Privatization of Water

What is the issue?

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Due to lacunae in the urban water sector strong push is being made for water privatisation.

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What are the problems of privatization?

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- The problems in water sector include losses, inefficiency, unreliability, corruption, issues of quality, and mismanagement.
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- But the international experience shows that the privatisation of water, privatization has never sustained over a long period of time in a comprehensive manner, especially in the urban water sector.
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- Mostly privatisation of some small sub-sector like water distribution is done and the rest of the issues are still kept in the public sector.
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- Management of water supply is an issue of rights and a basic need, as acknowledged by the judiciary.
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- Moreover, water is embedded in the ecosystem. Any attempt to see water only as a commodity is bound to have multiple disruptive consequences.
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- The promise of creating competition that will benefit the consumer due to privatisation has not been delivered in the power sector.
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- The power sector is not only a monopoly but refuses to submit itself to public audit.
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What should be done?

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- It does not address the real problem in the water sector, which is a need for better governance.
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- We need democratic, transparent, accountable and participatory governance in a bottom-up approach, on each aspect of the urban water sector where water privatisation is advocated.
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- Only those who can must be made to pay.
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Source: The Hindu

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