



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar"

# Dhordo

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**Why is in news?** PM hails Gujarat's Dhordo for being awarded as Best Tourism Village by UNWTO

As Dhordo in Gujarat made it to the **United Nations World Tourism Organization's best villages list**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the honour showcased the potential of Indian tourism.

A **global initiative** to highlight those **villages where tourism preserves cultures and traditions**, celebrates diversity, provides opportunities and safeguards biodiversity.

## Objective:

Reduce regional inequalities in income and development.

Fight rural depopulation.

Progress gender equality and women's and youth empowerment.

Enhance education and skills development.

## Need for this initiative:

Make tourism one of the drivers of rural development and community well-being.

Commit to sustainability in all its aspects -economic, social and environmental-.

Gain visibility and international recognition as an outstanding example of a rural tourism destination.

Be part of a global network of rural destinations.

## Requirements:

Low population density, and a maximum of 15,000 inhabitants.

Be located in a landscape with an important presence of traditional activities such as agriculture, forestry, livestock or fishing.

Share community values and lifestyle.

## Dhordo:

From Salty marshland to an Iconic destination of the Western Indian Subcontinent – **Dhordo, in the Rann of Kutch, has become the face of Gujarat's development.**

Tourism has projected this formerly nondescript village onto the **world tourism map**

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The village must be commended for its achievements especially considering that it faces environmental and geographic extremities making development in the area extremely challenging. Coupled with these hardships, the Bhuj earthquake of 2001, devastated this village even more.

The initiative of using tourism as a key device to showcase what otherwise has been impeding the general development of the locality has worked wonders.

Tourism was launched through Rann Utsav, a four-month festival whereby **a special tent city was created in the desertic land** with all the necessary amenities made available to tourists.

The economy is growing because the products are promoted nationally and internationally, and consumers are eager to engage with the resources as much as they want to learn the art of making them.

The **local natural and cultural resources are critical** hence why both community and government have taken the initiative to conserve and sustainably use its limited resources.

The state initiated the Heritage Tourism Policy that promotes conservation of old properties through PPP; the Gujarat Tourism Policy, which allows financial incentives for investors towards constructing Bhungas as lodgings.

The introduction of Rann Utsav has been one of the turning points for the village.

Rann Utsav is a 4 month long annual festival that takes place between November to February in the Tent City. When launched visitor footfall increased from 5,000 to 7,000.

This **one touristic event in the village** has had a catapultic effect on the rural society with incomes growing exponentially along with the self-esteem of the locals.

As tourism becomes the key economic driver of Dhordo, the development of the tertiary service sector has been significant. The creation of Banks, ATMs and advances in digital transaction have greatly increased.

Additionally, at present the village allows a 100% coverage of digital cashless transactions through Gpay and PhonePe to make payments more accessible for tourists.

Traditional homes called **Bhungas**, are used by locals and are also promoted as a tourist lodging offering an insight into the local experiences.

**Bhungas are circular mud huts**, which withhold the integral character of Gujarat's Kutch desert regions.

These dwellings are **climate resistant and have immense structural stability** if hit by earthquakes. Additionally, they defend against cyclonic winds and sandstorms.

Following a devastating earthquake in 1819, the inhabitants of Kutch devised the circular design of bhungas, which has been in use for nearly 200 years.

Bhungas continued to stand strong even after the devastating earthquake of 2001.