand is a good arrangement, which normally one does not expect a GP to have. On the downside, two things must be mentioned. One is about the final disposal of garbage, and the other is about the disposal of the wastewater from each household connected to a centralised sewage system. On the surface, these look good; but if one tracked up to the final disposal of waste collected from households, and the wastewater collected through a centralised sewer system, they are unsystematic. The collection is methodical but the disposal is haphazard. The GP needs to take action about proper final disposal of waste collected from households/streets and shops; and for treating the wastewater at the final disposal point before it is let out into the fields.

Community Perspective of the Facilities

Let’s take a look at what the Punsari residents have to say about various facilities. Availability of primary infrastructure facilities and the community satisfaction with such facilities in Punsari was arranged on a five-point scale. Table 4.1 shows the community satisfaction with the facilities in Punsari GP.

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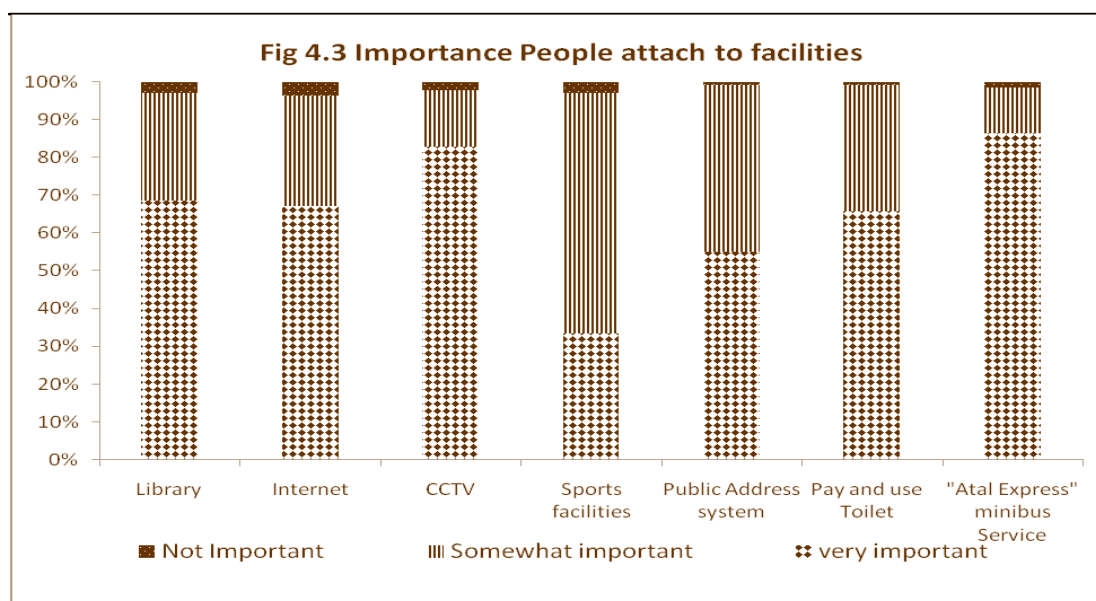
Table 4.1: Community satisfaction of various facilities

Various Facilities	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Undecided	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Total	Weighted Index
	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %	
Anganwadi services	120 85.7%	18 12.9%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.8
Smart School	115 82.1%	23 16.4%	1 0.7%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.8
General healthcare	118 84.3%	19 13.6%	1 0.7%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.8
Drinking water	127 90.7%	12 8.6%	0 0.0%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.9
Solid waste collection arrangement	110 78.6%	28 20.0%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.8
Drainage facility	120 85.7%	18 12.9%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.8
Electricity	130 92.9%	10 7.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.9
Grievance redressal mechanism	95 67.9%	42 30.0%	3 2.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.7
PDS (Ration Shop)	126 90.0%	14 10.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.9
Access to information	109 77.9%	29 20.7%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.8
Library facilities	95 67.9%	41 29.3%	4 2.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.7
Facilities for playing	54 38.6%	78 55.7%	6 4.3%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.3
Local Bank	122 87.1%	17 12.1%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.9
ATM	127 90.7%	10 7.1%	3 2.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.9

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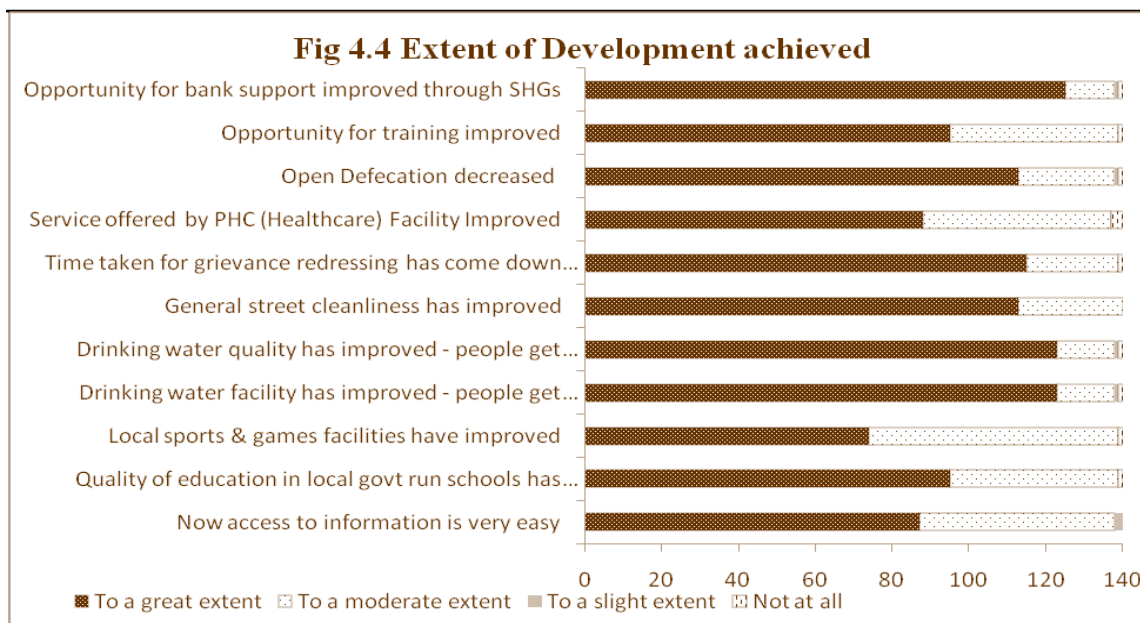
We find that the overall satisfaction of the people on various facilities is very positive, as most people are ‘very satisfied’ about most of the facilities. Only the ‘facilities for playing’ is reported to be slightly at ‘somewhat satisfied’ state. The weighted average on a five-point scale also indicates more than 4.7 scores in most of the variables considered. There is almost none who have expressed dissatisfaction with the facilities/services.

Importance People attach to Facilities (especially the higher order ones)



Certain facilities are uncommon in many Gram Panchayats, e.g. internet kiosk, CCTV camera, public address system, Atal Express minibus service, etc. To what extent people attach importance to these secondary facilities matter as well. Importance goes with the awareness of the benefits of such a facility and their use value. An enquiry into this aspect of development revealed (Figure 4.3) that almost all the facilities such as library, internet, CCTV camera, and public address system are considered either ‘very important’ or at least ‘somewhat important’. The minibus service is used not only for the convenience of people but also for transporting of milk produced at Punsari. Only a very negligible few have mentioned that they are not important, or unnecessary.

Extent of Development Achieved



In terms of the extent of development achieved, we draw your attention to the parameters considered. It was found that facilities such as adequacy and safety of drinking water, quality of school education, healthcare, the number of people who use the toilet, and general cleanliness of the village have improved to a great extent. The time taken by the GP for grievance redressal has come down to a great extent. Again in the same category, at second order falls aspects such as access to information, quality of education, games and sports, and participation in Gram Sabha have improved. We find there are very few people who differ from this view, or dissent.

The opportunity for training, bank support for small start-ups, and the cooperation from the local bank and government officials implementing rural development and agriculture-related programmes have improved as well. The inference can be that people experience development taking place because of the increased availability of infrastructure facilities. Obviously, the more facilities in place, the better the quality of living is. The image Punsari Gram Panchayat has been able to put on show within and outside Gujarat might also have played a considerable role in making official cooperation quick and favourable for citizens from the Gram Panchayat to get their things done.

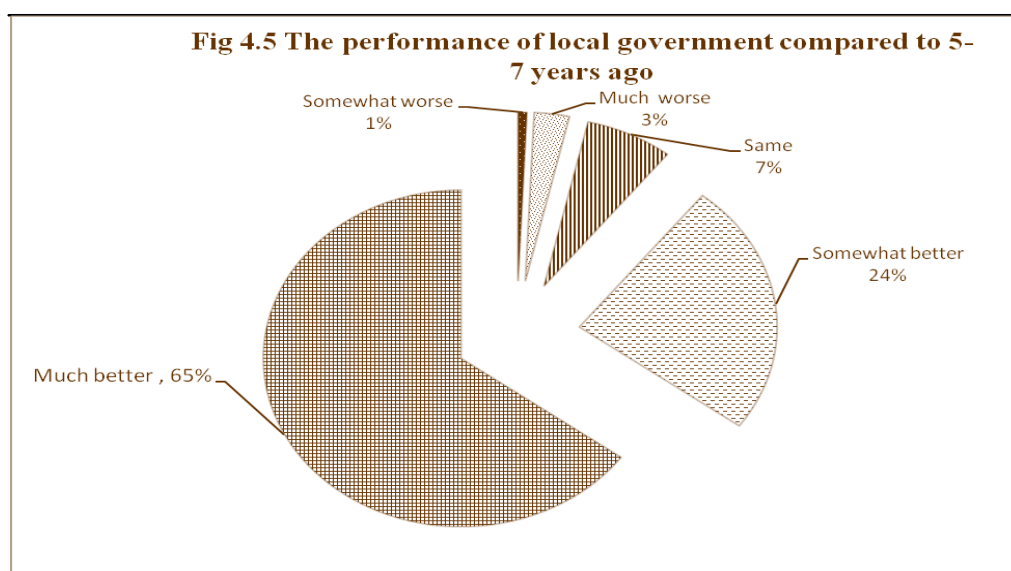
Table 4.2: Community Views on Governance & Development

Parameters considered	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total	Weighted Index
	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %	Number %	
Gram Sabha meets every quarter	85 60.7%	50 35.7%	4 2.9%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.6
Gram Sabha in Punsari is a participatory democratic platform	83 59.3%	52 37.1%	3 2.1%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.5
Local Committees are strong	93 66.4%	43 30.7%	3 2.1%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.6
Women have equal say in GP functioning	86 61.4%	47 33.6%	6 4.3%	0 0.0%	1 0.7%	140 100.0%	4.6
Women influence GP decisions if they pertain to them	80 57.1%	54 38.6%	5 3.6%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.5
Enhanced community facilities have improved quality of life in Punsari	91 65.0%	45 32.1%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	2 1.4%	140 100.0%	4.6
Punsari is completely an ODF village. (Everyone uses toilet)	113 80.7%	24 17.1%	1 0.7%	1 0.7%	1 0.7%	140 100.0%	4.8
All children go to school	112 80.0%	27 19.3%	1 0.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.8
Local skill training centre has been useful in providing employable skills	99 70.7%	39 27.9%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 1.4%	140 100.0%	4.7
The GP is generally very responsive to redress community grievances	105 75.0%	33 23.6%	0 0.0%	2 1.4%	0 0.0%	140 100.0%	4.7

Accountability and transparency are two vital principles of good governance. Good governance is a facilitator for local development to take place. A vibrant Gram Sabha steered by local committees that really functions as a democratic platform, providing equal space for women to participate is essential for meaningful development practice. Table 4.2 indicates that most people in Punsari Gram Panchayat either strongly agree or agree that the elements of democratic governance really take place in Punsari; that Gram Sabha meets at appointed intervals; that local women are able to participate and influence the discussions in the Gram Sabha; and that the enhanced community facilities have improved the quality of living of people. It is found that the GP is responsive to redress the grievances of local people. Those disagree or strongly disagree with this view are very minimal.

The performance of local government, compared to 5-7 years ago

Governance at the local level is an important facilitator of development. A local governance system that is vibrant shall naturally attach importance to basic facilities, and where possible move beyond to provide secondary facilities as well. As a thumb rule, a good system is responsive and accountable to the needs and priorities of the community, administering things in a transparent manner.



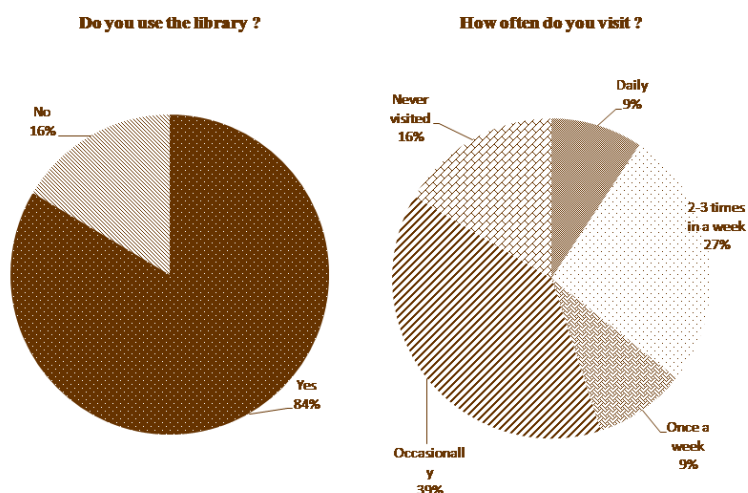
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For a question on the *performance of the local government* compared to the situation prevailed 5-7 years ago, nearly 90 per cent responded that it is either ‘much better’ or ‘somewhat better’. Similarly, for a question on the current level of security (with respect to violence, crime) compared to 5-7 years ago, nearly 93 per cent of the respondents interviewed responded that they feel ‘much better (75 per cent)’ or ‘somewhat better (18 per cent)’.

Use of Library

Presence of library and how frequently it is used by the community can be an indicator of a society growing in the direction of a learned society.

Fig 4.6 Library facility



In Punsari, when it comes to using the local library, 84 per cent of the residents were reportedly using the library. Upon a probe, it was found that 9 per cent of them visit the library daily; and there are others (26 per cent) who use the library 2-3 times in a week. About 38 per cent occasionally visit, and 16 per cent of them never visited at all. That a considerable number of the respondents visit the library at least once a week or so itself

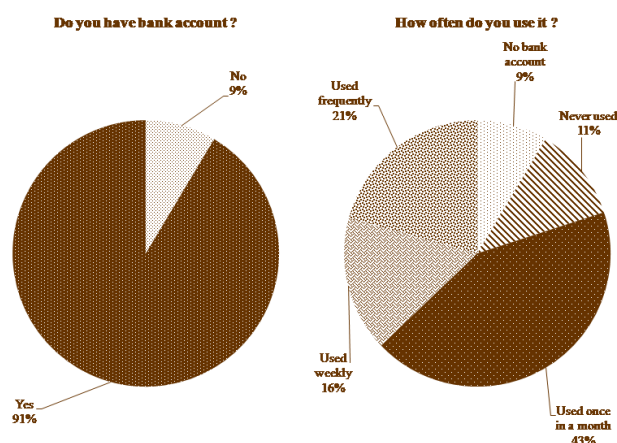
indicates that village library is found to be useful by some people, and it's evident at least one-third of them use it.

Possession/Operation of Bank Account

Being connected to the banking system is economically supportive and empowering. That's the thrust behind the idea of inclusive banking. Being an account holder in a bank, and having transactions with a bank are indicators of being connected to a banking system. However, having a bank account is one; and as an account holder making use of the services of a bank (i.e. transacting) is another. 'Be an account holder and never transact with the bank' is like having a medical prescription in the pocket, expecting to get cured of the disease. It implies that having an idle account seldom helps. The faster the operating cycle a person is engaged in, the more she/he is likely to be benefited.

Punsari has a State Bank of India (SBI) branch within the village with ATM facility. It also has a Customer Service Point (CSP) run by a Business Correspondent appointed by the SBI. The CSP is open until 8.00 pm, and so it is easy for the people to transact even after the local SBI branch closes. The financial services offered include banking/savings & deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, and pension which any person in the village can use.

Fig 4.7 Possession / Operation of Bank Account

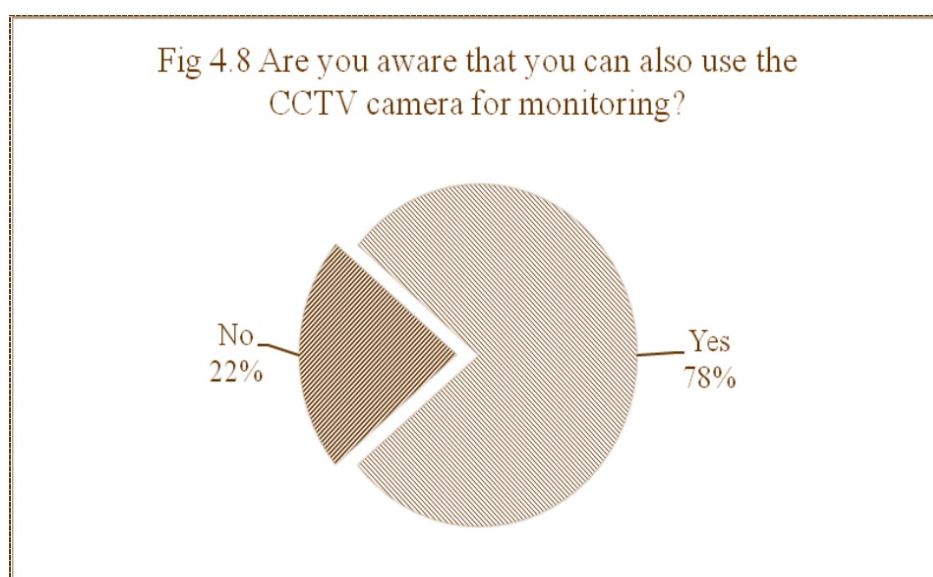


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Among the respondents interviewed in Punsari GP, we found that more than 91 per cent hold a bank account (Figure 4.7). A little less than nine per cent do not have bank accounts. Among those who hold accounts, about 37 per cent of them transact with the bank very frequently or at least once a week; about 43 per cent of them use once a month or so. 11 per cent of them do not use at all. That means, in effect, 80 per cent of the respondents use the banking services. The remaining 20 per cent either do not have an account or they do not go to the bank at all.

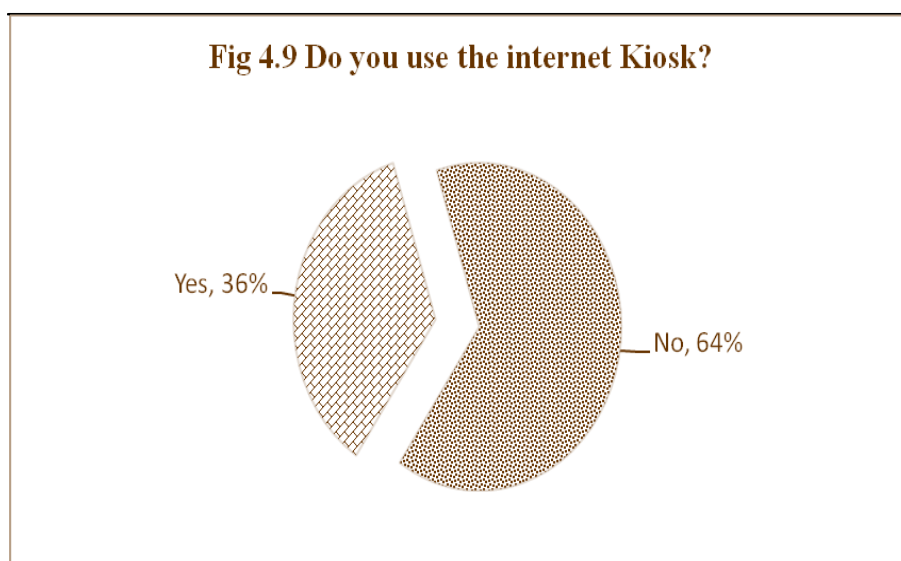
Awareness on the use of the CCTV camera

Earlier, for a question on security in Punsari, most people responded positively. Punsari GP has also moved beyond providing manual security to provide technology-supported security. This is done through Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTV) using surveillance cameras in many important places – such as main streets, GP Office, school, bank, and so on. More than 82 per cent of the people have mentioned that CCTV camera is very important and useful, and 77 per cent of them have also responded that they are aware that they can also use the CCTV camera for monitoring the goings-on in important places such as schools, GP Office, bank, at the milk collection centre, and in various streets in the village (Figure 4.8).



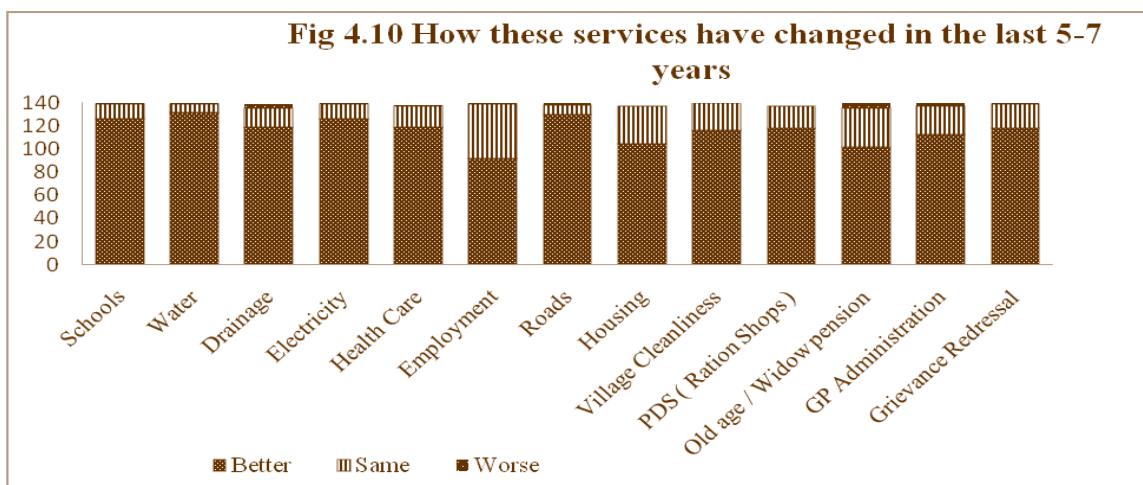
Use of Internet Kiosk

Internet is allowing people to be their own experts. It has introduced an egalitarian platform for creating, sharing and obtaining information on a global scale. Punsari has an Internet kiosk that people can use.



Although 67 per cent of the people considered the internet as a useful tool, only 35 per cent of the respondents have reported to have used the internet facility. It is interesting to find that one-third of the population in a village using the internet.

Change in the level of basic service



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An enquiry was made on the change in the level of various services and Figure 4.10 indicates that most of the services (school, drinking water, drainage, electricity, healthcare, roads, village cleanliness, PDS, etc.) have become 'better'. However, a considerable number of respondents have reported that no significant change came about in terms of employment generation (34 per cent), or housing (23 per cent). The effect of various facilities on employment needs to be studied exclusively, which is outside the scope of this report.

Maintenance Arrangement

One big challenge with regard to going for infrastructure-centred development is the operation and maintenance of the facilities created. In Punsari, it was found that they have gone for several different arrangements with regard to operation and maintenance. The Atal Bus Service is run by an SHG accountable to milk producers collective; the Customer Service Point of the local SBI is managed by SBI; the library is managed and maintained by local youth volunteers; the skill training centre is managed by State Resource Centre; the public toilet is a contracted out 'pay and use facility'; and facilities such as drinking water supply, street cleanliness, street lights, public address system and CCTV camera come under the maintenance of the Gram Panchayat. The Punsari Gram Panchayat has set up a corpus created out of the sale of land worth Rs.25 lakh. Most of the expenses for operation and maintenance - besides the assistance from the state government by way of the grant – are met out of the interest accrued from the corpus that remains as bank deposit. Therefore, Punsari Gram Panchayat does not have any big botheration about the maintenance of the facilities like many other Gram Panchayats are worried about.

CHAPTER – 5

STUDY OF MODEL VILLAGES IN INDIA: A FRAMEWORK FOR REFERENCE

Conclusion

In trying to understand a model village, the first thing we need to be clear about is that *‘the very idea of a model village is notional*. It is a frame of mind/a mental state – or a composed perspective/intellection. Some villages, after a prolonged engagement, provide the essentials for building a certain line of argument that become ‘definitional of a model village’. We cannot speak about model villages sans the socio-political context. From each model village, we may be able to construe ‘the constituents’ that illustrate or typify a model village. There cannot be one hallmark or unvarying visage which we can label as a model village. There is no *gold standard* to compare with. However, we can recognise the attributes; document the processes that led to certain characteristics that singled a village out, as the pick of the bunch.

Much of the debate on the alternative approaches to understanding and explaining relate to the priorities in deciding on what should be at the core of our normative concern – what do we call a model at all? What constitutes a model? What is the basis for this model/norm (Sen, 1999)? We must also bear in mind the saying: *‘Show me a perfect village in all respects, I shall show you an imperfection there; show me a perfect scale that measures ‘a model village’ absolutely perfectly; I shall show you a flaw in the tool.*’ Therefore, measurements can be claimed to be robust within a methodological framework, or within the perspective, it is argued.

The easiest thing about the model village, perhaps, is to dream about one. Attempting to create a model village, even on a paper, is highly demanding. Issues come up from several doors. For instance, queries will be raised about the basic facilities and services, the farm and non-farm related developments, rural employment generation and livelihoods diversification, rural arts and crafts and so on. A Gram Panchayat (GP) is recognised as a model for emulation - in this case, Punsari GP in Sabarkanta district of Gujarat.

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The study of a model village can provide many interesting and relevant insights. But history is full of examples of how such studies are made for propagandistic purposes to show that their own model is the superior one in the atmosphere of political and ideological confrontation. Many researchers have taken great pains to paint their own models in as bright colours as possible – as if everything fell in place only because of, and after the intervention. Development researchers and development practitioners in many instances played the game of comparing ideally functioning models of their own model with other systems as they function in a less perfect reality (Pretty, 1995) that degenerates into subjective value judgments or propagandistic statements. Therefore, in studying and emulating model villages, one needs to be wary of false comparisons and variables being unintentionally overemphasised or intentionally underplayed.

In order to understand and explain: *what constitutes a model village or what makes people call Punsari a model village*, one needs to put it in a certain perspective and offer an explanation. Getting into perspective demands dispelling the misconceptions about the idea of a ‘model village’. Our involvement in this study corrected certain misconceptions we had about model villages. They are given below.

Misconception – 1: *The immediate perspective of a model village is ‘a village complete in all respects’.* For instance, the SAGY guideline provides a robustly exhaustive outline, which by all means, can be considered to be theoretically complete as well. It is a comprehensive framework ‘to draw ideas from’. However, it is ‘not a blueprint’ that one should try to implement every element mentioned in it. In a study of a model village, as the study unfolds one gets to recognise that there are several facets or strata of development. These stages tend to be gradual, progressive and often overlapping. They are not admission-restricted compartments like how rural development is dimensionally captured in a college syllabus for each department to deal in a given subject matter. It is no blueprint with certain requirements one needs to fill in, in order to qualify for a village to become ‘model’. In any ‘developed village’, by all accounts, there could be certain elements overwhelmingly present and certain elements conspicuously absent. The point is: *a model*

village cannot be complete in all spheres of development one might wish to see on the ground. We need a proper sense of perspective delimiting our framework.

Misconception – 2: *There is an ultimate destination which is perfect (or pinnacle of development a village must touch) to qualify for being called a ‘model village’.* There is no stage called the ‘pinnacle of development’ the definition of which describes the ultimate destination a village must reach, so as to qualify for being called a ‘model village’. One cannot say that development practitioners and professionals are directing villages towards ‘that ultimately perfect destination.’ It can be any comprehensive listing like it is given in SAGY guidelines, or the norms given under human development index, it is always relative and progressive with a possibility for further perfection. It is not a run towards a finish line. Therefore, by one scale, a village could be addressed as developed, and by another, it could be measured as lacking.

This is based not only on our experience in trying to understand and explain Punsari Gram Panchayat but also is the reality in measuring nations based on the human development index (HDI). The HDI is constantly evolving, and the indices have been relentlessly being made better and sharpened year after year since 1990. The best brains in the world are working on constructing the indices and measuring human development. We are not fully convinced as yet, that here is a completely perfect set of index that measure development absolutely flawlessly. In the last 25 years, we have developed robust tools, but not one that can be claimed as ‘totally perfect’. The minimal required is holding a perspective and determining ‘a framework to understand and explain.’ This study on Punsari model Gram Panchayat shall be viewed from ‘rural infrastructure’ perspective.

Taking an infrastructure standpoint can be done robustly with normative standards available to measure, coupled with community perception and satisfaction of the common facilities.

Basic Identity: This is a common minimum every citizen must possess. The three basic

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identities of citizenship one can think of, in the Indian context are (i) Aadhaar card; (ii) Voter ID Card; and (iii) Family Ration Card. In addition to these, a recent addition after the introduction of MGNREGA is the job card. The possession of these four IDs [including the job card from MGNREGA], besides providing identity for an individual, can enable entitlements - including social security - of several types to a poor family.

Some studies have established that the Ration Card and the MGNREGA job card serve as the lifeline of some poor families in rural areas (Ramesh G. P., 2015). Therefore, there is a direct negative correlation one can draw between non-possession of certain identity cards and to the chances of a person being denied certain entitlements and the social security arrangements. In Punsari Gram Panchayat, it was found that almost everyone has Aadhaar card, Ration Card, and Voter ID. A considerable number of families (600 families) also have MGNREGA job card and bank accounts. Therefore, the basic identity is unquestionably clear. There can be no problem about accessing basic entitlements such as getting essential commodities from the Public Distribution System (PDS) or making social security claims.

Basic Infrastructure: Going by the national standards/officially established norms (See Annexure 1.1 to 1.7 for standards and norms), a verification of the common and individual facilities available (in schools, anganwadis, PHC, drinking water supply, sanitation facilities at household and community levels, etc.) reveals that Punsari GP has all the primary infrastructure a Gram Panchayat is expected to have as per the Indian standards. From there, it has moved on to build secondary infrastructure, which put development on the fast track.

The Extra Infrastructure that makes Punsari Extraordinary: Observably, what has put Punsari GP on a higher pedestal is not the mere provision of basic infrastructure facilities, and their uninterrupted functionality; rather certain uncommon facilities (secondary infrastructure) have singled this Gram Panchayat out as outstanding. Certain exceptional facilities we find are computers in the local government-run schools with software for

children to learn play way, TV with a VCD player, public address system regularly used for information as well as educational purposes, CCTV camera in several places also covering the schools and ration shop, and Wi-Fi connectivity in the village, etc. All these go beyond what the official norms require, raising eyebrows. These extra make Punsari extraordinary in the eyes of any visitor to the village.

Pay and use toilet at the bus stand and special bus service (Atal Bus Service - named after the former Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee) especially for transporting milk out of the village, and for the sake of school children, is a good arrangement, which normally one does not expect to be present at GP level. Similarly, a training centre operates within the village to train school dropouts in some hands-on skills such as computer operation, tailoring, embroidery, etc. Apart from the facility of a State Bank of India branch and an ATM, Punsari has Customer Service Point of SBI which is open even after the banking hours are really extraordinary (economic infrastructure) facility within a Gram Panchayat. There are also women SHGs working in the village that make use of the services of the SBI branch. Theoretically, the presence of these facilities must enhance the standard of living of the people. Given the conditions in Punsari, there is no reason to think about a rival explanation as to why practically it may not happen. However, community perception was also sought for the purpose of understanding the utility of these facilities.

Community Perception: Making facilities available and providing access to certain common infrastructure facilities are important aspects in gearing up rural development. If common facilities are made available and accessible, it is natural people shall use them - and happily so. Yet, an extensive enquiry was made to find out community perception and satisfaction.

We find that the overall opinion of the people about various facilities to be very positive, as most people are 'very satisfied' about most of the facilities. Only the 'facilities for playing' is reported to be slightly at 'somewhat satisfied' state. There is almost none who

have expressed dissatisfaction with the facilities/services.

Certain facilities are uncommon or unusual in other places. To what extent people attach importance to these facilities matter as well. Importance goes with the awareness of the benefits of such a facility and their use value. An enquiry into this aspect of development revealed that almost all the facilities such as library, internet, CCTV camera and public address system are considered either ‘very important’ or at least ‘somewhat important’. The minibus service is used not only for the convenience of people but also for transporting the milk produced at Punsari. Only a very negligible few have mentioned that some of the facilities such as internet and CCTV camera are not important, or unnecessary.

Extent of Development Achieved: In terms of the extent of development achieved, it was found that facilities such as the supply of safe drinking water in adequate quantity, quality of school education and healthcare have improved. Everyone in every family uses the household toilet and general cleanliness of the village has improved considerably. The time taken by GP for attending to the complaints has come down to a great extent, which is noticeable from the Register maintained for ‘Public Complaints and Redressal.’

In Essence – What does Punsari offer to development literature?

Trying to answer this question with an analogy would provide better clarity. We take the idea of ‘microcredit and group lending’ for an analogy. The essence or the central idea of ‘Microcredit Programme’ is *if you take care of household economics by creating a mechanism for uninterrupted money flow into households, rural economic development shall automatically take place*. Now, where do we get this money from, is a question that has been answered (group savings + bank credit); and how do we enable money flow into households (through productive loans); how do we make it uninterrupted (prompt repayment through peer-pressure), and so on. This model works worldwide. This model could prove even a sceptic-banker that the poor are bankable. What made this concept succeed was the principle that has been put to use with several different contextual modifications to suit varying community mindsets and

abilities in different villages, regions and continents. It was not a blueprint operationalised all over the world; rather it is the basic tenets and undercurrent that made the operational mechanism robust; and the microcredit programme a thumping success world over.

Similarly, what is the central idea (bottom-line) of Punsari model? *Focus on basic rural infrastructural facilities* like providing safe and adequate drinking water, basic healthcare facilities, schooling of children, arrangement for regular street cleaning, and household toilets for every house – which implies that Punsari Panchayat performs what the Article 243 G in the Eleventh Schedule of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act demands from a Gram Panchayat. Through this performance, the Panchayat has secured its place as a regular FUNCTIONAL Gram Panchayat. Secondly, *going further beyond the basics* to provide higher level facilities such as public address system, internet, library, CCTV cameras, banking beyond the bank hours, ATM at the village level, Punsari has become a SPOKEN ABOUT Gram Panchayat from an outsider's point of view. The weighted average of the community satisfaction also has shown *more than 4 scores on a 5-point scale* indicating that people are 'fully satisfied' about the entire facilities available in the Panchayat.

Enabling development to take place by persistently expanding rural infrastructure theoretically means providing the enablement required or creating the eco-system needed for development to take shape has been done in Punsari. This, in turn, shall reflect in child development, quality of education, nutrition, agriculture, credit support, market linkage, overall well-being and in the quality of life and so on. The sustainable functioning of the infrastructure created has been ensured through arrangements such as 'management by GP', 'management by SHGs', and 'management through private sector/government sector involvement,' etc.

Conclusion

In trying to understand a model village, the first thing we need to be clear about is that *'the very idea of a model village is notional*. It is a frame of mind/a mental state – or a

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composed perspective/intellection. Some villages, after a prolonged engagement, provide the essentials for building a certain line of argument that become 'definitional of a model village'.

This study has come out with a framework for reference to those who would want to study model villages in India. A key learning point from this study is that we cannot speak about model villages sans the socio-political context. From each model village, we may be able to construe 'the constituents' that illustrate or typify a model village. There cannot be one hallmark or unvarying visage which we can label as a model village for making nation-wide carbon copies. Yet, we must recognise the attributes; document the processes that led to certain characteristics that singled a village out, as a pick of the bunch.

A model village, by and large, does provide a concoction which may or may not be replicable; or it can be viewed as a version or pattern as an exemplar that is illustrative. A version that contains several significant developmental fortunes, and renders itself uncomplicated for scaling up becomes sought-after, like the Microcredit model of Bangladesh. Perhaps, this is what they call maximum benefit for the maximum number of people (in 'Benefit Maximization Axiom' in sociological theories). There is always the danger of some elements being missed out unintentionally, which one needs to be observant about.

This is based on the premise that each village is different in terms of problems; resource availability; locational advantage/disadvantage; community capabilities and mindset; and more than anything else the 'local leadership' and so on. Himanshu Patel, the Sarpanch of Punsari Panchayat, is a very dynamic leader with high political connections. His father and grandfather were respected as local leaders and he belongs to that lineage. Moreover, the socio-political and economic standing of the Sarpanch is beyond comparison. Therefore, we are going to be imprudent in our attempt, if we attempted providing blanket-type ingredients that go into making constituents of a model village. We can draw lessons from some of the existing model villages – not only of Punsari's but also

of others. It will not be methodological - rather 'mythodological' - if we try to replicate Punsari as an example, not taking into account the socio-political context in which it has operated, including the political support that the Sarpanch is able to draw, and the resultant official support.

Punsari has operated in a certain socio-political context, which is improbable to be the same all over – even within Gujarat. The best validation to this statement could be an article titled: 'Revisiting the Midnapore Model after ten years of Total Sanitation Campaign in India' by Taposik Banerjee et al. from National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies, New Delhi. Midnapore Model of sanitation promotion was well acclaimed 10 years ago and prescribed by the Government of India for adopting that model all over India. Ten years after, these authors have revisited the whole thing and have come back to tell us 'why Midnapore Model did not succeed in other places. They say: *'probably there are several contextual elements that we overlooked during replication of Midnapore Model'*. The question is: why did those researchers and authors – not one or two but many - who then studied and recommended Midnapore for replication, fabulously made-up and glorified Midnapore Model? Did they fail to notice the contextual factors; or they all had a temperament to overemphasise, understate, or completely dismiss things that might go against what the mainstream thinking was at that time?

The study of a model village can provide many interesting and relevant insights. But history is full of examples of how such studies are made for propagandistic purposes to show that their own model is the superior one in the atmosphere of political and ideological confrontation. Many researchers have taken great pains to paint their own models in as bright colours as possible – as if everything fell in place only because of, and after the intervention. Development researchers and development practitioners in many instances played the game of comparing ideally functioning models of their own model with other systems as they function in a less perfect reality (Pretty, 1995) that degenerates into subjective value judgments or propagandistic statements. Therefore, in studying and emulating model villages, one needs to be wary of false comparisons and variables being

unintentionally overemphasised or intentionally underplayed, etc.

We are going to be imprudent in our attempt if we set out providing blanket-type ingredients that go into making constituents of a model village. Perhaps, what is intelligible is, we can deduce the characteristics that Punsari has to offer as constituents of a desirable pattern. And certain principles and values that Punsari considered non-negotiable during the process of creating Punsari version of development. All said and done, we may have to go for a participatory plan with the community wherever we propose to make an intervention, bearing in mind the principles and values that facilitated the transformation of Punsari Gram Panchayat - or any model village for that matter - rather than recommending that model to be adopted as a blueprint. Perhaps, that sounds an intelligible proposition.

Annexure – 1.1

A. Infrastructure Norms & Standards – Schools

Schools (as found in ‘The Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education Act, 2009)	
Items	Norms and Standards
· Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All-weather building consisting of at least one classroom for every teacher and an office-cum-Head teacher’s room. · Barrier-free access · Separate toilets for boys and girls · Safe and adequate drinking water facility to all children · A kitchen where mid-day meal is cooked in the school · Playground with play materials and sports equipment · Boundary wall/fencing for the school
· Teaching learning equipment	Shall be provided to each class as required
· Library	There shall be a library in each school providing newspaper, magazines and books on all subjects, including story books.
· Play materials, games and sports equipment	Shall be provided to each class as required
· Number of teachers	Pupil – Teacher Ratio (excluding Head Teacher) shall not exceed forty.
<i>Additional facilities found in Punsari</i>	
1. Computers with lessons for children	
2. TV with VCD Player	
3. CCTV camera	

B. Infrastructure Norms & Standards – Anganwadis (Childcare centres)

Anganwadi Centre (Approved norms under ICDS Mission)	
Items	Norms and Standards
Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · All-weather building in 600 sq.ft. · Government own building/if rented, it must have the necessary facilities indicated · Electricity facility · Fan · Barrier-free access · Child friendly toilets · Safe and adequate drinking water facility · A kitchen (and a store room), where mid-day meal is cooked
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Others like weighing scale (adult & child), cooking utensils, soft toys, mat,

C. Infrastructure Norms & Standards - Primary Health Centres

PHCs (Indian Public Health Standards for PHCs)	
Items	Norms and Standards
Building and other facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Building not located very far from the locality (free from garbage dump, cattle shed, stagnant pool, pollution from industry) · Own building (total sq. area.) · Compound wall with gate · Condition of walls/floor/fencing · Drinking water & Sanitation Facility · Cleanliness of OPD, wards, toilets, premises · Display boards regarding service availability · OPD rooms/cubicles · Waiting room · Family welfare clinic · Emergency room/casualty · No. of beds: Male; female · Operation theatre · Labour room · Laboratory room · Ancillary room – nurses' restroom · Water, sewage, waste disposal · Electricity · Laundry facility · Essential laboratory services (blood, etc.) · Communication/vehicle facility · Storeroom · Kitchen · Resident facility for the medical officer/ pharmacist/nurses · MCH Facility · Population covered

Note: For a complete list of facilities on PHC, please refer to 'Indian Public Health Standards'.

Annexure – 1.4

D. Infrastructure Norms & Standards - Drinking Water Supply

Drinking Water Supply (National Rural Drinking Water Programme – NRDWP standards)	
Items	Norms and Standards
Criteria to check the facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fifty-five lpcd (at least 12 days out of consecutive 14 days) – Adequacy · Water chlorinated daily or RO treated water - Safety · Piped on premises to over 80% of the households – Piped water through yard tap · Accessible within 100 metres from residence (at least) in difficult areas

Annexure – 1.5

E. Infrastructure Norms & Standards - Individual Household Toilets

Individual Household Toilets	
Items	Norms and Standards
Toilet Facility & usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Every household has a usable toilet · Toilet has proper water seal/ functional door · 100% use and fly proofing of toilets · No visible faeces found in the village · Soap and water found inside or near the toilet

Annexure – 1.6

F. Infrastructure Norms & Standards - School & Anganwadi Toilets

School & Anganwadi Toilets (Swachh Bharat Mission – ODF Survey)	
Items	Norms and Standards
Toilet Facility & usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · One toilet for 80-120 girls/ boys separately. · 3-4 urinals each of which is supposed to cater to 20-40 boys or girls separately. · There must be washbasins (handwashing area with water tubs/ running tap& soap) ·

Annexure – 1.7

G. Infrastructure Norms & Standards - Solid Waste & Sewage Disposal

Solid Waste & Sewage Disposal (Swachh Bharat Mission – ODF Survey)	
Items	Norms and Standards
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Arrangement for solid waste collection from households, shops & establishments · System for collection, transportation, segregation, and composting and disposal of remaining garbage at a landfill · Adequacy and functionality of the system

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