

SRISTI SAMMAN – 2016

**Pooja Paija,
Teacher
Dharampur, Gujarat**



Pooja Paija became the headmistress of Dharampur Primary School in 2012, and has greatly improved the facilities and learning outcomes. Since students found it difficult to cope with homework on their own, she initiated a community project where parents would take turns to host students at night and help them complete their coursework. She has

received recognition from IIM-A for instituting “Pustak Parab”, through which children were gifted books in their local language. Students at her school are encouraged to learn cooking, gardening, and other life skills. Honored by the Gujarat government, Pooja is widely appreciated for her contributions to education, social service, and literature.