Good Governance in India: Issues and Challenges

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**ARTICLE DETAILS**

**ABSTRACT**

This Paper aims to sketch the concept of good governance especially in Indian context. The basic impact of good governance over the countrymen has also been elaborated herein. As a matter of fact the challenge for the society as a whole is to create a system of governance that promotes and supports human development—especially for the poorest and most marginal. Good governance, according to the author, means securing justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services. The paper deals with these subjects in detail and also analyses administrative and political faultiness. It identifies criminalization of politics and corruption as two major challenges. It also highlights shifts in meaning and content of national values of the freedom movement particularly those of nationalism, democracy, secularism, non-alignment, and mixed economy and its impact on the nitty gritty of administration as well as on the intellectual buildup of the organs of the Indian State. The paper lists several areas of concern that need to be addressed energetically and calls for synergy of efforts between government, the market and the civil society. Innovations are generally taking place. There are, however, two areas that need special attention by innovators, namely, economic empowerment of women and livelihood programmes based on local resources and upgraded skills. The need is to formulate a national strategy that accords primacy to the Gandhian principle of ‘antodaya’ without sacrificing growth and by making instruments of State accountable for good governance.

**INTRODUCTION**

India is a country of great diversity with varied culture, dissimilar lifestyles, languages and population, and states having different levels of social and economic development. We are entering into an era of capitalist innovation. It leaves a lot of people out and the market laws even threaten to dominate natural environment. But as luck would have it, fear of losing control of the circumstances and routines of one’s daily life and growing inequity is bringing the State back. We are getting increasingly linked to the global market, good governance that people need in order to improve their lives depends, in a larger measure, on government activities and approaches.

**Meaning:**

As a student of political science, one was taught that the essential features of the State included: (i) a definite territory; (ii) population; (iii) government; and (iv) sovereignty. The government is viewed as an agency or machinery through which the will of the State is formulated, expressed and realized. While this traditional distinction between the state and the government holds, the role of the government and nature of governance have been changing from time to time and even at a given point of time there is considerable variation when the form of government is a democracy or otherwise.

There is no accepted definition of governance. There is divergence of opinion about the meaning of governance between the conservatives and the liberals, between socialists and the communists. The World Bank, for example, has sought to take a middle position be defining governance particularly as the traditions and the institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (i) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; (ii) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social communications among them.

In recent years the word governance has become a very fashionable term and is being used in a variety of ways and that covers a large number of organizations both in public and private domains.

For our purposes, however, we are confining governance only to public domain. We are concerned here with that form of governance which serves the citizens by safeguarding territorial integrity of the State and securing individual security, rule of law and the delivery of services ranging from education, health to livelihood and food security.

**Context:**

No theory of governance would be intelligible unless it is seen in the context of its time. In the beginning of the 21st century, it has become evident that those who want minimal government are having an upper hand against the advocates of the paternalist welfare state. But there is no run-away success in sight. One thing has emerged clearly. An efficient, effective and democratic government is the best guarantor of social justice as well as an orderly society. Similarly, there is also emphasis on the fact that the administrative system has to be country specific and area specific taking in view not only the institutions of governance and its legal and regulatory mechanisms but also its market, its civil society and cultural values of the people. The government would, therefore, have the singular responsibility to create an enabling environment.
where development programmes get properly implemented and that creative minds do not get stifled or their energies diverted from undertaking new initiatives or enterprises. The principal response of the state, therefore, would be to facilitate, to enable, and to coordinate. Neither the market nor the civil society can perform this role as effectively as the government and thus they cannot become substitutes for the government.

**ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE**

The concept of ‘Governance’ is not new. It is as old as government itself. Both the terms are derived respectively, from the old French words governance and government. Initially their meanings were very close, referring to acts or manner of government. By the mid-16th century, however, government denoted a “system by which something is governed” and by the early 18th century it further evolved to acquire the meaning of a “governing authority.” In this process the term governance gradually became marginalized, and by the 19th century it was deemed to reflect an incipient archaism. For the next 100 years, it would hardly be used as a political term.

**GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Citizens all the world over look up to the nation-state and its organs for high quality performance. When good governance is guaranteed, citizens go about their personal business and pursuits with enhanced expectations. On the other side of the spectrum, bad or indifferent governance not only restricts opportunities of success but it can even degenerate into sectarian conflicts and civil wars. In such an atmosphere personal accomplishments as well as social achievements get severely restricted.

Good governance helps create an environment in which sustained economic growth becomes achievable. Conditions of good governance allow citizens to maximize their returns on investment.

Good governance does not occur by chance. It must be demanded by citizens and nourished explicitly and consciously by the nation state. It is, therefore, necessary that the citizens are allowed to participate freely, openly and fully in the political process. The citizens must have the right to compete for office, form political party and enjoy fundamental rights and civil liberty. Good governance is accordingly associated with accountable political leadership, enlightened policy-making and a civil service imbued with a professional ethos. The presence of a strong civil society including a free press and independent judiciary are pre-conditions for good governance.

What is ‘good’ governance in the Indian context? The central challenge before good governance relates to social development. In his famous ‘tryst with destiny’ speech on 14 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru articulated this challenge as ‘the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunities’. Good governance must aim at expansion in social opportunities and removal of poverty. In short, good governance, as I perceive it, means securing justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services.

**GOVERNANCE v/S GOOD GOVERNANCE**

The terms “governance” and good governance are being increasingly used in development literature.

As the “governance” means: the process of decision making by which decisions have to be implemented. This word can be used in various contexts as international – national governance, corporate governance and local governance.

There are a numbers of factors are involved in the process of decision making and its implementation. I.e. Government in case of governance besides the rural areas the factors may be landlord, local influential farmers as well NGO’s, civil societies as well as military.

As a whole these are the basic factors which are very much responsible for the governance. Now as “Good Governance” contains other factors to be implemented. This assures that corruption has to be minimized and the views of the minorities are taken into account and the voices of most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making.

**FEATURES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE**

- Good education facilities offered by the government having greater employability,
- Development of basic infrastructures like roads, bridges, power, telecom, airport, irrigation and transport,
- Safety of public life, property, peaceful law and order,
- Creating new employment opportunities in the government and private sectors,
- Effectiveness and efficiency of working of government and its staffs,
- Good business environment with free-market economy,
- Reducing inequalities in the society through positive discrimination in favour of poorest of the poor,
- Providing total freedom of speech, of religion, of work and attitude of non-interference by government,
- Provision of more concessions to citizens and free from bias,
- Good business environment and
- Citizen centric services.

**MAJOR INITIATIVES**

Recently two major initiatives have been taken up in India for empowering common man and effective functioning of governance which includes Right to Information and E-Governance.

**MAJOR ISSUES & CHALLENGES TO GOOD GOVERNANCE IN INDIA**

Among other things, good governance is, participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest
and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources.

But in the execution of good governance there are some challenges involved, which are given below:

1. **Criminalization of politics**: This is the biggest concern here, due to the neutralization of the educated mass towards the politics a lot of criminal background people entering into the parliament of India. Most of them are illiterate even involved into the criminal activities.

2. **Corruption**: The high level of corruption in India has been widely perceived as a major obstacle in improving the quality of governance. While human greed is obviously a driver of corruption, it is the structural incentives and poor enforcement system to punish the corrupt that have contributed to the rising curve of graft in India. The complex and non-transparent system of command and control, monopoly of the government as a service provider, underdeveloped legal framework, and lack of information and weak notion of citizens’ rights have provided incentives for corruption in India.

3. **Judicial System**: Our judicial system is not up to the mark. Because by the availability of the above two reasons this is also a big challenge to upgrade our existing judicial system. The unavailability of the concern officers as well as delay in the implementing policies, all covers our judicial system very weak. This is also the matter of concern for the implementation of good governance.

**SUGGESTION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE IN INDIA**

We are entering into an era of capitalist innovation. We have to take care of every necessary steps for the proper implementation of good governance in the well-efficient manner.

So these suggestive points are mentioned here:

A. **Citizen’s empowerment**: We have to plan the intensive people’s training, dissemination and empowerment programme. In such kind of initiatives we have to educate both the men and women. Besides we can promote the military education essential in Indian educational system.

B. **Advocacy for social accountability mechanisms**: We should focus on policy advocacy for pro-people issues at the state and national levels on social accountability, based on our findings from this field work. We may choose to advocate for participation of people in devolution, usage and audit of public money. Hence, the proposed activity not only builds on the existing successful initiatives in India, learns from the failures and replicates the best practices in new areas, but also strategically integrates them with the future holistic work plan.

C. **Making government transparent and accountable**: It’s our prime responsibility to make sure the people we are going to elect should be a good human being, free from any kind of criminal activity. Besides he/she should be educated. Persons charge sheeted by a competent court for heinous offences and corrupt practices should be debarred from contesting elections. The point of concern is here that we have to try for the citizen charter in each government sector, there should be also mention the particular activity or work take such n such time for the execution. If this is not done within the stipulated time limit the concern officer/ clerk will be accountable. And by the fast judicial appealing system the rest activity should be executed. By such approachable activity, we can take care of our rights as well as implement the good governance very efficiently.

D. **Civil service reforms**: Civil service should be given clear responsibility for delivery of services in respect of approved schemes and held accountable. Public expenditure review meets should be held periodically at village and district levels to ensure proper utilization of funds and ownership of development programmes by the people.

E. **Waging war against corruption**: Anti-corruption measures are also part of the good governance framework. Although the links between corruption, anti-corruption measures and human rights are not yet greatly explored, the anti-corruption movement is looking to human rights to bolster its efforts. In fighting corruption, good governance efforts rely on principles such as accountability, transparency and participation to shape anti-corruption measures. Initiatives may include establishing institutions such as anti-corruption commissions, creating mechanisms of information sharing, and monitoring Governments’ use of public funds and implementation of policies.

F. **Legislative and institutional framework for good governance**: The primary responsibilities of the government can be briefly stated as law and order and police, adequate and prompt criminal and civil justice system, and protection of interests of economically and socially weaker sections of society. The government will also have to take the responsibility for provision of primary education, public health, and water supply, particularly in the rural and semi-urban areas. If these are fully taken care of, a number of the remaining activities can be left to be provided by the private or co-operative sectors. The State may step in to fill the gap only in sectors and activities which cannot be catered for by the private and co-operative sectors. Once this is accepted, the efforts for good governance can be more focused and properly targeted. It is recommended that the state government may prepare a working paper on this subject and publish it for eliciting views of the people.

So by implementing the above mentioned points the good governance can be achieved. The good governance is the mirror of best implementation of human rights.

**CONCLUSION**

Thus Good governance has become a perfect sound bite for the present age. All governments swear by it. For the donor agencies and the civil society organizations, good governance has become a fashionable buzzword. The
traditional view of good governance was that a government must preserve the rule of law, engage in physical and social infrastructure development, provide enabling environment for growth and ensure civil and political freedoms. Today, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, equitability, sustainable development etc have become the key ingredients of good governance.

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