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Small dams enhance ecology in India's drylands

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India is one among the top 10 most water-starved nations of the world due to declining water availability and escalating demand. India's rainfall is concentrated during monsoons and some parts Western Ghats receive heavy rainfall even reaching up to 6 inches daily, causing extensive damage. However, most of the rainwater cannot be harvested for later use, owing to inadequate storage facilities. Global water use has tripled since the 1950s and policy makers and politicians have met this increasing water demand by building mega dams. Can mega dams solve chronic water shortages, poverty and future food security? What about building numerous small check dams in rivers? Can they enhance sustainable development in rural areas? A small non-profit agency has assisted villages in the drylands of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh States to build cost-effective check dams in rivers to harvest rainwater for three decades. Water saved through the check dams not only transformed the infertile drylands into productive agricultural lands, but also increased ground water recharge ultimately benefiting the environment. This model has remarkable potential to be replicated within India and also in other developing countries to reduce irrigation water stress and river water conflicts.

Biography

Govindasamy Agoramoorthy currently serves as Distinguished Research Professor at Tajen University, Taiwan. His research ranges from biodiversity conservation to sustainable development and he has carried out field research in Asia, Africa, and South America. He is Editor-In-Chief of the American Journal of Social issues & Humanities and Consulting Editor of Journal of Environmental Biology. Between 1989 and 1993, he served as Visiting Scientist at Smithsonian Institution, USA. He is also Tata Visiting Chair at Sadguru Foundation, India where he reviews water and natural resources management projects. He has authored 15 books, 50 book chapters, and 200 scientific articles in international journals with impact factor.

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