

Good Governance in India: Challenges and Prospects

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ABSTRACT: Good governance emerged as a powerful idea when multilateral and bilateral agencies like World Bank, UNDP, OECD, ADB, etc realized that it is a citizen friendly, citizen caring and responsive administration. In absence of good governance, no development schemes can bring any improvement in the quality life of the citizens. On the other hand, if the power of the state, exercised in improper ways then the poor will suffer the most, as poor governance generates and reinforces corruption, poverty etc, so it is essential to strengthen the governance and it is also the precondition for to improve the lives of the poor. The concept of good governance plays important role in the modern governmental system. No doubt people are now a day's very conscious and they are always aware about the day to day functioning of the government. So the government has to satisfy the general people and good governance creates an environment for this. India's democratic experience of past six decades has clearly established that good governance must aim at expansion of social opportunities and removal of poverty. As in his famous "tryst with destiny" speech on 14 Aug, 1947, J.L.Nehru articulated the challenges to good governance as, ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunities. So the author perceives good governance as securing justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services. This paper is intended to examine the framework of good governance in India. The paper is also intended to examine the challenges and prospects of good governance in India. The methodology will be qualitative in nature and secondary sources will be used and examined. The secondary source includes Books, Magazines, Journals and Newspapers etc.

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I. INTRODUCTION

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.¹ The word "Good Governance" derives from the Greek verb "kubernao" which means "to steer". The dictionary meaning of governance is way of governing. It is the process undertaken by government and nongovernmental institution including family. It refers to a process or act or function of exercising authority to regulate affairs of man in a given territory. Good Governance implies the process of decision-making and its implementation free from abuse and corruption. In recent years, the issue of good governance is widely regarded as one of the key ingredients for poverty reduction and sustainable development.²

In 1989 World Bank study "Sub-Saharan Africa-from Crisis to Sustainable Growth", the term 'Governance' was first used to describe the need for institutional reform and a better and more efficient public sector in Sub-Saharan countries. It defined governance as "the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs."³ However, it did not explicitly refer to the connotation 'good'. It was only in the foreword, that former World Bank President Barber Conable (1986-1991) used the term 'good governance', referring to it as a "public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable and an administration that is accountable to its public."⁴ The concept of governance was further developed in the Bank's 1992 publication 'Governance and

¹ Balmiki Prasad Singh; "The Challenge of Good Governance in India: Need for Innovative Approaches", Yojna, January, 2013.

² Banasree Devi; "Good Governance and its Working: at the Indian Context", International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Science Society and Culture(IJIRSSC) Vol: 1, Issue:2, (December Issue), 2015, p.79

³ World Bank 1989, p. 55

⁴ Ibid., p. XII

Development'. In this publication, governance was defined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development."⁵ Later on in 1994, the Bank substantiated this definition, "Governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law".⁶ Subsequently in 1998 World Bank's annual report *Governance in Asia: From crisis to Opportunity*, presented a more cogent concept of good governance. The report elaborates four key components of good governance: accountability, transparency, predictability and participation.⁷

The United Nations Development Programme defines governance as "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their political rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences."⁸ According to U.N Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Good Governance has eight characteristics:⁹

- a) **Participation:** Participation in administration by both men and women is the key cornerstone of good governance. Participation may be direct or indirect.
- b) **Rule of law:** Good Governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires protection of human rights, independent and imperial police force, and bureaucracy.
- c) **Transparency:** It means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. Right to Information Act of India plays a very effective role in this regard.
- d) **Responsiveness:** Good Governance requires that institution and process try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.
- e) **Consensus oriented:** Good Governance requires reaching a broad consensus in a society on what is in the best interest of community and how this can be achieved in a sustainable and prudent manner.
- f) **Equity and Inclusiveness:** A society's wellbeing depends on the overall development of its people including women, poor, as well as economically and socially backward people without which real progress of the society cannot be achieved. Their proper representation in the decision making process is very important.
- g) **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Good governance means the process and institutions produce results that meet the needs of stake holders while making the best use of resources at their disposal.
- h) **Accountability:** Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Every governmental system whether it is public or private should be accountable to the people. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and rule of law.

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'.¹⁰ The principle of good governance is not new to the Indian society. While throwing attention over the state of affairs in ancient India, it is noticed that the king or the ruler was bounded by the dharma which precisely meant to ensure good governance to the people.¹¹ Mahatma Gandhi advocated the concept 'Ram Rajya' for India basing upon the principles of good governance which necessarily meant for dreaming India as a welfare state where the necessities of the down-trodden, the welfare of the commoner and their progress through indigenous industries would become the hallmark. After independence, the Indian Constitution has also been framed for securing justice, liberty, equality and empowering weaker sections including women, youth and poor, scheduled

⁵ World Bank 1992, p. 1

⁶ World Bank 1994, VII also see World Bank 1994: Governance: The World Bank's Experience, World Bank.org/website/external/Countries/menaext/extmonaregtop/governance

⁷ World Bank, "Governance in Asia: From Crisis to Opportunity," Annual Report 1998, available at: www.worldbank.org

⁸ UNDP 1997, p. IV

⁹ Das P.G 2014: Fundamentals of Public Administration. New Central Book Agency (P) Ltd 8/1 Chintamani das Lane, Kolkata -700009

¹⁰ Balmiki Prasad Singh; pp.5,6.

¹¹ Chinmayee Satpathy; "Initiatives and Challenges of Good Governance in India," Yojna, January ,2013, p.51

castes and scheduled tribes through making special provisions in the Indian Constitution. India's experiences during the past six decades have clearly established that good governance in India aims at expansion of social and economic opportunities, removal of poverty and efficient delivery of services at the grassroots. For effective functioning of good governance, every citizen must be empowered and has right to be informed, express their views which must be heard and considered, participate in various decision-making processes of governance and contribute in meaningful ways. Recently two major initiatives have been taken up in India for empowering common man and effective functioning of governance which include Right to Information and E-Governance.¹²

II. CHALLENGES TO GOOD GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

a) Women empowerment; According to Swami Vivekananda "it is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on only one wing." One way to assess the state of nation is to study the status of its women. As women comprise almost 50% of the population it is unfair that they are not adequately represented in government institutions, and other allied sectors. So in order to ensure good governance it is essential to ensure empowerment of women.

b) Growing incidence of violence: Resort to illegal force is considered to be a law and order problem. But when one looks at it from the point of view of the principles of Good governance, it becomes clear that peace and order is the first step to development. Strikes, riots, terror attacks are onerant of this harmful culture of violence. But when the government uses force to contain these situations, at times human rights of common citizens are violated by the state police. It requires a clear vision, courage and understanding to deal with this menace through dialogue.

c) Corruption: - The high level of corruption in India has been widely perceived as a major obstacle in improving the quality of governance. Bureaucracy is called the engine of good governance. The government implemented different welfare policies like PDS, NRHM, MGNREGA, Prime Minister's Jan Dhan Yojna, etc. which are very influential for good governance. But because of corruption practise among our bureaucrats our Government cannot achieve success in implementation of these programmes.¹³

d) Delay in Justice: A citizen has right to avail timely justice, but there are several factors, because of that a common man doesn't get timely justice, these factors are;

- Some citizens are not aware of their rights. Poor person cannot afford legal aid to advocate on their behalf.
- Prosecution rate is very low even in some cases to the extent of only 5%, and most of time it is poor, who are prosecuted, since rich manage to escape clutches of law through loopholes in legal system.¹⁴
- Lack of personnel and logistic under disposal of court. It is to be noted that at the end of 2016 there are around 21.3 million cases pending in various courts in India including the Supreme Court. Systematic solutions are, therefore, needed for strengthening access to justice. At the same time ad hoc measures are required to provide immediate assistance to the needy citizens.¹⁵

e) Centralisation of Administrative system: Governments at lower levels can only function efficiently if they are empowered to do so. This is particularly relevant for the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), which currently suffer from inadequate devolution of funds as well as functionaries to carry out the functions constitutionally assigned to them.¹⁶

f) Criminalisation of Politics:- The criminalisation of the political process and the unholy nexus between politicians, civil servants, and business houses are having a baneful influence on public policy formulation and governance.¹⁷

¹² Ibid; p.52

¹³ Banasree Devi; p. 81

¹⁴ K.C. Tiwari; "The Challenges of Good Governance in India, in the era of 21st Century," Abhinav National Monthly Refereed Journal Of Research in Commerce & Management, www.abhinavjournal.com

¹⁵ Rajesh Ranjan; "what causes judicial delay? Judgements diluting timeframes in code of Civil Procedure worsen the problem of Adjourments." Times of India, August 2016.

¹⁶ Dinesh Arora; "Good Governance: A Study of the Concept in Indian Context," International Political Science Association (IPSA), pp.6,7

¹⁷ Balmiki Prasad Singh; p.8

g) Empowerment of socially and economically backward people: The socially and economically backward sections of the society have always been marginalised in the process of development. Although there are constitutional provisions for their upliftment but in practice they are lagging behind in so many areas like education, economic wellbeing etc.

h) Environmental security, sustainable development

i) Challenges of globalization, liberalisation and market economy

Prospects

E-governance is a powerful tool of good governance¹⁸. The National e-Governance Plan has the vision to “Make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.”¹⁹ Furthermore for e-governance different initiatives have been proposed by the government viz ;

Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI):-PRAGATI was launched on 25 March 2015. It is a multipurpose and multi modal platform aimed at addressing grievance of common man. It also aims at monitoring and Reviewing important union government projects and programmes as well as projects flagged by state governments. It is an innovative project in e-governance and good governance and accountability with real time presence and information exchange among the key stakeholders.

Digital India: - It is a dream which is created by the government of India to ensure that government services are made available to citizens electronically, even in remote areas, by improving online infrastructure and by increasing internet connectivity. The motive behind the concept is to build participative, transparent and responsive system.²⁰

The initiative on the part of government to celebrate 25th December as Good Governance Day is to make people aware about the government commitment for providing a transparent and accountable administration in country. While observing the Good governance day on 25 December 2016, the government decided to launch 100 days good governance campaign all over the country where Ministers will be participating in the programmes.

To ensure Good Governance, women empowerment is one of its essential conditions. The government seems to be actively involved in addressing this issue. They have launched different schemes like *Beti Bachao Beti Parhao*, *Janani Suraksha Yojana*, and *UJJAWALLA*.

In November 2016 the government came up with the decision to demonetize the 500 and 1000 Rupee denomination notes. The government’s main objective was to eradicate the counterfeit currency, resist tax evasion, and destroy the black money, terrorist financing activities and to encourage the country towards the cash less economy..²¹

III. CONCLUSION

Rightful implementation of different attributes of governance like accountability, impartiality, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, etc. Improve the quality of governance. It is always important on part of the government to analyse its work thoroughly and to improve it whenever necessary. However, despite achieving success on several counts, there are still many challenges for the governance system in our country. Corruption is one of the biggest factors that hinder efficient performance of the administration. There is need to eliminate interference in the delivery of services. It is also necessary to adopt non-discretionary approach towards decision-making and initiate two-way communication with the users. Governance is a holistic approach, involving all the pillars of the State, including provision of justice. The need for judicial reforms and initiation of measures like greater use of information technology to clear pending court cases is essential.

¹⁸ The Tribune, December , 2005

¹⁹ <http://www.upagovt.com//2014/02/10-years-of-progress-upa-milestones.html>

²⁰ Seema Dua; “*Digital India: Opportunities and Challenges, International Conference on Recent Innovations in Engineering Science*”, Humanities and Management, 18th-19th March 2017, www.conferenceworld.in

²¹ Lokesh Uke; “*Demonetization and its effects in India*”, International Journal Economics and Management Studies, Volume 4, Issue 2 February, 2017, p.18

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