Appendix II

(News Articles)
The Patel family tree branches out

Ayesha Khan

Posted: Apr 03, 2005 at 0000 hrs IST

Dharmaj (Anand) In Dharmaj, the boys don’t head for the village pond. Instead they plunge into the sparkling waters of a swimming pool while their elders enjoy a boat ride in the Surajba Resorts run by the Dharmaj Gram Panchayat.

Behind this prosperity is the invisible shadow of its residents abroad. Of the 10,000 residents about 6,000 are Patels. And almost each of the Patel family has a member abroad.

‘‘Every year at least five families immigrate either to the US or UK,’’ says Bhavna Patel, the village sarpanch.

According to historians, Dharmaj Patels first immigrated to Manchester in 1895. In just five years there were about 50 Gujarati families in Manchester alone.

Barely 60 km away from Vadodara, Dharmaj’s local post office boasts of deposits worth Rs 200 crore. The village’s old age home, specialty hospitals, banks and schools is all funded by its absent members.

THE village entrance sets the tone, with brightly painted road dividers, streetlights, and paved roads. The village’s biggest pride is H M Patel, the late union finance minister and veteran Congress leader but others abroad have done the Patels proud. Their corner shops, business enterprises and more recently a designation in Friends of BJP—the overseas branch of the party—are all now part of the village lore.

‘‘What makes this village different is the sense of pride its residents take in it. They come each year to celebrate their roots,’’ says R K Shah, manager of Dharmaj Co-operative Bank in the village. The secret behind the village’s prosperous show, says Shah is, ‘‘The NRIs have faith that the money they send back will be put to good use.’’

A reason why Rs 1.50 crore of the Dharmaj Gram Panchayat goes into maintaining its fodder bank, the Surajba Resorts complete with its cottages, swimming pool, boat rides, gardens and a marriage park for its winter-time visitors from abroad.

Prosperity among the Patels has brought a change in lifestyle. The village has 3,500 phone and 80 internet connections. Every Patel birthday and anniversary is dutifully acknowledged in the village website: www.globaldharmaj.com. ‘‘We need to keep connected with our relatives, we therefore update our village website everyday. We even send gifts from here,’’ says Ashok Patel.

Source: http://www.indianexpress.com/oldStory/67611/
NRGs chip in with more donations for Dharmaj

TNN, Jan 25, 2007, 10.28pm IST

VADODARA: NRI-rich Dharmaj town is once again cheering its connection with the West. After setting up a cancer research facility, kidney centre, orthopaedic and physiotherapy centre through donations from NRIs, the town is now gearing up to include a water treatment facility, a dental facility and a glaucoma research centre at the town through donations from UK and Zimbabwe-based NRIs.

Only recently, the town had celebrated 'Dharmaj Day' to revive its connection with second and third generation NRGs, who now live across the globe.

Thanks to their efforts, the NRGS have now given donations for a reverse osmosis filtered mineral water plant at the cost of Rs 50 lakh that was opened on Wednesday.

Another donor Kantibhai Maganbhai Patel, from CMC India Limited Skylark, has also donated Rs 13 lakh to start a dental department from February 7.

While members of the Dharmaj Society of London (DSOL) have contributed to ensure that residents get proper drinking water facility, Zimbabwe-based senator Kanti Gordhan Patel has chipped in to start Gujarat's second glaucoma research centre.

The research centre is being started after Jalaram Eye Hospital got the approval from the union government to start such a centre.

It is second such centre to start after Nagari Hospital of Ahmedabad. "Jalaram Gram Vikas Trust has started distribution of water in 20 litres jar at the cost of Rs 12 per jar that will be delivered to each and every household of the town," said Rajesh Patel from Chh Gam Patidar Samaj.

"It was last year that it came to the notice of DSOL office-bearers that the drinking water in the town was not potable and was not advisable to drink. We also had reports that the town's drinking water could result in water borne diseases in long run and hence the NRGS have come up with the facility."

Source: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1460916.cms
NRIs deposits in leading nationalised banks in Gujarat surge

25 Nov 2008, 0144 hrs IST,PTI

AHMEDABAD: In backdrop of the global financial crisis, Non-Resident Indian (NRI) deposits in leading nationalised banks in Gujarat have surged.

"In the current fiscal till October, total NRI deposits in our branches across Gujarat have grown by Rs 651 crore, from Rs 5,980 crore in March to Rs 6,631 crore," Chief General Manager, State Bank of India (SBI), Gujarat, H C Pattnaik said.

"The currency inflow is largely from NRIs settled in the US and UK. The net growth in NRI deposits in last eight months has been at Rs 651 crore, with 80 per cent of deposits in Foreign Currency Non Resident (FCNR) accounts and 20 per cent in Non Resident External (NRE) fixed deposits," he said.

Bankers attribute this robust inflow of funds from overseas in last few months to paradigm shift in NRIs' confidence from banks of the US and Europe to their Indian counterparts.

"Between August and October, NRI deposits in our branches across Gujarat increased by Rs 334 crore. Of this Rs 256 crore has been in FCNR accounts, a growth of 10 per cent in foreign currency," General Manager, Bank of Baroda (BoB) Gujarat, GJ Joshi said.

"The overall NRI deposits in our branches continue to grow at 8 per cent ever since the financial crisis rocked the West," he added.

"Total NRI deposits in various branches of BoB across Gujarat were Rs 5,041 crore in August, which jumped to Rs 5,375 crore in September. Of these Rs 2,402 crore were in FCNR accounts," Joshi said, adding "Deposits in FCNR rose to Rs 2,658 crore between September and October."

NRI deposits of BoB had fallen by Rs 171 crore between March and August 2008, but post-August the flow of foreign currency in the bank has been robust, Joshi said.

"RBI's recent decision to allow margin over benchmark interest rates London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) continues to have a positive impact on FCNR and NRE deposits," Joshi added. As per a recent RBI order "Interest rates on fresh Rupee NRE term deposits for one to three years maturity should not exceed the LIBOR/SWAPS (a swap is a derivative in which two counterparties agree to exchange one stream of cash flows against another stream) rates plus 175 basis points, for US dollar of corresponding maturities."

Source:
http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/NRIs_deposits_surge_in_leading_nationalised_banks/articleshow/3753261.cms
Ahmedabad, Jan 2: The Gujarati diaspora across the globe are sending more and more money to hometowns, leading to an increase in the non-resident Indian (NRI) deposits with banks in Gujarat. Even the banks are rolling out new products to woo non-resident Gujaratis (NRG).

As per the details available with State Level Banking Committee (SLBC) in Gujarat, the total NRI deposits in the state have surged to Rs 17,456 crore as on September, 2006, which is 14.76% higher than Rs 15,674 crore in the corresponding period of last year.

There has been an increase of nearly Rs. 2,000 crore in NRI deposits of the state, which also shows growth of 16 to 17% as against the corresponding period as on September 2005, said Purushottam Kumar, convener, SLBC, Gujarat. The share of NRI deposits in total bank deposits in the state is 14.76%, which has also touched 16 to 17% in the past.

Giving more details, JM Patel, chief manager, SLBC, said, “Regions like Kutch region receives the highest amount of remittances in the state, followed by Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Anand.

As per the available data, NRI deposits in Kutch is Rs 3,508 crore and in Ahmedabad it is Rs. 2,300 crore. While in case of Vadodara, Anand and Navsari, total NRI deposits stood at Rs 2,260 crore, Rs 2,100 crore and Rs 1,813 crore as on September 2006.

Informing that roughly there are around 2 to 2.5 lakh NRI account holders in the state and NRI deposits surpassed the growth rate of total deposits in the state.

The total deposits as on September, 2006 were at Rs 1.18 lakh crore, which showed an increase of 10% as against the total Rs 1.06 lakh crore in the corresponding period in 2005.

As compared to this NRI deposits grew by 14 to 15% in the same period.

$-gaon: Gujarat's pride, India's envy

Prashant Rupera, TNN, Jan 13, 2008, 12.54am IST

DHARMAJ (ANAND DISTRICT): Think Anand and you think Amul. And dairy co-operatives. But, the Amul model is not the only big ticket export out of Anand.

The great dollar dream has created a stir in the land of White Revolution, and turned Dharmaj into a village with world class facilities, rubbing shoulders with any top city, totally on NRI money. Now, this little village wants the country to adopt the Dharmaj model.

Where can one see a village, with a population of 5,000, running a vibrant English medium school for children and a college, ultra-modern medical facilities, water park, recreation zone and state-of-the-art civic infrastructure?

If the medical facilities include a kidney centre, a cancer research facility, a maternity hospital, a polio and orthopaedic hospital, an eye hospital that has operated on 1.47 lakh patients, a glaucoma research centre, a dental hospital and a mineral water plant provides 20 litre treated water at just Rs 2 to the economically backward.

It is a silent revolution that has seen NRGs from the village, which are now spread across the globe, pitching in just to assure that their relatives get all the facilities that any city can boast of. For 76-year-old Hemlata Patel, the metamorphosis of Dharmaj is nothing short of magic. “We had small houses which got bigger. Mud roads have turned smooth with cars zipping about and I am not worried about my grandsons as an engineering college is all set to come up. It’s a dream come true,” says Patel, who has seen the transformation over the years.

And, though Gujarat has many philanthropic NRGs, Dharmaj has scored with its meticulous planning and novel approach. “Simply donating money and creating infrastructure does not help. It needs to be sustained over the years,” says Bhupendra Patel, former president of Dharmaj Society of London (DSOL). Patel is not only a representative for projects in Dharmaj, he is also responsible for streamlining the management of NRI-funded projects. “One may secure funds from NRGs to put up a hospital building. But, that would not ensure that doctors will serve free of cost. One has to adopt a corporate culture to even run a charitable institute,” says Patel.

“We approach NRIs with a futuristic plan. This helps them understand the need of the hour,” says Rasik Patel, president of a trust that runs a small-scale industry for women from weaker sections, apart from a number of schools and colleges.

Source:
Five-star NRI village swears by Modi

*Srinand Jha, Hindustan Times*

Dharmaj (Kheda), December 17, 2007

Elegant bungalows with manicured lawns and blossoming daliahs, tree-lined, well-lit streets leading to tobacco fields, a centralised water purification plant, a fresh water lake for boating, specialised hi-tech hospitals — that’s Dharmaj, Gujarat’s richest village for you.

The catch lies in the fact that for most part of the year, the village is deserted, the houses locked up. In central Gujarat’s Kheda district, the Patel-dominated village of Dharmaj has the following calling card: About 70 per cent of the population are NRIs, coming from destinations as far and wide as the US, Australia, Germany or Slovenia.

This year, the village is full to its brim. The reason: elections and chief minister Narendra Modi. Forty-three-year-old Jayesh Patel, owner of a chain of motels in Georgia, says: “Inspiring things have been happening here. Last 45 years the Congress did nothing, but Modi has ushered in unimaginable development. Only Modi can bring about an enabling environment for NRI investments in the state.” Florida-based Ishwarbhai Shantilal Bhatt adds, “The US may well have denied Modi a visa but will they continue to deny him the facility when he becomes Prime Minister?”

Flooding social networking site Orkut, conducting an SMS campaign are some of the ways NRIs are employing to campaign for Modi. “The NRIs do not have voting rights, but there is no prohibition on campaigning,” says Chandrakant Chhotabhai Patel of the wonder village.

NRI remittances leading to boom in wealth in villages

25 Jul, 2010, 08.05PM IST, Anirvan Ghosh, ET Bureau

When Shreyas Vani, a resident of Karamsad in Gujarat’s Anand district, wants to loosen his tired muscles after a hard day’s work, he just ambles into a swanky parlour bang in the middle of the village.

“It is just one of many (luxuries of life). Young people in our village yearn for them and want them right here. Money is not a factor,” he says, as the latest model of iPod deliberately slips out of his jeans’ pocket.

Two thousand kilometers away in Punjab’s Jallandhar district, when potato seed farmer, Santokh Singh, wanted to buy a car, he hitched a cab ride to Chandigarh, only to drive back in a brand new Audi A4. He says his fellow farmers are not settling for anything less, so why should he. “Our village has narrow roads, but a broad vision for BMWs, Mercs and Audis,” Singh laughs.

Stories such as these redefine rural life as we perceive it. Some villages in India are ahead of the curve and when it comes to luxury, they offer an opportunity to brands, no less secondary to businesses in the metros. Here people want the best cars and branded diamond jewellery. They shop for foreign tours— for travelling as well as study, and use Wi-fi enabled laptops. Here, the raw scent of the farmlands get mixed with the fragrance of a Channel and Diesel.

The secret is quite an open one, whether the village be in Punjab, Gujarat or Kerala. Remittances from their NRI sons and daughters have led to an unprecedented boom in wealth. In Kerala, near Thiruvalla, lies the Kumbanad-Kozhencheri belt which has a whopping `5,400 crore parked in bank deposits! In Karamsad village, remittances have topped `1,500 crore in banks and post offices.

Take the example of Kerala. Real estate development, the most visible sign of recent prosperity that provided jobs to 25 lakh people in the state is also roaring in Kochi after being hit by the Gulf crisis earlier this year.

Hoardings at city junctions announce the arrival of new luxury apartments, the kinds which are usually found in posh localities of metro cities. Big builders already have more plans. “A lot of investment had been planned there on the basis of projected demand linked to the expansion of the technology parks, and in homes,” says SN Raghuchandran Nair, president of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers. What has this done to villages? Well they look more like a wealthy suburb in a western country than an Indian village.

If this sounds unbelievable, wait till you hear about Asia’s richest village. With remittances of over `5,000 crore, people in Madhapar in Gujarat’s Kutch district, live life kingsize. Apart from cars like the Jaguar, or BMW 7-series, they are particularly enthused by the brand of cosmetics they use. Jadhavbhai Varsani, who runs a plush supermarket in the town, says that imported cosmetics, from L’Oreal to Dunhill and Diesel, sell like hot cakes.

Remittances via Western Union-postal dept double

Our Regional Bureau / Ahmedabad April 30, 2004

Inward remittances made to people in Gujarat through the partnership between Western Union Financial Services Inc and India Post have been doubling on a year-to-year basis for the past two years, Shekhar Nair, regional manager and business head, western India, said.

Remittances are increasing now after an initial phase when people were apprehensive of routing money through the arrangement to their relatives in Gujarat. Nair said, “Gujarat ranks among the top ten states as far as inward remittance is concerned. Among all our partners, India Post has emerged as the most sought-after for inward remittance. Remittance into Gujarat through our partnership with India Post has been doubling on a year-to-year basis.”

The country receives inward remittance worth around $16 billion every year. While Western Union has the largest share of this, a good amount is remitted through various banks. Western Union has also made a few banks its partners in money remittance. “People were a little reluctant to avail of this facility when the arrangement was launched in January 2001. People were apprehensive that being a government department, India Post would inform the Income Tax department about their transactions. However, things have changed rapidly now,” said Radhika Doraiswamy, chief post master general, Gujarat circle.

Doraiswamy said of the total 9,000 post offices in Gujarat, remittance is being given through 346 post offices, which are strategically located at various parts of the state. Throughout the country, Western Union operates through 14,500 locations, of which 4,500 are post office locations. It operates through 13 business partners in the country, of which the department of posts accounts for the maximum volume of remittance.

“Gujarat has always been at the forefront of money transfer. We aim to further strengthen the arrangement with the department of posts to gain more share of the market,” Nair said.

Some of the target audience that the company has identified for money transfer are persons who are working in foreign countries and have families back home, parents who send money to their children studying in India and tourists in India who require money at short notice. “We have built a system where money is transferred to the recipient within 15 minutes after being sent,” Nair said.

Dollar, Euro flow to Delhi, Gujarat; riyals, dinars to Kochi, Mumbai

23 Apr, 2010, 03.31AM IST, ET Bureau

MUMBAI: There is a distinct pattern in flow of remittances by the Indian diaspora. While Kochi and Mumbai receive more than 50% of remittances from the gulf region, the other major centres like Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru receive more than 60% of their remittances from Europe and North America together.

These were the findings of a survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of India on remittances by overseas Indians. The survey also indicates both Kochi and Mumbai receive bulk of their money at a monthly intervals compared to other cities. Kochi for instance gets 45% of its remittances at a monthly interval, while Mumbai receives 44% at monthly intervals. The national average for monthly receipts for remittances in 42%.

Explaining this trend, RBI has said that these variations reflect underlying migration patterns. The first phase of overseas migration picked up since the later seventies with the new oil finds and the resultant boom in the Persian Gulf region creating a huge demand for semi-skilled labour.

Migration was largely from Kerala and other part of the west coast including Mumbai then. The first phase of surge in remittances coincides with these developments.

However, since the nineties there has been a distinct change in the pattern of migration with the boom in the IT sector in North America and Europe. This resulted in large scale migration of skilled manpower to these regions. Many of them were from major southern states such as Karnataka and Hyderabad, where local IT companies were mushrooming then.

Both Punjab and Gujarat saw migration to Europe and US. The early migrants from Gujarat to East Africa also shifted their base to UK since the seventies, also resulted higher migration from Gujarat to UK. While for Migrants from Punjab, Canada is also a very popular destination.

Remittances to India in April-December 2009 at Rs 2.04lakh crore

May 05, 2010 05:49 PM  |  Moneylife Digital Team

The country had received around Rs2.34 lakh crore in remittances from Indian expatriates in the financial year 2008-09.

Notwithstanding the global financial meltdown, India received a huge amount of Rs2.04 lakh crore in remittances during April-December 2009. The country had received around Rs2.34 lakh crore in remittances from Indian expatriates in the financial year 2008-09.

Overseas Indian affairs minister Vayalar Ravi told the Lok Sabha that the country received $40,810 million (around Rs2,04,050 crore) during April to December 2009.

Remittances to India have been on the rise over the past few years and it has become one of the preferred destinations of global flow of remittances. The minister said that in 2006-07, the country had got $30,835 million in remittances while the amount increased to $43,508 million in 2007-08.

The Gulf region accounts for an average of 27% of the total remittance inflows into India, with major source countries being the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The Reserve Bank of India recently had said that North America continues to be the most important source of remittances to India despite its share in total remittances falling to 38% from 44% in 2006.