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**HEADLINE:** Guj's port development policy among the best in Asia: study

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**BODY:**

Gujarat's port policy, which was announced in 1995 and has encouraged participation of private players in the port sector, is one of the best public policies in Asia, according to a study.

"Gujarat has implemented various forms of port liberalisation since the 1990s. This has helped it become the country's fastest growing state and its economy has grown at an average of 10.14 per cent per year from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2006," a research study by United States of America based Cato Institute stated.

The state's "Port Policy Statement of December 1995" spelt out an explicit strategy of port-led development, including the creation of 10 completely new, world-class ports, in which private-sector participation would play a large role, it said.

Gujarat has a number of private ports like the Adani group owned-Mundra port, Pipavav port and private jetties developed by industries like Reliance.

Giving comparative figures of cargo handling by the ports, the study argued that ports developed by the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), also known as minor ports, have handled largest volume of cargo in the country.

"In the fiscal year ending 2007, Gujarat's minor ports handled 123.6 million tons of cargo, compared with the 53.0 million tons handled by its only major port (Kandla)," said the study, adding that its minor ports accounted for 123.6 million tons of the total of 171.9 million tons handled by all such ports nationwide. "Another study estimates that the state represents 20.87 per cent of India's exports and 20.11 per cent of imports. This highlights the extent to which Gujarat has harnessed international trade for economic development," observed the study by Cato institute.

According to projections made by Credit Rating Information Services of India Ltd (a subsidiary of Standard and Poors), additional port capacity to be created by 2020 will be 127.57 million tons at Sikka, 97.86 million tons at Mundra, 45.23 million tons at Pipavav, and 37.07 million tons at Dahej.

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