

Modi's 'Sujalam Sufalam' scores high

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Sujalam Sufalam, billed as world's largest water conservation scheme, launched by then Chief Minister Narendra Modi, achieved a milestone with Gujarat Government assisted by social organisations and people's participation, desilted 13,000 ponds and check dams and 32 rivers across the State. The monumental work was achieved in a month's time that aimed to create an additional storage capacity of 11 lakhs cubic feet rain water.

Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, who led the entire exercise in the State told *The Pioneer*, "The works that remained incomplete in the Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan will be completed by June 8. Rupani was upbeat as the State-wide desilting of water holding bodies, will result in 11,000-lakh cubic feet of additional water storage capacity and will help the State accelerate at double speed. Since monsoon is expected to arrive in the State by mid-June, this mass scale task was started with seamless coordination from all the agencies and stake holders to



ensure that rain water was not allowed to go waste and was stored in the dug up water bodies".

"Narmada river, which is lifeline of Gujarat has 48 percent less water, hence we decided to embark upon to generate awareness among the people water conservation and how it was imperative to rejuvenate our water bodies and rivers", the Chief Minister said.

"The campaign vindicates the adage that water is life;

water is the basis of development, a measure of development — useful for all flora and fauna", Rupani said.

"The campaign undertaken with people's cooperation has generated huge quantity of loose soil/clay that will help increase agricultural production. Having launched the country's biggest water conservation campaign, Gujarat has emerged as the leader. It entailed cleansing the state's 5,500 km long canal network,

- ❑ Under this scheme, the target to conserve the conventional water resources and to deepen around 13,000 ponds and check dams has been achieved.
- ❑ This abhiyan targeted to create an additional 11,000 lakh sq. ft capacity of rain water storage.
- ❑ For Sujlam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan, more than 4000 JCB Hitachi Machines were used for soil excavation. In addition to this, around 8000 more tractors and dumpers were also used for this purpose.
- ❑ All the fertile soil coming out as a result of the deepening of ponds and check-dams was given to the general public without a single penny of royalty.
- ❑ The primary focus of this campaign was to revive 32 rivers having length of 340 km in 30 districts of Gujarat.
- ❑ Even a small pond construction in Kosmadi of around 27 hectares will resolve the water problem of around 25 villages.
- ❑ Canals having length of approx. 5400 km and small water channels with around 580 km of length were cleaned in this water conservation drive.
- ❑ Furthermore, Gujarat Government carried out around 10,750 water conservation and protection works under MNREGA Scheme.
- ❑ Entire drive was also aimed at checking soil erosion and formation of gully. Since water will be available to the farmers throughout the year, it will increase agricultural production and rural livelihood. It has created 1449 water harvesting structures with minimum water storage capacity of 44,09,950 Cubic meters and generation of ground water recharge of approximately 13,22,983 Cubic meters.

including Ahmedabad's Kharicut Canal" Rupani said.

Responding to allegations leveled by the main opposition Congress of ₹2,400-crore corruption in the entire exercise as against this campaign's total worth ₹200-crore, Rupani retorted, "Congress leaders see corruption even in dreams or else would not leveled such baseless charge. They had leveled similar charges of 'purchase scandal' in grass 'distributed free' in Banaskantha. It is no pre-poll campaign but pro-people initiative, keeping the requirements of future

generations", he added.

The campaign, which began with 527 JCB machines and 2,000 tractors-dumpers with the involvement of 27,000 workers, now deploys 4,600 JCB machines and 16,000 tractors-dumpers and employs 3-lakh workers. "Water conservation campaign with people's cooperation to prove as philosopher's stone for Gujarat's development", Rupani said.

"The primary motive behind this gigantic drive across all the 33 districts of Gujarat was to increase the

rate of groundwater recharge through artificial techniques along with the natural stream network in the upstream and revive the water bodies in the downstream. It also achieved its objective to recharge aquifers and ground water and maintain the flow of surface water in targeted rivers for a longer period", the Chief Minister said.

Sujalam Sufalam scheme, kick started by the Chief Minister in Kasvav village of Tapi district culminated at Dhundhuka of Ahmedabad district.