



GOOD GOVERNANCE: CONCEPT AND CHALLENGES

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Good Governance is an essential ingredient for socio- economic development of the country. Good governance is of paramount importance in these times of far reaching changes. Improved governance requires an integrated, long-term strategy built upon cooperation between government and citizens. Good Governance first emerged in the mid-1980s as governability with the emphasis on adherence to the rule of law. Absence of good governance has been identified as the root cause of many of the deficiencies in society. It robs the citizenry of their social and economic rights. Good governance signifies basic parameters such as rule of law, participatory decision-making structure, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness.

The whole idea of good governance is the participative system of governance in which those who are called upon to govern on behalf of the people are motivated with a will to give their best, serving and doing well to the people, solving their problems and making their lives more livable, satisfying and enjoyable. As a democratic country, a central feature of good governance is the constitutionally protected right to elect government at various levels in a fair manner, with effective participation by all sections of the population. The government at all levels must be accountable and transparent. Closely related to accountability is the need to eliminate corruption, which is widely seen as a major deficiency in governance. Good governance implies utmost concern for people's welfare wherein the government and its bureaucracy follow policies and discharge their duties with a deep sense of commitment; respecting the rule of law in a manner which is transparent, ensuring human rights and

dignity, probity and public accountability. In the new millennium, the greatest challenge before the largest democracy of the world is to steer the overall growth in the country along the lines of fairness, equality, equity, justice and sustainability especially when the role of the government itself is being redefined.

Indian Perspective of Good Governance

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. The idea of Good Governance is as old as Indian civilization. The rulers were bound by dharma, popularly called 'Raj Dharma', which precisely meant for ensuring good governance to the people. Good Governance found in ancient Indian scriptures, can be the Jataka tales, Shanti Parva-Anushasanparva of Mahabharat, Shukracharyas's Nitisar, Panini's Ashtadhyayi, Aitreya Brahmana, Valmiki's Ramayana and especially in Kautilya's Arthashastra. Arthashastra while highlighting the principle of good governance declares, "In the happiness of his people lies king's happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his people he shall consider as good." 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.

Basic Parameters of Good Governance

As per UNESCAP good governance is an ideal, which is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. It signifies basic parameters. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

Participation – Participation of the people either direct or indirect in the development and decision making process is one of the corner stone of good governance. The availability of people to participate in social decisions is a valuable characteristic feature of good society. The participation in order to be effective needs to be informed and organized and therefore depends upon the availability to the subjects, freedom of association and expression on one hand and existence of an organized civil society on the other.

ii) **Consensual in orientation** - Good governance must ensure that there a regular and dynamic process of consensus making. That is first of all there should be consultation between the government functionaries, NGOs and the public; second stage should be consideration of

different views; third stageshould be taking their consenton a broad area; and finallyconsensus should be attemptedafter conflict resolution.

iii) **Accountability** –Accountability is a key tenet of good governance. It is a driving force‘ that puts pressure on the administrators to be responsible for actions and to ensure good public performance.It involves the right decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders.

iv)**Transparency** - Transparency is built on the free flow of information. It means that information should be provided in easily understandable forms and media; that it should be freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by governance policies and practices, as well as the outcomes resulting therefrom; and that any decisions taken and their enforcement are in compliance with established rules and regulations.

v) **Responsiveness** - Good governance requires that organizations and their processes are designed to serve the best interests of stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.The attribute of responsiveness for good governance necessitates that all public institutions and their processes strive to serve all stakeholders within a responsible time frame.

vi) **Effective and efficient** –Efficiency means doing works at a first speed and effectiveness means doing things effectively focusing on results. 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 sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.Thus both timelines and result orientation are to be ensured.

vii) **Equitable and inclusive** –A society’s well being depends mostly on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. *“Equity implies inclusiveness with unbiased access to basic necessities of urban life, with institutional priorities focusing on pro-poor policies and an established mechanism for responding to the basic services.”*

viii) **Rule of law** - Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights. Impartial enforcement requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force.

Challenges of Good Governance

Good governance would promote welfare state in its true connotation wherein people would be looked after by government as part and parcel of government machinery. Indian

administration is certainly the core of all human affairs. India is certainly on the cross roads of her national destiny, facing a serious challenge to our politics and administration, i.e.

- chronic delays,
- lack of sympathy and humane approach,
- time consuming meetings,
- corrupt practices,
- lack of work culture,
- Criminalization of politics,
- Insensitive and callous etc.

All these are the obstacles in the path of good governance which can be removed by personnel in government both political and administrative to reassure good governance. The challenge of good governance would certainly require government to be reinvented, bureaucracy to be re-positioned, non government business to be re-invigorated with a social motive.

Good governance must be ensured and established to ensure welfare of the people otherwise there can be agitations, strikes and lawlessness. Good governance is possible if our policies are implemented sincerely and efficiently. Governance is the manner in which authority, control and power of government is exercised in mobilizing society's economic and social resources to address the issues of public interest. Good governance is epitomized by, among other things, predictable, open and enlightened administration, respect to basic human rights and values, strengthened democratic institutions and effective institutional as well as structural framework to ensure accountability and transparency.

Thus Good governance has become a perfect sound bite for the present age. The effective functioning of governance is the prime concern of every citizen of the country. The citizens are ready to pay the price for good services offered by the state, but what is required is transparent, accountable and intelligible governance system absolutely free from bias and prejudices. In the present era when India is progressively moving towards development and prosperity, there is a need to reformulate our national strategy to accord primacy to the Gandhian principle of 'Antodaya' to restore good governance in the country. After all, the good governance in the country can 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.

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