



AS IT IS

India's First Fully Solar Village Lights Up Lives

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Kesa Bhai Prajapati works with material from earth called clay to make containers like jugs and vases. Prajapati recently became much happier while making his products.

Prajapati is 68 years old and from the village of Modhera in western India's Gujarat state. He is happier because he has doubled the amount of clay goods he can make compared to a few months ago.

He creates his products on a machine called a potter's wheel.

In the past, he was producing less because he had to turn the wheel himself. He could not pay the cost of running an electric **motor**. The electricity bill was up to \$18.19 a month.

Now, however, his machine moves on solar power. Earlier this month, Prajapati's village was declared India's first village to run completely on solar power all the time. The village has around 6,500 people living there who mostly work with clay, clothes, shoes, or on farms.

Prajapati said, "Electricity has helped us to save time and produce more products."

India is the world's third-largest carbon dioxide releaser. But it aims to meet half of its energy demands from renewable **sources**, such as solar and wind, by 2030. That is an increase over its earlier goal of 40 percent. The government said it met that goal in December 2021.

The project in Modhera was financed by the federal and local governments for nearly \$10 million. It involved setting up over 1,300 **solar panels** on the tops of private and government buildings that were connected to a power plant.

The government buys surplus energy produced from the villagers if they do not use all of the amount that has been given to the household.

Praveen Bhai is 43 years old and works with clothes. With the extra money, he plans to buy a gas connection and stove. Many houses in the village cook food on wood-fired stoves which create smoke.

He said, "I had to teach the **kids** under the **streetlamp**. Now they will be able to study inside the house."

Modhera is known for its ancient Sun Temple which honors the sun god. And it is located in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state Gujarat. Gujarat will be holding elections later this year.

Modi said earlier this month, "For a **self-reliant** India of the 21st century, we have to increase such efforts related to our energy needs."

Reena Ben is 36 years old and sews clothes part time. The solar power has hugely helped her work.

She said, "When we got **access** to solar power, I bought an electric motor worth 2,000 rupees (\$24) to attach to the sewing machine. Now I am able to sew one or two more clothes daily."

I'm Jill Robbins.

Sunil Kataria reported this story for Reuters. Gregory Stachel adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Words in This Story

source – *n.* someone or something that provides what is wanted or needed

solar panel – *n.* a large, flat piece of equipment that uses the sun's light or heat to create electricity

kid – *n.* a son or daughter

lamp – *n.* a device that produces light

self-reliant – *adj.* confident in your own abilities and able to do things for yourself: not needing help from other people

access – *n.* a way of being able to use or get something

motor – *n.* a machine that produces motion or power for doing work

What do you think of this solar energy powered village?

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