

Assessment on Impidements and Challenges of Good Governance in Arbaminch City: The Case of Selected Public Institution.

Astatike Alemu Alasso

ABSTRACT

Good Governance is a concept more inclusive than traditional government and administration and reflects wider range of participants in the processes. The attainment of good governance is a function of exhaustive effort of public officials. The research used descriptive research design, study participants were selected with convenience and purposive samplings, participants were service users, public servants of the institutions, and representatives of institutions. The findings show that an underlying characteristic of principles of good governance that results in effective and better performance of public institution but they are unsatisfactory. Lack of competence, inefficient and ineffective monitoring and evaluation system were major factors that contributed to ineffectiveness of good governance. Improving the relationship between the public officials and the citizens, that helps them for providing consistent, transparent and proportional decision. The selected public institutions should be equipped with necessary materials that can facilitate the speedy, convincing and open service delivery.

Keywords: Governance. Good governance, satisfactory service, Service delivery

INTRODUCTION

The concept of governance is seen as the process and institutions in which authority is exercised And governance deals with how governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and an emphasis on the capacity of government to manage issues with respect rule of law (World Bank, 2004). Therefore, the word 'good' in governance connotes the proper exercise of authority, management of resources and respect for the rule of law in accordance to laid-down principles for the benefit of all in a society. Good governance in any nation is the relative absence of corrupt practices in all its ramifications. The implication of this position is that in a nation where corruption has almost become the norm, such a nation cannot claim to experience good governance. One of the reasons attributable to the unethical practice of corruption in a nation is that of weak leadership and lack of accountability of public officials (TAFGN,2011-2015).

Governance extends beyond government action to address the role of citizens and the way groups and communities within society organize to make and implement decisions on matters of general concern and promoting good governance includes:

reforms to increase accountability, transparency and responsiveness (Brinkerhoff, 2005).

Local governance comprises a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs at the local level. This in turn, presupposes the existence of local authority with power to act independent of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs (Omona, 2010 and Havenga, 2002).

Local governance emphasizes the need to look beyond the legal frameworks and local government entities, it seeks to include the multiplicity of formal and informal relationships between different actors in development and that shape and influence the output and effectiveness of political and administrative systems at a sub-national level (Olsen, 2007).

Local governance as the formulation and execution of collective action at the local level, it encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighborhood associations in pursuing collective action by defining the framework for citizen-

Department of Civics and Ethical Studies, College of Social Science and Humanities ArbaMinch University, Ethiopia, Tel:+ 927836365; Email: astu.alemu@gmail.com

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citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of local public services (UNDP, 2007). Hence, local governance includes the diverse objectives of vibrant, living, working, and environmentally preserved self-governing communities (World Bank, 2008).

Good governance at local levels denotes quality, effectiveness and efficiency of local administration and public service delivery; the quality of local public policy and decision-making procedures, their inclusiveness, their transparency, and their accountability in governance; and the manner in which power and authority are exercised at the local level (shah, 2006). Therefore, building blocks of good local governance are citizen participation, partnerships among key actors at the local level, capacity of local actors across all sectors, multiple flows of information, institutions of accountability, and a pro-poor orientation the preference of individuals in participating in decision making process as well as whom and by whom those decisions are implemented (UNDP, 2004 and Arko. et al. 2010).

Statement of the problem

Good governance, which is strategic direction of domestic governance in the country are to adopt infancy and enforces laws that support democracy and good governance. Growth of globalization and the information revolution are forcing a reexamination of citizen-state relations and roles as well as the relationships of various orders of government with entities beyond government and thereby an enhanced focus on local governance (shah, 2006). Due to the introduction of governance in public administration, the decision-making process is carried out in cooperation with the participation of all stakeholders and leader's act in a conciliatory, transparent, accountable, effective and responsible manner and government is run not only by a group of elected but also with the involvement of different actor (Fikret T., 2008).

Local government units manage their own affairs; they enjoy adequate financial and human resources to implement their responsibilities efficiently, effectively and independently of any other unit as far as possible. Each has an elected governing body that represents the local community, manages local affairs and provides essential services in the citizens' interests and aspirations and works towards local development (Berghof Foundation 2018). With the evolution of good governance, favorable climate are created for political and socioeconomic development and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of development programmes in a society as well as rights of citizens are secured (Ekpe, 2008).

Therefore, good governance at local level is important to secure countries long term development and progress even though it is not sufficient and it defines quality for development and a necessary condition for it (Abdalla, 2010).

Most researchers agree on the importance of the local good governance, and that its application would have achieved greater decentralization, addressed many challenges and constraints to local development, and contributed to more stability and equity as well as sustainable development. However, a number of challenges at the governorate and district levels have impeded its

full application and it attributed to weak monitoring and control mechanisms, as well as the little understanding of accounting, accountability, participation, rule of law and transparency (Berghof Foundation 2018).

Ethiopia like any other African country has faced a number of challenges in building good governance and local good governance. In order to address the gaps identified the government developed a multi-sectoral national capacity building strategy which advocates the principles of decentralization, regional autonomy, and efficiency to enhance popular participation and to promote good governance, accountability and transparency. In order to enhance the government has undertaken various reforms to improve the level of governance in the country (ECA, 2005, Cohen, and Mogues, 2008). Regardless of the various reforms implemented in the country, Ethiopia still faces various challenges in achieving good governance and ArbaMinch was not exceptional to this case.

Therefore, the study intended to assess selected elements of governance such as rule of law, participation, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in some selected institutions like the municipal office, administrative office, town revenue office and first instance court, tries to deal with the central issues of governance and its challenge in line with existing institutional role.

General objective

The overall objective of the study was to see the practice of local governance in the town with respect to its challenges and opportunities.

Specific objective

Based on the above general objective the following key points were identified as specific objective of the study

Factors that affect good governance in ArbaMinch city on basis of transparency, accountability, rule of law and participation

To identify the challenges in practicing local governance

Research Questions

Based on the above specific objective the researcher tries to develop the following research questions.

- What are the basic factors that influence the degree of transparency, accountability, rule of law and participation of citizens at the local level?
- What are challenges of good governance?

Literature review

Governance is the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organises itself to make and implement decisions achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action (UNDP, 2004). Governance comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests mediate their differences and exercise their legal

rights and obligations. It is the rules, institutions and practices that set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organisations and firms. Governance, including its social, political and economic dimensions, operates at every level of human enterprise, be it the household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe (UNDP, 2004).

Good governance seeks to improve the capacity of the state, encompassing a variety of strategies to increase efficiency and effectiveness of government performance and furthermore accountability, transparency and responsiveness on the part of government and its officials are the hallmark of good governance in any society (UNDP, 2005).

Local governance comprises as set of institutions, mechanisms and processes, through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations at a local level. The building blocks of good local governance are many: citizen participation, partnerships among key actors at the local level, capacity of the local actors, multiple flows of information, and accountability. And good governance enables to enhance and maintain the social, cultural, political, and economic elements of a community (UNDP, 2005).

PUBLIC SECTOR GOVERNANCE

Public sector governance as the processes by which organizations are directed, controlled and held to account. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, direction and control exercised in the organization Australian National Auditing Agency (ANOA) (2003). Public governance has “a very broad coverage, including how an organization is managed, its corporate and other structures, its culture, its policies and strategies and the way it deals with its various stakeholders (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003).

Public sector governance encompasses the policies and procedures used to direct an organization’s activities to provide reasonable assurance that objectives are met and that operations are carried out in an ethical and accountable manner. In the public sector, governance relates to the means by which goals are established and accomplished. It also includes activities that ensure a government’s credibility, establish equitable provision of services, and assure appropriate behaviour of government officials reducing the risk of public corruption.

According to World Bank (2005), sound functioning public sector that delivers quality public services consistent with citizen preferences as well as promoting private market-led growth as the same time managing fiscal resources prudently is considered critical to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. Public sector governance has objects of ensuring an institution achieves its overall outcomes in an aspect to enhance confidence in the institution, its decisions and actions. Good governance in public sector therefore means that the institution’s leadership, its staff, the government and in general the population can rely on the institution to perform its tasks well and with full probity and accountability.

Good public sector governance generally focuses on Performance or how institution uses of its governance

arrangements to contribute to its overall performance and the delivery of its goods, services or programs and conformance or how institution uses of its governance arrangements to make sure it meets the requirement of the law, regulation, published standards and community expectations of probity, accountability and openness (World Bank, 2005).

Unique governance principles arise from the unique nature of government, and are especially important in government. For instance, unique to the public sector is the importance of political forces, the not-for-profit nature, and the ultimate objective of public service for many governmental activities. Moreover, good public governance requires fair and impartially enforced legal frameworks. The absence of good governance structures and lack of adherence to basic governance principles increases the risk of public corruption, which is defined as the misuse of entrusted power for private gain.

There are governance principles critical for good public sector governance in addition to the basic governance principles described in the previous sections. These governance principles, critical for good public sector governance, are the principles of accountability, transparency, probity, and equity (Institute of Internal Auditor, 2006).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The practice of good governance in separate agencies and programs no longer satisfies citizens, politicians, economists, developmental planner and even researchers. This is true in urban land administration which ranks highly regarding corruption. Proper practice of good governance enhances effective urban land administration and leads to sustainable urban development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological part focused on; selection of study area, research design, source of data, sampling techniques, and data analysis methods. Descriptive research designs was used to describe systematically a situation, problem, phenomena program, administrative structure of organization, and the needs of community. Since the basic purpose of this study focuses on assessing the challenge of local good governance in case of ArbaMinch city.

The respondents of service users of each institution have been selected based on convenience sampling (accidental) method. This is due to the nature of the service user inaccessibility in fixed time and place and the pandemic (COVID19) in accessibility of the respondents (limited number of users who went to use service). Thus, the users of service in selected institution at different days were made to fill the questionnaires and key informants were selected from each institution through purposive sample selection.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data are questionnaires for sample survey, key informants' and direct personal observation were used. Secondary sources like data and factual information from various published materials, official documents. A well-

structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents who were used services from selected institutions and an in-depth interview was also made with the officials of selected institution. Finally data collected through quantitative and qualitative ways were organized and analyzed by using statistical tools .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present government has undertaken various reforms to improve the level of governance in the country such as The National Capacity Building Program (NCBP), Capacity Building for Decentralized Service Delivery (CBDS), Public Sector Capacity Building Program (PSCAP) (Cohen, and Mogues, 2008). Regardless of the various reforms implemented in the country, Ethiopia still faces various challenges in achieving good governance. To support this position it is necessary assess the level of good governance in the country.

Good Governance in ArbaMinch Town even though good governance is a result of complex interactions between different bodies, it is mainly based on practices of local good governance. Hence, the results of practices of town administration in ensuring good governance is analyzed in terms of good governance principles such as participation, , transparency, accountability, responsiveness, rule of law and effectiveness in achieving predetermined objectives. These governance attributes enable practitioners, administrators and residents to better compare good governance principles and work together to bring diverse resources, experiences and skills to bear on the improvement of administration on the town. To promote good governance the administrators' commitment is important that ensures the engagement of all stakeholders in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of town development activities. Creating an environment that permits community to fully participate in the process indicates the concern of administrators to citizens. The research identified several factors and challenges of good local governance in some public institution ArbaMinch town.

Factors Affecting Participation in Town's Affairs

Factors that hinder public participation in decision-making and implementations were manifold. In this regard respondents were given different factors that affect participation and choose from alternatives by indicating the major factors in relation to their effects on participation of community. Poor relationship between public officials and residents of the town is major factor that impede community participation in Town affairs. Lack of effective guidance from the administrator's (when to participate, how to participate) is another factor that setback community participation and lack of timely information which was rated as another factor by respondents.

Community participation

Participation is one of the key elements of good governance. It is the extent to which actors are involved in decision making process. Participation could be direct or through legitimate representation. The voice of citizens is particularly important in

all aspects of administration and residents should provide inputs. Members of the community need to understand city administrations extensive mission, how formal authority is shared and the scope and form of their involvement in governances (Shah 1997 cited in Asrat G 2010)

Participation of citizens' and other actors in over all activities of the city are considered to be good and there are mechanisms in administration through which youth association, business association, private sectors representatives and civil servants can participate in the decision making. Concerning participation of citizens in the city administrators with public, as confirmation of respondents large number of respondents replied that public institutions did not invite the public to discussion over official issues while there are respondents who replied that community participation with discussion of the public on certain issues that needs discussion or when the discussion are relevant to get input for their decision and governance.

Due to aforementioned factors, there are no possible opportunities for continual discussion of the public and the administrator's prevalence of such circumstance hinder the development of the town administration. Participatory governance and consensus orientation is a corner stone for good governance by mediating different interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the citizens. As in the interview conducted with key officials the main reason behind the town's low achievement in participation was the way that institutions mostly favored participation to be conducted through suggestion boxes put in the compound of most institutions rather than face to face discussion with customers or their representatives.

Transparency in Service Delivery

Transparency has to do with openness, truth and straight forwardness in the running of governmental affairs, which enables citizens to be part of the formulation of governmental policies either through their representatives or public opinion expressed in the media and favorably responded to by the government, which in turn enhances the support of the people at implementation of such policies for development (Ekpe, 2008). Transparency helps to evaluate where promised by government and its agencies are fulfilled or not, hence they serve as bench mark to assess good governance of the given institution.

Transparency and accountability are the core principles of good governance. Transparency can be important decision making to be open and clear for stakeholders and it encourages stake holder's involvement in decision making. Generally, transparency here is important to assess openness and clarity of information's, processes, institutional rules and decisions to community. Transparency mainly focused on the accessibility and the level of information disclosure to the public in decision-making and in the provision of goods and services. Hence, in this study it has been assessed based on some mechanisms that the good governance practiced to disclose and make accessible the necessary information. Disclosing procedures, clear and easily understandable; and informing staff members when important decisions are made are some of the indicators of

transparency. Accessing information, being transparent for the service users and having clear procedures to complain and suggest were considered as part of the study. As information obtained from respondents, town administration employed different mechanisms to disseminate information. Accordingly, the respondents pointed out that public meetings and public forums are the common mechanism that the town administration used to disclose information. Similarly, information from the interview stated that the common mechanisms that the administrators used to share information, decisions and other messages were public forum and meetings that held at different times. Hence it is challenging to reach all the community with timely information.

Openness is built upon free flow of information, its availability, direct accessibility and clarity in an understandable way for all stakeholders. Regarding openness in service provision, there are vagueness on openness for service users and how immediate responses and fair decisions are made, this due to that there different measurements are posted on citizen charter of the public institution which are not easily determinable. This indicates that the service provider is not open in service delivery and this shows a symptom of poor service delivery. The key informants also stated that there is a gap in service delivery of the town administrations. The current environment requires that institutions and processes should serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. According to the result observed, service users were not able to evaluate the institutions management. This is even further checked by the interviews conducted with key officials as they said the institutions were not made directly evaluated by their service users.

The Provision of Timely and Quality Services

Responsiveness was assessed based on how the public servants and administrators are responsive to the demand of the citizens periodically based on the duration that the customer would have waited to get service from the town administration.

With respect to the issue how the administrators are responsive to the demand of the citizens periodically based on the duration that the customer would have waited to get service from the town administration. From this the service delivery of the town administration took a long period of time in real-life situations. Effectiveness and efficiency are one of the core elements of good governance frequently used as indicators in governance measurement. Thus, the utilization of time in implementing programs and planed projects is very poor. The time aspect entails the responsiveness and speedy in which services are delivered. In this case the customer/service users couldn't receive a service in its time frame. Different activities and Projects were not completed on their schedule to be ready for services. Most of key informants have raised civil servants did not work full time. Due to this fact, community could not get timely services. As a result, community wastes its time by staying in public institution to get services. Therefore, there is poor time utilization to ensure effectiveness in ArbaMinch town administration.

Rule of Law in delivering service

It is understandable that the existence of properly set rule of law is a backbone to effective functioning of a country. Good governance, democracy and protection of human rights could only be reached if and only if independent and effective application of rule of law along with skilled manpower; law makers, judges and police forces are put in place.

Transparency allows people (including deprived) to gather information critical to reveal abuses and defend their interests; to take advantage of opportunity, access services, exercise their rights. Decisions need evidence which is logical for all stake holders. Decision of any public institution should be on logical evidence to get trust from the users. In this regard respondents replied that all public officials and public servants follow the procedural fellow and run each and every activity according to rules and regulation of the given institution. To deliver service public officials consider what the rule says and they use rule and regulation as bench mark for their service delivery. Even different compliance from service users are responded according to respective procedure of the given institution. In line with above all customers were being offered their services with irrespective of color, ethnicity, religion and language by considering the rule and regulations of the institution. This implies that real application of rules and regulation, however, there are some incidences that affect from individual professionals and customers how had the knowledge gap with respect to regulation of the public institutions. For example the municipality of the town had taken legal measures on those who had illegally settled in the city and near to the city area; this indicates that strict application of law within the town administration (ArbaMinch city government communication affairs, 2020).

Major Challenges of good governance in ArbaMinch Town

Good governance requires that institutions and process try to serve all stakeholders within reasonable time frame and it is also the ability of public administrators to give due concern to the needs and interests of its constituent. Despite a fairly well growing institutional and legal framework for good governance, challenges are bound to happen. The study sought to determine some of the challenges facing ArbaMinch town in implementing good governance practices. The public institutions in Ethiopia has been characterized by weak structures, inefficient services provision, poor capacity and the routine neglect of the due process of law in matters of public issue. The specific problems facing the ArbaMinch town administration as follows

Rent Seeking Attitudes

According to information of respondents there are incidences in the town that had been perceived as a major obstacle in improving the quality of governance. Instead of transparency things are get done in different public institutions and some sort of delivering services for relatives and friends in terms of favoritism. The gap of accountability mechanisms is another impediment to improve service provisions in the town. Complex

and unclear work procedures make it difficult for a citizen to get timely and quality services. The practice of maladministration has created frequent transfer of leaders and key civil servants that contributed to failure in delivery of services.

An interview conducted stated the idea that the main problem of challenge for under development in the area could be due to the existence of large numbers tax invader merchants and unable to pay tax as per their earn, rent seeker public servants and lack of awareness about the challenges of ups and downs on the side of the communities were some of the challenges to the administration of the city. Hence, trying to change the attitudes of the community about the disadvantage of challenges through communication office and public awareness will be conducted with great effort to reach in each community member.

Limited Resources and Demand challenges

According to key informants interview there are growing number of investment flow to the city and there private individual industrial activities in the town, all flow activities and interests needs resources and suitable environments furthermore, there is high demand for additional infrastructure services such as housing, pure water, roads and electrification. This clearly shows that being responsive for public needs is a question of additional resources beyond planned budgets. Handling the economic development at municipal level requires mobilizing the necessary resources which further require institutional capability in doing so. Town administration is expected to monitor development and facilitate the mobilization, distribution and allocation of resources, these adds the challenges up on the administration on the existing challenges and provide additional challenges on the existing responsibilities and on the scarce resources.

Lack of Commitment

It is clear that administrators have awareness, skill and in understanding their endeavor to ensure good governance. The interviewed agreed that most of the public officials and civil servants did not possess the same qualities such as openness and transparency. The interviewed respondents stated that an underlying characteristic of public officials and civil servants that results in effective or better performance in a job in this regard was unsatisfactory. Most of key informants argued that poor commitment is noticeable in implementing good governance in the town administrations. Lack of their commitment was mainly related with overcrowded issues, treating large number of customers per day and busy with planning of activities, supervising and monitoring. Hence they become more crowded with activities and these may lose their commitment and the like.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Town administration plays an important role in ensuring good governance which in turn create stable environment to enhance social, economic and political development. Without strong application of good governance principles there is no better and quality administration. Meanwhile administration faces different challenges in ensuring good governance in practice. This poor commitment practice of public officials in leadership can be expressed in terms of lack of sustainable tools of community participation, lack of poor relationship between public officials and community. Despite the public official's desire for good governance and institutional framework to practice good governance, the town still faces many challenges that undermine its realization of its governance low public participation; inadequate funds and low capacity hinder the full realization of good governance. The finding indicates that, maladministration, rent-seeking behaviors and loosely relationship between public officials resulted in poor consensus and trust on decisions made. The ways to disclose information to the public and seeking feedbacks, comments and opinion from the public at large is poor.

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