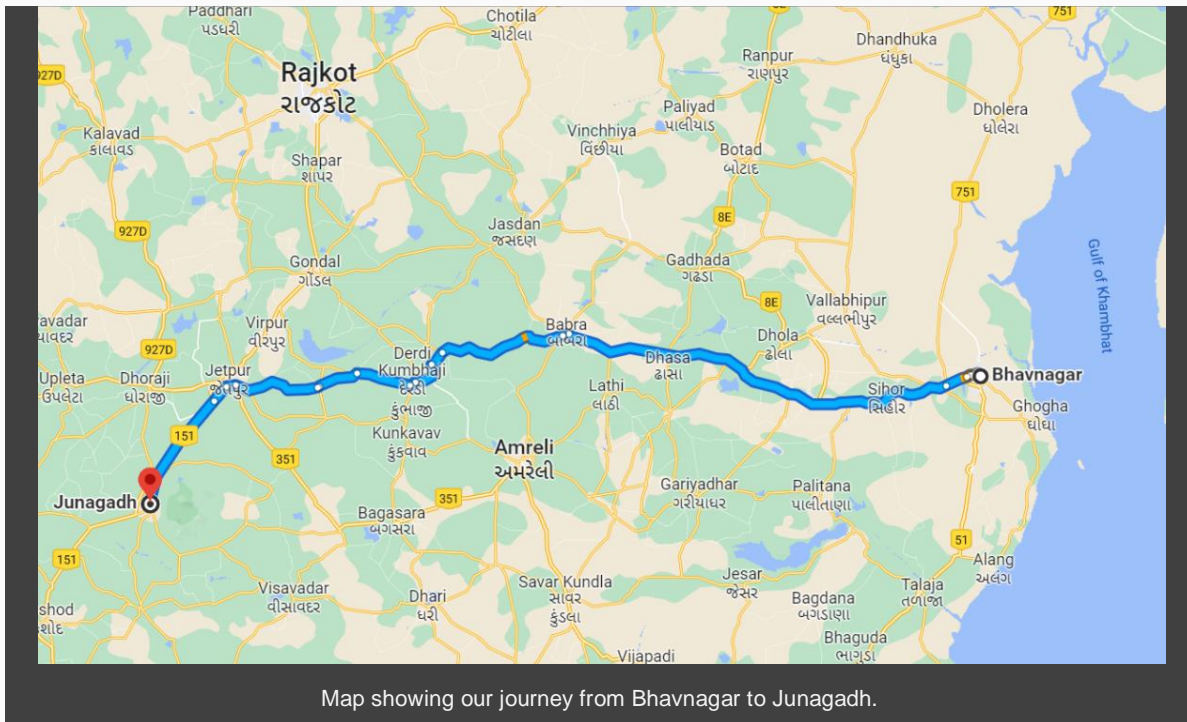




SHUKHAR FOUNDATION OUR JOURNEY

On the morning of the 18th, we left for a long drive from Bhavnagar to Junagadh.



Map showing our journey from Bhavnagar to Junagadh.

Over the last couple of years, during COVID, we did a lot of work moving our sponsored kids to different schools as parents constantly migrated in search of safety and employment. It was a very challenging time for everyone.

Many in India live as joint families, which was a challenging problem during COVID as members passed COVID to each other as they didn't have enough space for isolation. During this visit, we learned that almost every family had at least one member pass away due to COVID leaving the family vulnerable and with inadequate support.

During COVID, we took the risk of enrolling our children in one of the most expensive schools, The Podar International School. The tuition for each child costs us approximately \$2,000. However, we had no choice but to put ten boys into this school as there were few other qualified schools accepting children.

The most challenging part of enrolling them in school was finding a Hostel. We worked with the Junagadh Aga Khan hostel housing older boys to reopen a building wing to accommodate the younger boys.



Many of you may not know this, but this particular Hostel's construction was started by Razia's Grandfather Habib Mawji Nathani in 1932 and completed with the opening in 1943. Soon after that he passed away.

Razia expressed "How my life brought me back to where his spirit was and his love for educating children is what I have inherited."

Looking at our dire situation, they willingly helped us by renovating the property and accepting the children at the hostel. We acknowledge the Regional President, Mr. Navroz Gangani, who stood by us during this challenging period. We also hired a couple as caretakers for the hostel to help look after the boys. They work hand in hand with the hostel management.



Podar International School.

We were very impressed with this school. The Principal showed us around and ensured that we met our children in the classroom. We will never forget one sentence he told us “you have brought the children from ultra-poor families. These families would never have been able to walk through this gate.” All we can say is Shukhar.



Our children were not academically comparable, but the Principal and school teachers patiently worked with them to help them fit in academically and socially with their classmates. We can see that their education, English and self-confidence have improved since being at the school.



We had dinner with all the children. We also met the couple hired to help care for the younger boys and shared our expectations for their work with them.

Our next newsletter will be about our visit to Chitravad school.
