



Public Administration and Political Will Power

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ABSTRACT

In the words of Kofi Annan, “Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development” The concept of „governance“ came into vogue only recently though the story of governance is as old as human civilization itself. In India the concept of good governance is as old as Indus valley civilization which is continued to be practiced even after Kautilya for many centuries. Kautilya in his treatise Arthashastra propounded the traits of good governance by ruler-king as follows: “happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in the welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good , but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider as good” . We can even trace the concept of good governance in the writings of Plato when he referred to the philosopher king or when Rousseau and Thomas Paine stressed on Rule of Law or when Bentham called for “Greatest Happiness to greatest number”. According to Karl Marx good governance is governance where it is replaced by self regulation. The governance should be good is a universal fact then what is the need to prefix „good“ before governance. The term „good governance“ has been coined by west for the third world countries. The aid which was provided by the west for third world countries gave rise to the concept of good governance.

World Bank first time in 1989, highlighted the concept of good governance. In 1992, World Bank document Governance and Development said, “Good governance is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies. But in this modern era the word good governance is replaced by a term “Misgovernance” as there are crisis in governance is found at every stage of governance which should be rectified in order to make governance good for our citizens.

Keywords

vogue, eradication, misgovernance, self regulation, equitable, development

1. Introduction

Kautilya in his treatise “Arthashastra” propounded the traits of good governance by the ruler/king

In his words,

“Happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in the welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider as good”



The governance should be good is a universal fact then what is the need to prefix „good“ before governance. The term „good governance“ has been coined by west for the third world countries. The aid which was provided by the west for third world countries gave rise to the concept of good governance. The term “good” has been derived from the word “GOD” which means an ability to distinguish between Right and Wrong, just and unjust, fair and unfair, right and moral.

Governance has become a fashionable term nowadays and in broad context it means “Administration”. In india, one can cite the context of good governance , the concept of RAM RAJYA , the advice given by lord Krishna to Arjuna in Gita. We can even trace the concept of good governance in the writings of Plato when he referred to the philosopher king or when Rousseau and Thomas Paine stressed on Rule of Law or when Bentham called for “Greatest Happiness to greatest number”. According to Karl Marx good governance is governance where it is replaced by self regulation.

Alexander pope’s famous dictum that for “the forms of government let fools contest , whatever is best administered is best truly reflects the spirit of the concept of good governance which has gained wide currency and popularity in recent times. The importance of the concept lies in the fact that it is considered as the panacea for all administrative ills”.

Good governance is a dynamic concept. It encompasses fast changing political, social and economic milieu along with international environment and conditions of operational governance.

2.Method andStructure

Secondary data obtained from relevant books and journals, seminar papers, magazines and internet was adopted to accomplish the work. The paper is structured into five sections. Section one serves as introduction. Section two examines the meaning and definition of the concept. Section three looks at the concept of good governance and development. Section four discusses problem and challenges of good governance. Section five deals with the conclusion.

3.Meaning of GoodGovernance

The term “good” has been derived from the word “GOD” which means an ability to distinguish between Right and Wrong, just and unjust, fair and unfair, right and moral. In context of good governance it is so if it is taken in public interest and serves the public interest. Oxford dictionary defines it as „an act or manner of governing“ and „the office or function of governing“. There are some essential features of goodgovernance.



Participation of the people is the key to good governance because people are not only beneficiaries of good governance but they are also agents of it. The government should be accountable to its citizens. It means those who rule are answerable to those from whom they derive authority. There must exist predictability as it refers to the existence of laws, regulations and policies to regulate society. Thus there should be orderly existence of the citizens and institutions in the society. Transparency is also an important feature of good governance as it refers to the availability of information to general public and clarity about government rules, regulation and decisions. This can be done by enforcing the citizens „Right to Information“ as it will help in curbing corruption.

4. Challenges and problems of good governance

After a long struggle against colonial rule people of India won independence and resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, socialist, secular and Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizen justice, liberty and equality. And we promised in our fundamental law of the land – a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people; social, economic and political justice for all; minimization of inequalities in income and elimination of inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities among individuals and groups of people; right to adequate means of livelihood for all citizens men and women equally ; right to work, to education and public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and safeguarding of forest and wild life and promotion of international peace and security.

Even after so many years of independence we sadly find that many of the promises, which we made in our constitution, still remain distant dreams. Even after six decades of Swaraj has not yet enabled us to eradicate poverty and to provide atleast the basic necessities of life such as food, safe drinking water, sanitation and access to health facilities, a minimum education and even the simple kind of social security. We see frequent reports of death caused by starvation while food grains is rotting in FCI godowns. Even today there are fellow Indians who live on food grains retrieved from washing cowdung.

Caste, communal, ethnic and sectarian divisions have assumed a serious dimension. Corruption has crept into all walks of public life- polity, administration, society and business etc. criminalization of politics has tended to acquire legitimacy. Almost all institutions of democratic governance have weakened over the years.



There is a long list of problems and challenges:

Corruption in Public life

Corruption in India is not a new concept. What is new, of course is its seriousness and magnitude. Only four days before assassination Gandhi ji warned his countrymen of dangerous effects of corruption. The effects of corruption on the economy and polity are obvious. It undermines investment and economic growth, decreases the resources available for human development goals, deepens the extent of poverty and undermines the legitimacy of the states. Corruption has done the greatest harm to the common man. A common man or woman thinks hundred times before approaching to any Sarpanch, a municipal councilor, a police official or deputy commissioner for redressal of the problem. Without faith of the people system of governance people friendly? For this citizens should be encouraged to use right to information (RTI) without any fear. We should protest against corruption. Finally we should teach our children"s distinction between what is corruption and what is not same as we teach other subjects to our children"s.

Criminalization of politics

Criminalization of politics is a recent development in Indian politics. Within a very short period of time it has reached to the roots of democratic governance. During the early years criminals were kept out of the politics because in those times national leaders both at the centre as well as states steeped in moral values and personnel integrity. During those days people from criminal background never dared to seek election on any party tickets. As we are going towards the age of pygmies. Broadly speaking criminalization of politics means use of money and muscle power. Thus we are facing era of politicization of the criminals. The election commission has taken a revolutionary step of defining the term „conviction“. It declared that the person who has been convicted for an offence listed in the Representation of people act 1951, by a trial court"s judgment also stood disqualified. Every candidate must be required to file an affidavit along with the nomination from specifying the cases in which he is involved and the present position of those cases, and this information may be printed along with every bit of election material which is furnished by him or on his behalf; along with their audited account every year. Political parties are required to submit all the details to the election commission. In case of wrong information by the candidate or refusal to submit affidavit will lead to cancelation of the nomination paper. This is a very bold step in order to bring transparency but all these steps need to be implemented partially and this will foster public verification and promote transparency and accountability.

Reforming political parties

Political parties are the backbone of democratic system of governance. Democracy and



political parties are linked together. Thus it is obvious that weakening of party system has a dangerous consequence for democracy. But political parties in India are under crisis. There is a steep decline in working of the political parties. And they contest election for the vote bank. Thus there is a strict need for reforms in the functioning of the political parties. And reform should begin in the beginning, government should enforce strict laws and rules for the registration of the political parties both at state as well as national level. A remarkable development of election commission recently ordered that the total amount expended by a political party should be reported. And the observers which are appointed in every constituency to check out the poll expenses and to tally their report with the one filed by the candidate. More strict laws are need of an hour to ensure transparency and accountability.

Crisis of Institution

To provide good governance, democracy must be supported by stronger institutions such as representative parliament, more responsive executive and impartial judiciary. These institutions must be transparent and accountable. Sadly in recent years India has been experiencing a steady erosion of important institutions of democratic governance. The most serious concern is judicial delays. Ever since independence government has paid a very little attention on improvement of infrastructure of judiciary. There are a lot of vacant seats of judges in the courts which are unfilled form many years. Thus to save judiciary from the evils of corruption judicial reforms are necessary before the judicial system totally collapse and lose its credibility and impartiality.

Steep fall in values and degeneration in politics

But, politics gradually degenerated into a struggle for power for its own sake. Power for personal ends became the supreme value. And there has been steep fall in standard of conduct in public life and in administration is widely accepted. There is a crisis of character and values in politics and public administration. Enough has been written and spoken about the problems of communalization, criminalization, casteism, growth of narrow identities and loyalties widespread corruption, abject poverty, rampant illiteracy, over population and lack of quality leadership. But there is no solution to all these problems strict action is needed for solving such problems in order to establish a welfare governance or good governance.

5. Conclusion

A dynamic concept like good governance need not be narrowly conceived in the manner the aid giving agencies have sought to present it. There is no doubt that a more creative approach and a lot of rethinking is needed on the subject. To be pragmatic, good governance has to be in tune with fast changing political, social and economic milieu along with the international environment and conditions. The World Bank itself acknowledged that governance is a continuing and not necessarily unidirectional; it does not improve automatically over time. It is a plant that need



constant tending. Citizens need to demand good governance. Their ability to do so is enhanced by literacy, education and employment opportunities. Thus the concept of good governance is under crisis and therefore requires periodical rethinking and even remodeling.

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