

MY VILLAGE IS MY SCHOOL: SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

TEACHER	Goswami Jigneshpuri Surendrapuri
SCHOOL	Shri Fachariya Primary School, Dhaari Taluka, Amreli district
PHONE NUMBER	9427-2311-33
E-MAIL	jigneshbaba31@gmail.com



Scan QR-code
to watch video



Shri Goswami became a teacher in June 1999. Since 2009, he has been working in the Fachariya Primary School. This is a small Class 1-7 school in Dhaari taluka on the outskirts of Gir in Gujarat. The population is only 486 people. There were just 27 students in the whole school. The previous teacher had left after an altercation with the villagers.

When he joined, Shri Goswami found that the records of 2007 to 2008 were totally missing. The condition of the school was very poor. It had just two dilapidated rooms with tiled roofs, no flooring, broken compound wall and one broken door. The children of Fachariya village shifted to private schools. The villagers had often requested the authorities for good teachers. In the end, the villagers locked the school premises for 4 days. It was next to impossible to conduct any academic activity in such extreme social and physical conditions.

Shri Goswami started with varied activity-based education. He started prayer assembly, yoga class, games and story-telling creating a bond between the school and students. The school timings were extended from 8.30 AM to



Prayer meeting organized by children in the village

6.30 PM and it also remained open on Sundays and other public holidays. The students had the freedom to come and go as they wished. They were encouraged to operate the school by themselves. Shri Goswami created a ministers' committee and assigned different duties to each student. A temple to the Goddess of Education, Saraswati, was set up in the school campus. Night school and programs for improving handwriting and value-oriented activities on holidays were started. Regular activities included children's assembly, language week, clockwork yoga, night school, fun on holidays, computer education, health assembly, handwriting improvement program, language corner, storytelling, "my day", tours and picnics, regional tours, children's fair, life skills fair, Annual day, National festivals, birthday celebrations, street plays, village cleanliness activity, Save Water, Save the Lion, tree plantation and people's awareness campaigns.

The next step was to create a feeling of "My village is my school". He held meetings with the parents of the students who had shifted to private schools, different communities and the women of the village to get them involved with the school activities. The school also honoured people in the village for the various skills they exhibited. He also interacted with the various government officials requesting them to help with the street lights, cleaning of the streets, dustbins and the school's water tank.

Shri Goswami also honoured the memories of the villagers who had died. The idea was to extend the concept of school to the entire village, involving all people in its various activities.

An "assembly for awareness" was started – one night in a month. There were discussions on various topics such as religion, education, patriotism, women's development, ending

superstitions, street plays, environment awareness, and saving the lion. People connected with these subjects and actively participated in them.



Prayer meeting organized by children in the village

A whole range of other activities such as farmers' fest, vaccination camps, pest control, and entertainment programs, brought the community closer to the school, resulting in the formation of a school management committee.

When parents found it difficult to come to the school, he and the other teachers decided to meet the parents at their homes after they returned from their fields or work. This was called "Otlā Parishad" or verandah meets. On the 14th

and 28th day of every month in the evening from 5.30 to 6.30, a women's forum was held.

The school prospered, and 19 of the 22 children who had left returned. The confidence of the people in the school improved, so much so that when the villagers collected Rs 15 lakh for a temple, the responsibility for its construction was handed over to the school. The strength of the students increased from 27 to 56 students. The school was selected to be the best school in the taluka in 2015-16, and its performance in Gunotsav improved from D grade in 2009 to A grade in 2014-15 and has been maintained for four years. People have contributed to build a compound wall and the main gate. The school now has good facilities such as TV, Dish connection, Bio-gas, 3 printers, DVD system, Tape recorder, microphone system, photocopy machine and an RO system for water purification. Two more rooms, a mid-day meal kitchen and toilets for girls have been built. Donors for school tours and school dress have been booked for a time period of 3 years.

Shri Goswami has received a number of awards at the taluka and district level; he also received the Shikshak Bhushan Award, Goa in 2015. The work has also been recognized by IIM Ahmedabad.



QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What should be done to increase children's attendance?
2. What should be done to bring the children going to private school back to government school?
3. What programs should be done to bring awareness in the village?

QUESTIONS FOR TRAINEES

1. What issues can be discussed in a parent meeting?
2. What activities can be done to make children like to come to school?
3. What activities can be given to children to help them understand their responsibility towards school?