

Technical Assistant Sureshbhai Padvi

Village: Nani Kosbadi, Block Dharampur, District Valsad

Beekeeping has transformed 36 year old Sureshbhai Padvi's life. Before starting beekeeping in 2010, Sureshbhai was compelled to migrate from his remote hill-top village to the nearest town of Dharampur 45 km away for 7 months a year, seeking manual labour work. Having been educated upto Grade 6, and owning a small 5 acre rain-fed farm, opportunities for income generation to support his family of five were extremely limited. The rice and *nachni* (finger millet) he cultivated each monsoon season was barely sufficient to meet their food requirements.



Today, aided by the benefits that his bees provide, he no longer migrates. His financial security has improved significantly. With the income generated in 2010, he purchased an electric pump to source water from the river into his farm. In this way, he has reduced

dependence on the increasingly unpredictable rains and can cultivate multiple crops - sunhemp, *chana*, *tuvar*, - and mango and cashew trees. The quality and quantity of his crops has improved and he sells the honey harvested. **“Beekeeping is the best way,”** he states, **“you can't get any other advantage like it.”** Sureshbhai now uses his profits to add to his savings and to invest in highly-productive mango trees for his farm.

Sureshbhai's belief in beekeeping goes beyond financial returns. He believes in its impact and is committed to sharing his knowledge with his peers. What started out as an income generating activity has become a passion. He worked hard, quickly rising up the ranks in UTMT from beekeeper to Master Trainer and now Technical Assistant.



Sureshbhai holds village sessions to demonstrate how beekeeping works and motivates sceptical farmers, showing them the impact he has seen firsthand. He credits his evolving role at UTMT in helping him overcome his fear of approaching people. **“Now I can speak to anyone!”** he exclaims. He especially

enjoys travelling to UTMT's new project areas in Madhya Pradesh to train farmers, and showcasing the 14 beehives on his farm to visitors and guests from cities. Managing own bee boxes and teaching new beekeepers the ropes, Sureshbhai Padvi is a personification of the impact Under The Mango Tree hopes to continue creating.

