PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP: A NUANCE, NUISANCE OR NECESSITY?

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Introduction
- Gujarat State is located in the western part of India.
- Total area of 196,000 sq. KM - 96,000 sq. KM cultivable
- 185 rivers of which only 8 perennial located in the southern part
- Almost 80% of the area is naturally underprivileged.
- Irrigation potential developed so far 24,000 sq. KM considering the potential to be created by Sardar Sarovar Project - one of the largest water resources projects of the world.
- Over 60,000 sq. KM of land rainfed - Total villages about 18,000 out of which 11,000 deprived of irrigation facilities.
- Rains are only seasonal - expected only during monsoon lasting only for about two to three months.

Whether To Go For a Paradigm Shift
- Until the rainfed land gets permanent irrigation facilities, can we afford to leave it precarious by?
- Is it feasible to provide irrigation through conventional major or medium irrigation projects everywhere?
- What will be the size of government machinery required to address these issues?
- Mini and micro irrigation projects implementation may be easier and faster-distributed resource management.

A Novel Nuance
- Government of Gujarat introduced in 2000 "Sardar Patel Participatory Water Conservation Programme" - checkdams to be constructed in large number on participatory basis - Checkdams are small bunds across rivulets or tributaries to rivers primary objective of conserving the rainwater.
- People's or NGO's contribution - 40% of the cost of the checkdam and Government's contribution 60% - normally 60% was the material cost and 40% the labor cost - Village dwellers and farmers were beneficiaries and were used to hard work on their farms could put their lab or component directly to construction of checkdams.
- Ground water recharge - no urban rights encroached.
- Basic intention to involve people in the process of deriving solution.

Experiment Proved Meaningful
- More than 13,000 checkdams were constructed in only one year - about 47,000 in five years.
- Ground water recharge - 138.47 MCM of runoff water during a drought year became possible - In a normal rainfall year with 2 overflows assumed, the generated storage capacity could be 307.71 MCM.
- Quality of ground water was found continuously improving and chlorides were found to be reducing.
- Benefits to agriculture - in drought year income increased by 7% - where no checkdams, decline of 23%.
- Impact on land prices - Average price hike of Rs. 19,244 per bigha, i.e. per 2027 sq. m. was estimated.

Conclusion
- For nations with limited resources and high population, distribution of resources and thereby prospects to prosperity is the problem and administration becomes really very difficult.
- Private-public partnership also helps in evolution of a more mature and harmonious public society imbued with the possibility of ownership in order to be capable of contributing in the crisis solving efforts of a democratic government.