

# 2022-23

## Annual Report



**PEOPLES TRAINING & RESEARCH CENTRE**

43, Shrinathdham Duplex, Dinesh Mill - Urmi Road, VADODARA - 390 007  
Telefax - 0265 - 2345576, Email : ptrcvdr@yahoo.co.in, Website : [www.peoplestraining.org](http://www.peoplestraining.org)

## **Summary:**

The year started with intimation from the Department of foreign affairs, Ministry of Home that our request for renewal of registration under the FCR Act has been granted. We then initiated actions to submit a proposal to the prospective donor. It took 6 months for us to get the proposal accepted, sign the agreement and receive the amount. We proposed working to locate silicosis victims in Rajkot, Morbi and Surendranagar districts to HC Foundation, UK.

We then initiated a process to recruit the required manpower in these three districts. We already have one full time worker in Surendranagar. It took a good deal of time to find a suitable person to work in Rajkot and Morbi. By the end of the year, we were not able to stabilise the project in Rajkot and partly in Surendranagar.

In April - May, we helped Silicosis victims Associations in Than and Dhrangadhra to submit a memorandum to the District collector. A delegation of the victims from Than, Dhrangadhra, Morbi and Khambhat visited the Minister, Labor and Employment, Government of Gujarat and then the Principal Secretary, L & E. The Secretary gave us a patient hearing and assured us that the demands that we raised would be given sympathetic consideration.

We continued to follow up in the complaints filed before the National Human Rights Commission. We filed two new complaints during the year. On 21st May, 2022 we wrote to the Business and Human Rights Committee of the NHRC. We filed a new complaint about the 12 deaths and 32 cases of silicosis affected in the Surendranagar district (1017/6/24/2022). In response to our complaint no.1067/6/3/2020, after the intervention by the Commission, Smt. Savitaben Chimanbhai Vaghri was paid Rs. 1 lakh on 07.10.2022 and an FD of Rs. 2 lakh has also been made in her name

We helped victims in these districts get organized. Representatives of Than and Dhrangadhra victims Associations visited the Collector, Surendranagar and presented a memorandum. A delegation of silicosis victims from Khambhat, Surendranagar and Morbi visited the Minister, Labor and Employment as well as the Principal Secretary, L & E. We tried to get an appointment with the sitting MLA as well as the BJP leader but failed.

A total 366 workers were contacted in a year out of which 29 new patients were identified in Surendranagar and 12 in Morbi districts. During the year, 8 deaths were recorded. 13 families were helped to claim the financial assistance. 4 victim meetings were conducted in Dhrangadhra which were attended by 38 participants.

We also continued helping workers covered under the ESI Act to represent their problems and complaints details of which you can find in the report.

During the year we received Rs. 27,58,268/- as grant, donation and interest and we spent Rs. 07,53,197 on the objectives of the organization.



### **Our Offices in Khambhat and Baroda:**

Our long stint of working in Khambhat came to an end in this year. After 2017, when we closed the day care centre and the OPD run by Sri Krishna Hospital and PS Medical College, Karamsad, it had increasingly become difficult for us to operate as the resources were dwindling. We had to vacate the office in Shakarpur and then we were forced to shift to the places one after another at a rent three times more than what we were paying in Shakarpur. Past 4 years we did not have any employed staff. We had been trying with the Khambhat Municipality to get a space owned by them without any rent, but we failed. We had been pushed to the wall now and decided to vacate the office. We finally vacated the office in June. We moved the furniture and literature etc to an office in Baroda.

In December we had to vacate our Baroda office. It was rented to us without any rent by Sri Ramesh Patel. On October, 22 he expired and then the building was sold out, which required vacating. We shifted belongings to a newer place.

### **Support for the workers:**

For workers who have been exposed to silica for a long time but have not yet been diagnosed with silicosis or have just been diagnosed with TB, or have taken frequent TB medicine courses and are still not recovering, we planned to take them to Rajkot Civil for diagnosis. In April and May 8 workers were sent to the Rajkot Civil Hospital for diagnosis. They were accompanied by our field officer in Surendranagar.



When we came to know about the problem faced by a silicosis sufferer in Surendranagar we helped him pay for the deposit of the Oxygen cylinder. We then gave him financial support of Rs.1000/- per month for some time. In October, we posted his problem on our Face book, which attracted comments from the friends. We wrote about his monthly financial need for oxygen. One of the friends offered to arrange for Oxygen Concentrator. We accepted the offer. We were put up in contact with a dedicated Red Cross volunteer who arranged for the Concentrator. Relatives of the patient arranged to transport the machine to Surendranagar from Ahmadabad.

In Dhrangadhra, when we visited a patient, we observed that the toilet was Indian style. It was difficult for the patient to squat. We immediately offered him a toilet chair. In December it was delivered to him.

We came to know about a patient who is very young and left disabled to earn money for his family and had to migrate from Morbi to Surendranagar. He had his own house in Morbi. The doctor treating him advised and warned him that the ambient air in Morbi is so polluted that it will further damage his lungs. In Surendranagar he had to rent a house when he is not able to earn his living. We introduced him to another organization which supports needy families for monthly ration.

### **Nikshay Mitra:**

When the Health and Family welfare Ministry, Government of India launched the Nikshay Mitra website to help TB patients to get nutrition support and appealed to people to come forward to help TB patients, we committed to helping 2 TB patients in Surendranagar district to provide nutrition support. We requested the TB centre in Than to help us identify two needy patients. We were given the names of two such patients. We supplied them with a nutrition kit in March and we shall continue supplying them for the next five months.

**Meeting of Advisory committee in Rajkot:**

We held meeting with our advisory committee in Rajkot on 2 October. We briefed them about the project and our needs. We included 2 new members in the committee.

**Placement of students:**

5 students of Masters in Labor Welfare, Gujarat University were assigned to us in February for one month placement. We introduced the subject to them and then they were assigned a project. They were assigned a project to work on Occupational hazards of agriculture workers. They collected data in Ahmadabad and Gandhinagar districts and prepared a report. They developed insight into the hazards faced by the agriculture workers at work.

**Online meeting organised:**

At present, there is no OPD available for diagnosis of occupational diseases in any public hospital in Gujarat. We have been representing with the Health department for a long time. On 11 March, we organised an online meeting which was attended by a small group of experts who exchanged their views on the subject. A report was prepared and shared with a larger group.

**Visits:**

In March, we visited the Medical college in Rajkot and met with the head of the PSM department and others to introduce ourselves. We also visited the DISH Office and met with the in-charge Dy. Director as well as the Certifying surgeon.

**Challenges:**

When we secured resources in August, 2022 to work in Rajkot, Morbi and Surendranagar to identify victims of silicosis and work with them for their welfare and rights, challenge before us was to appoint 3 field officers - one each in three districts.

We initially took it lightly and thought that it is an easy task. It proved to be otherwise. In September, October, November and January we interviewed several candidates. Several were selected but they did not join. Those who joined and were given training either left us shortly or we had to ask them that they were not suitable. We gave an advertisement in the Rajkot daily in December and again in February. We travelled to Morbi and Surendranagar to find suitable candidates.



In February, we organised 2-day training for 4 candidates at Patdi. Training was given by Jagdish Patel, Amulya Nidhi and Ram Manohar Vikas. Only one out of 4 has continued with us.

**Representation:**

We made written representations as per the details in the table below.

| No | Addressed to  | Date     | Purpose   |
|----|---|----------|---|
| 1  | Minister, Labor & Employment, Government of Gujarat | 22/04/22 | Seeking appointment   |
| 2  | Minister, Labor & Employment, Government of Gujarat | 25/04/22 | Comply with the Supreme Court order   |
| 3  | Principal Secy., L&E, GoG                           | 27/04/22 | Express gratitude for the meeting as well as confirming the discussion and promises |
| 4  | President, Indian Asso. of Occu. Health (IAOH)      | 24/06/22 | Amendment in ESI Act  |
| 5  | Principal Secy., L&E, GoG                           | 16/08/22 | Thanking for payment to Ms.Savita Chimam as directed by the NHRC in our complaint   |

|    |   |          |  |
|----|---|----------|--|
| 6  | Minister, Labor & Employment, Government of Gujarat | 19/08/22 | Request to look after the welfare of the silicosis victims in his constituency - Morbi.            |
| 7  | Director General, BIS, New Delhi                    | 17/02/23 | Asbestos standards   |
| 8  | MLA, Khambhat                                       | 14/03/23 | Request to represent non-compliance of Supreme Court order in the Assembly.                        |
| 9  | Labor Commissioner, GoG                             | 28/03/23 | Amending the resolution to give financial assistance to the NoKs of the workers dying of silicosis |
| 10 | Principal Secy., L&E, GoG                           | 28/03/23 | Requesting compliance of the Supreme Court order and NHRC recommendations in 351/6/3/2010          |

1. On 4-04-22, memorandum was given to the Collector Surendranagar Sri Keyur Sampat by Dhrangadhra workers and victims. The memorandum was signed by 87 workers. It was handed over by the representatives including Dharmesh Kanzariya, Chaturbhai Makwana, Ranjanben Keshabhai Parmar, Bhavnaben Lakum and Deepak Rathod. The memorandum included demands like complying Supreme Court order in PIL 110/2006 and drafting a policy for rehabilitation of silicosis patients as recommended by the NHRC.
2. Delegation of silicosis victims visited Gandhinagar on 26-04-23 to visit the Minister, Labor and Employment. We were directed to meet the Labor Secretary, who heard us patiently and assured us to make the scheme for financial assistance liberal.



3. On 05/05/23 memorandum was presented by the Than victims to the Collector, Surendranagar. Memorandum was handed over by the representatives including Mukesh Mahaliya, Dilip, Manjuben and 6 others. Except for Deepak Rathod and Mukesh Mahaliya others were not allowed to meet the collector. Deepak and Mukesh were not even asked to sit on the chair.



4. On 04/05/23 we wrote to ICMR with regard to an article published in the Times of India on Biomarker for Silicosis.
5. On 29/06/22 we visited the Ministry of Labor and Employment and represented before the Dy. Secretary, Labor and Employment as well as the Gujarat Rural Workers Welfare Board.
6. On 22 November, the Than Silicosis victims association gave a memorandum to the Aam Admi party candidate for Gujarat Assembly election

#### **NHRC Complaints:**

Complaints filed before the National Human Rights Commission between 2019, and 2020 for assistance to 29 workers who died due to silicosis in Surendranagar, Rajkot and Morbi districts and 57 workers who fell victim to silicosis have progressed slowly during the year. In the year 22-23 when we filed two new complaints, the total number went up to 41 and 88 respectively. In all 9 complaints have been filed so far out of which 3 have been closed after giving recommendations.

The details of the new complaints lodged before the Commission is as under

| No | Complaint no   | District      | Nos. of deaths | Living with silicosis | Date of complaint |
|----|----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | 798/6/3/2022   | Anand         | 01             | 0                     | 20-05-22          |
| 2  | 1017/6/24/2022 | Surendranagar | 13             | 29                    | 14-06-22          |
|    | Total          |               | 14             | 29                    |                   |

On 20-05-22 we filed a complaint of Fatema, widow of Akbarbhai Rasulbhai Malek, who was an agate polisher and died of silicosis on 22/07/21. When the family claimed financial assistance, they were paid Rs.1/- lakh in March, 2022. The complaint was to claim the remaining amount of Rs.3/- lakh. The complaint was assigned registration no.798/6/3/2022. In this complaint, the Commission sought a reply from the Government on 13/02/23 giving a one month time period. In 1017/6/24/2022 the Commission sought a reply from the Government on 31/03/23.

In complaint no.1217/6/24/2019, Collector, Surendranagar had submitted its report to the Commission on 11/11/20. The Commission expressed its dissatisfaction with the reply. On 15/7/21, the Commission communicated to Collector to submit a detailed report on the action taken. In response, the collector

submitted a reply prepared by DISH on 22/03/22. The Commission sought our response which we submitted on 20/06/22. On 20/07/22, the Commission wrote to the DISH, ESIC, Collector and the Chief Secretary, Government of Gujarat to submit report in response to the reply filed by us.

In complaint no. 671/6/24/2020 involving 12 silicosis deaths, on 22/03/22 the Superintendent of Police, Surendranagar confirmed 8 deaths in their report. On 31/03/22 the Commission sought a reply from the Collector and the Chief Secretary.

In complaint no. 624/6/24/2020, the Commission closed the complaint. The complaint was about compensation from ESIC for late Panchabhai Olakiya. Up on the intervention by the Commission the ESIC sent their officers for inquiry on 12/10/20 and again on 17/03/22 during which the family submitted available documents to the visiting officers to process the claim. Subsequently the family was invited to present the case before the Special Medical Board held on 29/08/22. The family members did not attend the Board. The ESIC then reported to the Commission. The Commission in its hearing on 31/10/22 closed the complaint with this note, "Hence, the complainant may be informed to contact the ESIC Regional Office, Ahmadabad at the earliest in connection with his claim. The complainant may also be informed that if they are aggrieved by the decision taken by the ESIC office relating to their claim, they are at liberty to approach the appropriate forum for seeking further relief." We contacted the family and counselled to approach ESIC but in vain.

In complaint no. 1067/6/3/2020, the Commission, vide its proceedings dated 04.4.2022 directed the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Gujarat to disburse the additional amount of Rs.3 lakh to Smt. Savitaben Chimanbhai Vaghri as recommended by the Commission and submit the compliance report along with

proof of payment. Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of Gujarat, Labour Skill Development & Employment Department, in response, vide letter dated 10.10.2022 has now submitted that as per the recommendation of Commission, Smt. Savitaben Chimanbhai Vaghri has been paid Rs. 1 lakh vide cheque no.518176 dated 07.10.2022 and an FD of Rs. 2 lakh has also been made in her name.



#### **Visits:**

\*On 13/14 September visited Godhara, Jhalod, Khambhat, and Petlad with Hridayesh Joshi for documentary on Silicosis

#### **Helping workers to get ESI services:**

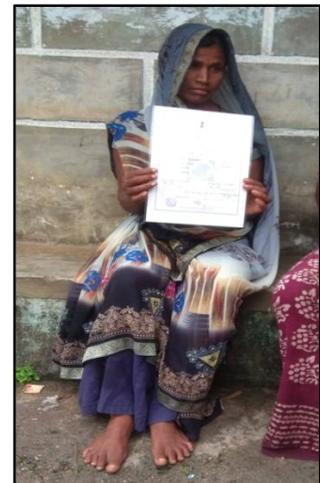
\* Dharmesh Bhoi, IP no.3811644340 met with an accident at work on 19/02/20 in Rockmen factory, Asoj in Vadodara district. He was referred to an tied up private hospital in Vadodara by ESIC. While he was

under treatment for severe burn injuries, lock down was declared due to COVID. The hospital, forced the patient to get discharged. The family of the patient shifted him to a private hospital far away. When his wounds had healed and the COVID had come under some control, he was again shifted to the tied up hospital for plastic surgery. After the surgery, the patient was told that the hospital contract with the ESIC covers only one dressing and for the second and third dressing he will have to go to ESI hospital or pay for it at the same hospital. Looking at the condition of the patient, the family got the dressing done by the tied up hospital with charge. Ultimately, when the patient was discharged, the family had spent Rs.6 lakh. We then represented unsuccessfully with the ESCI for reimbursement. We made representation at Suvidha Samagam meeting on 24/06/22 and then written submissions with the State Medical Officer on 10/06/22 and 03/07/22. Now the patient has challenged the decision in the ESI Court at Vadodara.

\* On 07/10/22 we wrote a letter to the Manager, Panigate local office requesting him to provide us information on the accidents that may have reported to his office by the contractors of M/s.Chopra Ind. and M/s.Amar Auto where, it is alleged by the workers, that the frequency of the power press accidents is very high. We did not receive any reply.

\* On 5/11/22 we filed a complaint before the Jt.Director, Sub Regional Office, ESIC, Vadodara. In our complaint we wrote that the employees of the Nayara petrol pump in the Akota area have not been issued identity cards under ESI Act and they are, as a result, deprived of the ESI services. The I-cards were issued after the complaint was filed.

\*Jashwant Manji Dalor worked as a labourer in quartz crushing unit in Godhara during 2002-2004. He contracted silicosis. NIOH experts diagnosed him to have silicosis. He then claimed PDB with the Kalol local office in Gujarat but he did not receive any reply. He then filed complaint before the ESI Court in Vadodara which delivered order in his favour in 2015. The ESIC appealed in the Gujarat High Court against this order but the Court dismissed the appeal on 02/07/2018. ESIC then paid him the arrears and later PDB each month till he died on 24 March 2021. Jashwantbhai is survived with his wife Kaliben, son Ajay (23), daughter Shital (21) and Sima (18). Kaliben applied for dependent benefit on 21/07/2021 with local office Kalol (Dist.Panchmahal). We followed up with the Sub-regional office in Vadodara. ESIC asked for medical papers which the family did not have. We made representation in 2021 and continued in 2022. We wrote to the SRO on 19/04/22 and 09/05/22. We made representation with the DG, ESIC on 30/04/22 to make changes in the rules for claiming dependent benefits in case of death due to occupational disease when the patient was being paid PDB.



Kaliben with Silicosis certificate of her late husband

\* Hitesh Patel IP no.3810173232 met with an accident at work while working in Gulebo Engg Co. Halol. He was taken to the ESI hospital which referred him to the private tied up hospital. When the treatment was over, he was left with a disability. The Medical Board examined him and gave him 0% disability. We



represented his case in the Suvidha Samagam meeting where they expressed their inability to intervene. IP has now filed a petition before the Medical Appeal Tribunal.

\* Allarakha, IP no.11097301 had met with an accident at work and his disability was assessed to be provisional 30% till 30/03/23. He then presented again and again before the Board but on one or the other pretext, his disability was not finalised. After our representation in person on 16/09/22 his problem was solved.

\* Dinesh Bhaktiram Chauhan worked for a ceramic factory in Wadhwan for a long time and contracted silicosis. When we visited him, we came to know that he was covered under the ESI Act for initial few years and was issued an I-card under the Act. He had availed services from ESI dispensary also. We encouraged him to claim for disability benefit and helped him draft the claim. We also helped him submit it to the Local Office, Surendranagar. We then followed up with the LoM by visiting the office in December and again in March.

#### **Attended/Visited/Lecture/Organized**

1. Attended program organised on the occasion of International Workers Memorial Day, 28 April by Bandhkam Mazdur Sangathan, Ahmedabad.
2. Attended and spoke at seminar on LG Gas leak on 8 May at Vishakhapattanam. On 6 May we held meeting with the Union representatives of the Vizag Steel Plant workers on OHS.
3. Attended JSA National Coordination committee meeting on 14 and 15 May at New Delhi
4. Participated in a Fact Finding of accidents in Dahej Ind. Area with as a team member on 28/07/22
5. We delivered a lecture at Granth Goshthi on autobiography of Alice Hamilton on 06/08/22.
6. Attended WPC meeting at Jaipur on 30/31 August and spoke on provisions of the ESI Act and the experience.



7. Being Secretariat of OEHNI network, we organised annual meeting of the members on 18-19-20/September at Ahmedabad.
8. Attended WPC meeting at Delhi on 23 & 24 September.
9. Attended HCF meeting at Jaipur with Vikas on 16 -18 November.
10. Delivered lecture on Ethical issues in OH with IJME Students on 19 November.
11. Attended CRCG meeting at National Law University, Gandhinagar on 20/21 January.

12. Delivered lecture on OHS in PUCL Baroda online meeting on 21 March.

### Participated / Attended / Presentation:

We attended 17 online ANROEV/ABAN meetings during the year. ANROEV is Asian Network of Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims while ABAN is Asian Ban Asbestos Network. In the 28 September ANROEV meeting we made a presentation on Occupational Lung Diseases.

We attended 3 meetings of the Working People's Coalition in which we helped them on a survey on ESI services. We even drafted a questionnaire for them.

We attended two meetings of TB Yaar - a new network of the Nikshay Mitras to share experiences with the scheme. We attended two meetings with Safe in India Foundation.

We made a presentation on biomarkers for silicosis diagnosis at AIHA webinar on 28 September.

### PTRC in the press:

1. News Channel/Documentary:
2. BBC story on Khamabhat aired on 07/11/22 (<https://www.bbc.com/gujarati/articles/cd1g2lvmlldzo>)
3. SUNO India podcast on Heat wave
4. Documentary by Hridayesh Joshi for News Laundry titled "सांसों में सीलीका " aired on 27/11/22 (<https://hindi.newslaundry.com/2022/11/25/documentary-silica-in-my-breathe>)
5. GPL BARODA debate on industrial accidents in wake of explosion and fire at Deepak Nitrite in Nandesari on 3 June 2023
6. Interviewed by French Radio 31/01/23

### Media:

| No | Name          | Date     | Title   |
|----|---------------|----------|---|
| 1  | SANDESH       | 06/04/22 | सांस्कृतिक वारसानुं जतन करता कारीगरोने सीलीकोसीसनुं जोषम  |
| 2  | Gujarat Today | 08/04/23 | राष्ट्रीय मानव अधीकार पं ये राज्यना मु प्र्य सचीवने साएसामां लीधा   |
| 3  | Counterview   | 09/04/22 | West Bengal silicosis policy a welcome step with few aberrations  |
| 4  | SANDESH       | 06/05/22 | सीरामीक कामदारोने राज्य वीमा कायदानो लाभ अपावडावो   |
| 5  | Divya Bhaskar | 06/05/22 | थानना सीरामीक कारखानामां काम करता कामदारो छ.अस.आछन लाभथी वं चीत   |
| 6  | OWSA.IN       | 25/04/22 | Stonewalling occupational health concerns of agate stone workers  |
| 7  | Deccan Herald | 02/05/22 | Workers' woes: Govt. must address occupational safety issues urgently ( <a href="https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/workers-woes-govt-must-address-occupational-safety-issues-urgently-1105625.html">https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/workers-woes-govt-must-address-occupational-safety-issues-urgently-1105625.html</a> ) |
| 8  | Counterview   | 05/06/23 | Industrial fires, blasts are new normal in 'vibrant' Gujarat: Disasters in motion?  |

|    |                  |          |   |
|----|------------------|----------|---|
|    |                  |          | ( <a href="https://www.counterview.net/2022/06/industrial-fires-blasts-are-new-normal.html">https://www.counterview.net/2022/06/industrial-fires-blasts-are-new-normal.html</a> )   |
| 9  | BBC              | 30/10/22 | એ બીમારી જેને કારણે મોતનો કારોબાર કહેવાતા ખંભાતના અકીક ઉદ્યોગમાં કારીગરો મરી રહ્યા છે   |
| 10 | Gujarat Guardian | 29/01/23 | સુરતના કાપડ ઉદ્યોગમાં મજૂરોની પરીસ્થિતી   |
| 11 | Gujarat Guardian | 05/02/23 | સુરતના કાપડ ઉદ્યોગમાં મજૂરોની પરીસ્થિતી ભાગ- ૨  |
| 12 | Conterview       | 21/10/22 | Silicosis victims: Govt of Gujarat should take bold step to frame rehabilitation policy ( <a href="https://www.counterview.in/2022/10/silicosis-victims-govt-of-gujarat.html">https://www.counterview.in/2022/10/silicosis-victims-govt-of-gujarat.html</a> ) |

### Financial report\*:

During the year, the organization received Rs. 27,14,720 / - from grants and donations and Rs. 43,548 / - from interest. The organization spent Rs. 7,53,197.74 on the objectives.

We truly thank all our donors, supporters and sympathizers for believing in us and supporting our work.

### List of donors:

| No | Name                   | Place     | Amount   |
|----|------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1  | Dr.Jagdish Parikh      | Ahmadabad | 25,000/- |
| 2  | Sri Jaydev Goculgandhi | Mumbai    | 05,000/- |
| 3  | Ms Heena Goculgandhi   | Mumbai    | 05,000/- |
| 4  | Sri Subhash Pandya     | Vadodara  | 10,000/- |
| 5  | Ms.Vasuben Gokani      | Ahmadabad | 05,000/- |
| 6  | M/s.Sure Safety        | Vadodara  | 50,000/- |
| 7  | Sri Mohanbhai Barot    | Vadodara  | 500/-    |
| 8  | Sri Bakul Shah         | Vadodara  | 500/-    |
| 9  | Mrs. Neeta Dhavle      | Ahmadabad | 15,000/- |
| 10 | Sri Allarakha Makrani  | Dhantej   | 500/-    |

**Our team:**

During the year several faces kept changing. We have now Sri Rohit Patel assisting Niranjana Patel in accounts at Vadodara office as part-time accountant. At Surendranagar we have Sri Mansukh Olakiya as part time field officer and Sri Chirag Chavda as full time field officer at Morbi.