

Tools and Challenges of Good Governance in India

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Abstract

Amongst the developing countries of the world, India has a unique distinction of having a well-developed system of administration and governance. It places her at par with many of the developed countries of the West, despite the country having a traditional society and a developing economy. Even at the time of Independence of the country in 1947, the horror of partition and its concomitant upheavals were minimized to the extent possible due to the existence of an efficient system of administration well-equipped in the performance of law and order functions of the state. Governance is one of the most widely used concepts in contemporary Public Administration. Yet, it has often been misunderstood. Traditionally, governance can be broadly defined as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s social and economic resources for development.” With the adoption of the New Economic Policy by the Government of India in 1991, India not only became a partner of the ongoing globalization process, but also entered into a new era in the history of administrative reforms. This new era was particularly significant as it witnessed a paradigm shift, for the first time after Independence, from the Nehruvian philosophy of socialistic welfare state to a Westernized model of development through globalization, liberalization, free-market economy and good governance. The concept of governance is closely linked to the working of the nation- state or its governing capacity. The key elements of good governance are respect for the rule of law, special care for the disadvantaged and the weak, tolerance and broad-mindedness which allow people to accept and embrace unity and diversity.

Introduction

The issue of good governance is very long and complex and the reforms in governance can be a matter of political contestation. The term good governance came in to India since the introduction of liberal economic policies in 1991 and the decade of 90s saw increasing use of the term governance and to discuss the failure of the planned strategy of development. The emphasis of the planning commission in improving governance in the country is a good initiative. The term governance is given by World Bank in its report on Sub-Saharan Africa in 1989. Traditionally, governance refers to forms of political systems and the manner in which

power is exercised in utilizing country's economic and social resources development.

Good governance is the most important issue facing the country today. This implies gearing up the government machinery to provide a responsive, transparent and clean and people- friendly administration. Good governance is also linked with the role of the state: what it can do and cannot do matching its capability and resources to undertake the task assigned for itself. During the last 50 years the view regarding the role of the state in economic and social development of a county has shifted dramatically. After the World War II, the size and scope of government has expanded enormously. Developed and newly industrialized countries of East Asia are discharging the role of an activist state in promoting development notwithstanding the recent economic crisis facing them. In these countries the state has played a people-friendly role, building the infrastructure, educating and training the workers and providing a state climate to enable release of creative urge of the people and help the economy of grow and flourish. The message from international experience is clear: what is required is not minimal government but an effective government.

Concept of Good Governance

The concept of good governance has been received considerable attention in recent years not only in India, but also in large number of developing and developed nations. Good governance implies a high level of organizational effectiveness without any choice to its ideological premise. The meaning of good governance may vary for various reasons. For instance the World Bank associates good governance primarily with capacity building and the exercise of political power needed for efficient and effective management of specific national programmers, irrespective of political system. It should however be agreed that good governance is committed to development oriented administration aiming improvement of equality of life of the people of a nation. For a number of other experts, good governance implies presence of honest and efficient government, accountability, transparency and openness.

The word 'good' is derived from the word 'God' which means the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, just and unjust, fair and unfair, moral and immoral. A judgment is good if it is just, fair, right and moral. The concept of governance is not new rather it is as old as human civilization. However to simply put it governance means the process of

decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented.

Good governance means such judgments, actions or deeds of those engaged in the process of welfare of all. Thus public service as an ideal is the classical view of Good Governance.

Characteristics of Good Governance

Following are the characteristics of good governance are:-

Participation

Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institution or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concern of the most vulnerable in society would be taken in to consideration in decision-making. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.

Rule of Law

Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force.

Transparency

Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rule and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media.

Responsiveness

Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. Responsibility is one of the very important parts of good governance. Every person should be responsive during the performance of his duty. Responsiveness provides easy services to the citizens which results decrease in corruption.

Consensus Oriented

There are several actors and as many viewpoints in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for suitable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society and community.

Equity And Inclusiveness

A society's well-being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

Effectiveness And Efficiency

Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the suitable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

Accountability

Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Who is accountable to whom varies depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or action. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.

Good Governance: An Overview

The term governance and good governance are being increasingly used in development literature. Governance describes the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. Hereby, public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources, and guarantee the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes this in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption, and with due regard for the rule of law. Good governance

defines an ideal which is difficult to achieve in it's totally. However, to ensure suitable human development, actions must be taken to works toward this ideal. Major donors and international financial institutions, like the IMF or World Bank, is basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms ensuring good governance are undertaken.

Tools for Good Governance in India

The legislature had takes very important steps to ensure good governance. It provides many important tools to achieve such an important goal like good governance in the country. Some of the most important tools for good governance are:-

Right to Information

Good governance and right to Information are complimentary and the success of one depends upon the other. There is large number of problems in the Indian Administration which goes un- noticed and the administration rather than changing continues in its grooves. Right to Information Act, 2005 would make the civil servants alert to provide the information to public challenges and as a by-product would make administration responsive and transparent which means good governance. The cherished aim of all Government, whatever its form or level, have always been the service of the people and governance of the people to their entire satisfaction. Good governance is the bedrock of our stability.

Police

Role of the police in good governance is to work the ambit of our constitution and ensure implementation of constitutional provisions particularly relating to fundamental rights. Police can help in strengthening democracy by contributing their best in the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections. Police enforce rule of law and ensure proper registration, investigation and prosecution of cases. To implement anti-corruption laws and take effective measures in giving clean administration within and outside the department. Police help in maintaining unity and integrity of the nation by taking effective action against anti-social, anti-national elements and terrorists.

Legislature

There are three organs of government, namely legislature, executive and judiciary. Although the work of execution of policy is that of the executive, but the legislature plays a very important role in the process of governance whether it is a parliamentary form of government or a

presidential form. In a parliamentary form of government the legislature plays a subordinate role in the process of governance. Here policy decisions are taken by the executive with bureaucratic help and parliament merely approves them. The legislature in a parliamentary form of government performs many functions called input functions and output functions. The functions like representation, call attention motion, questions fall in the category of input functions and functions like legislation, policy making and allocation of money for the government are output functions of legislature.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy literally means 'Desk Government or Government by bureau.' Generally it means a group of officials and a particular method of working by which an organization can achieve its goals. Bureaucracy has already made an imprint as one of the most powerful instruments of good governance in the present society and modern welfare state without which one cannot think of a responsible any organized governance. Whereas bureaucracy is an old concept, good governance is a recent one. Both the however, closely interlinked so much so that one is incomplete without the other.

Non-Government Organisations

It is now well realized that NGOs can play an effective role in promoting good governance through exposing their functionaries to the process of training and good capacity building to bridge the existing local community administrative gap. Good governance however, is a dynamic concept. It encompasses fast changing political, social and economic milieu with international environment and conditions of operational governance. The term good governance comprehends the process procedures and concerns which are necessary to achieve sustainable development and welfare of the people.

Panchayati Raj Institutions

Power and responsibility in a democracy should rest with people. The first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru said, "Details of constitution are for lawyers to make, but the fundamental basis of a constitution for a state or for the whole of India can only by one that power and responsibility and ultimate sovereignty must rest with the people. Endorsing the above viewpoint Panchayati Raj is the lowest unit of local government and its efficient working, clean image and activism can be the basis for good governance. Whether it is possible in the present circumstances? Panchayati Raj was revitalized through 73rd Constitutional Amendment. For the

success of democracy decentralized governance is most and for that the Panchayati Raj Institutions are the best example.

People's Participation

Time has come for a strong message to be conveyed that urban administration is for the people and not or the municipal bureaucracy. There has to be a change of attitudes, and local bodies should realized that efficiency will be measured not in term of what the services purport to offer, but in term of public satisfaction. Public Administration and citizens are intimately related to each other as the existence of one without the other is not possible in a civilized society. The harmonious relationship depends upon the sincerity, earnestness and co-operation between two. To quote Robson: "The achievement of good relations between the government and the public is a matter which does not by any means depends solely on the conduct of civil servants and politicians. It depends equally on the attitude of citizens, groups, corporations, associations of all kinds and indeed, of all unofficial bodies to public authorities. If we want public servants to behave well towards us, we must behave well towards them. Moreover, we must normally assume that they for their part will behave... if politicians and civil servants are held in low esteem, if their work is derided, if abuse and invective is poured on them continuously, if loose and the prosperity of the people, lies the strength of a government, it is in their contentment that lies the security unsubstantial allegation are made about their incompetence, dishonesty, laziness and indifference to the public interest, it is unlikely that officials will develop or display qualities of integrity, industry and public spirit." Administration is never something apart from people and their needs, rather it is the means by which these needs are met and the administrators who thinks of his organization as something apart from the community will fail to recognize significant problems of the citizens and the administration will not be in a position to deliver the goods.

Challenges to Good Governance in India

While evaluating India's stand amongst other countries of the world, it is revealed that India is compared favourable with many developing countries though it has long way to go to attain the level of developed countries. The criminalization of politics and corruption are two major challenged of good governance in India which need to be addressed on urgent basis.

The corruption has virtually spread in almost all aspects of public life. The person lying on the street is left to struggle incessantly with corruption

throughout his life. Corruption is relatively inherent in terms of client public puzzle, harassed by opaque rules and producers, excessive delay in disposal in public matters. It not only avert the benefits of globalization to reach the common men but also denies transparency, accessibility and accountability, confuses rules and producers, proliferate mindless control and poor commitments at all levels. Hence there is foremost need to check corruption at all levels through raising public consciousness and strong commitments not to make dishonest compromises which would put down the moral values and ethics of life.

India being the largest country in the world is struggling hard to emerge as world class leader in the field of social and economic development. However the nexus of politics and crime is so strong that the common citizens of the country have no stand to say or exert their rights. In order to prevent to such misuses on 2nd May, 2002, the Supreme Court of India has given a historic judgement following the public interest litigation led by the NGO that every candidate contesting an election to Parliament, State Legislatures or Municipal Corporations has to give true declarations of candidate's educational qualification, criminal charges and financial records. Though many commissions and committees have been framed to bring improvement in the situation, these reformative measures are just a drop in the ocean. So a new beginning is necessary to ameliorate criminalisation from politics and the seriousness of matter should be properly worked out. The educated youngsters should be encouraged to enter in to Indian politics and these young leaders should be properly nourished by the patriotic commitments and abide by the core principles of democratic governance.

Basic Realities in Independent India

There are some realities with context of India are:

Failures of System

The Indian governance scenario during the last 50 years is a rather gloomy one, uninspiring and dismal. If the first one or two decades after independence kindled some hope, it was extinguished thereafter. The system failed on several fronts, the major ones being: Vision and mission; Corruption; Population; Education; Character, value and integrity; Nationalist Spirit; Factorization of political parties; Social and institutional reforms; and Leadership vacuum. Though on paper and practically we had a grandiose framework of ideas, in real State-life and governmental dispensation, the future vision and lofty missions that we had during the initial years after independence were lost on the wayside. Good governance

was a casualty, if by the vacuity of vision, absence of mission and lack of leadership, it became totally perverted by pervasive as well as incisive corruption in every department of social life, in general, and political life, in particular. The result is that people are compelled today to “eat corruption, sleep corruption but drink only corruption.”

Population Explosion

Unchecked population explosion has also created problems for governance not only in terms of too many more mouths to be fed but also in terms of a provision of health care, housing, employment, education and others minimum the basic facilities of life. The limited economic resources distributed on wider and wider, almost unlimited base, do not and cannot, reap the desired results-be it poverty eradication programmes, employments, income generation and economic growth. The investable results has been the prevalence of massive poverty, hunger and starvation, illiteracy, ignorance, disease, child mortality, squalor, unemployment-the veritable “misery-go-round”! The development efforts are frustrated and all progress is eaten way by non-productive mass of humans, more parasite than contributive to social wealth. Population of our magnitude means breakdowns of good governance, yet the government does not seem to be much concerned, in fact, not worried at all, about effective population control policy measures.

Evaporation of Moral Values and Inadequacy of Social Reforms

There, moreover has been a drastic drop in moral values, ethical norms, and social-behavioural ethos. Characters, integrity and honesty now seem to be things of the past, unfashionable to have, and discard able as bad coins. A nation without character is a nation doomed. It becomes thoroughly ungovernable when it loses the nationalist spirit, national pride and dignity. This balloon can burst at the slightest pressure. Social and institutional reforms have not been addressed adequately so far; people are backward looking, conservative, with no modern or progressive outlook or approach, tied to the apron string of the past. Many of the social and political institutions have decayed and disintegrated, are malfunctioning and create adverse impact on modernization endeavours.

Leadership Failure and Fractured Political Parties

The governance problem have been aggravated and accentuated by factorization of political parties which are more individual based and less ideological founded. The result is multiplicity of parties, further splits, further fragmentation, defections, without any qualms of conscience, no

moral scruples; rank opportunism amongst the political leaders as well rank and file has dictated the course of politics for decades now, leading to governmental instability, administrative mess, policy paralysis and programmatic cardiac-arrest! Leadership has failed; so has the system; and the system has failed the people. There is in consequence, a total failure of governance.

Role of Three Wings of Governmental System in Mal-Governance

All three wings of government, the three arms and instrumentalities of governance-Legislature, Executive and Judiciary-have, it seems, collaborated to set up a joint venture in mal-governance. In our “functioning anarchy”, where Legislature and Executive have conspired to sacrifice governance at the altar of political expediency, an ‘activist’ judiciary in a very brief flicker of hope, seemed a savior, but that light has also gone out, engulfing the system of governance in a thick blanket of darkness. The delay, complications in legal dispensations, volumes of pendency, the high cost, the vagaries of lawyers-all combine to make courts of justice a dreaded place, almost a prohibited area for more sufferers, where you enter to compound your sufferings! In a slightly different context of having no time schedules at all in areas of social and political living bureaucrats, judges and politicians-the three pillars of governance-edifice do not bother about deadlines because they deal in other people’s money, time and morale. These three, in ‘joint venture’ with the other three, namely economic-financial mafia, underworld dons and trade- union, vested interest lobbies have made a mince-meet of good governance.

Conclusion

After all, the good governance in the country can be thrive only when every Indian citizen would ignite themselves in the flame of patriotism adhering to truth, peace and non-violence as means to perceive India of our dream. At this movement, every Indian swears that the moral principles of our life should never be waved out by the money and muscle power. Let our moral strength success over material strength. Being responsible citizens of the country it is our foremost duty not to pledge a vote for deviants to ruin our nation rather to vote for the honest and upright citizen who can be good administrators and reformers to bring positive transformations and can lead our nation under dynamic leadership. The overall balance of different views and arguments leads to conclusion: good governance should basically mean balanced governance. Government, private sector, non-government organizations and cooperatives should harmoniously share the responsibility

of governance by protecting the interests and meeting the needs of the people. The value of good governance is increasing in every society. Good governance should be related to the overall managing of society. This can be achieved through the decentralization of administration. Decentralization can be brought only if there is transfer of power from the centre to the state and village level. The challenge of good governance would certainly require government to be reinvented, bureaucracy to be re-positioned, non government business sectors to be re-invigorated with a social motive. For all this a shift of emphasis to the normative model of managing government would be needed. A reinvented government must have both ethical consistency and organizational flexibility to remain faithful to the goal of public service. For the sake of good governance a reinvented government is to function in a missionary, egalitarian and energized manner, having less machine-like and less hierarchical structure and procedure. The good governance agenda includes promoting transparency, accountability, efficiency, fairness and participation. It includes most activities that government performs with the help of institutions and bureaucracy for the welfare of society. In short there is a need of balanced government. Government, public, NGOs and corporate should harmoniously shared the responsibilities.

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