

Good Governance: Ethos and Ethics

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Abstract

Good governance is a buzzword which has gained prominence in the 21st century, with the advent of technology. It is a powerful tool through which human civilization can attain the attributes of sustainable development. It is a citizen friendly phenomenon that bridges the gap between the state and its stakeholders. On the other hand, poor governance will create chaos in the society thereby disrupting the functioning of the state and retarding the overall developmental process.

There are numerous impediment in the form of lawlessness, poverty, corruption, illiteracy, unemployment, etc. which may deter the aim of achieving good governance in totality. Thus, it is imperative that in this modern era of globalization effective measures should be taken to ensure implementation of the policies that are necessary for successful and efficient governance. The essential features and shortcomings must be identified and emphasis should be laid upon innovative approaches.

Keywords: Good governance; State; Technology; Innovation; Development

come out from the boundary of just decision-making and implementing.

Introduction

Since ages, the principle of democracy has been given wide prominence in all the administrative functions as well as by all the functionaries. The policies of the government were targeted to reach every strata of the community, low, medium or high, irrespective of caste, creed and other pre-dominant factors prevalent in the society. Crores and Crores of rupees were spent on numerous projects implemented by the government for the benefit of the target audience. But the outcome of these projects was not meeting the expectations of the governing bodies. Despite trying to reach all the stake holders with the available resources, through every possible ways, the reason for the so called 'inefficient and ineffective outcome' could not be ascertained and to trace out the factual reasons became a daunting task for the state. Considering the existing scenario, the need for governance over government was felt as the imminent driving force required to overcome the hindrance. Philosophy of good governance was recognized by the pundits as the most effective tool for achieving sustainable development, cater to the needs of the mankind and establish a civilized society. Since then, the principle of good governance gained importance in almost all facets of administration and it became one of the most advocated theories in this domain.

The study of governance and its implications is at par with the concept of democracy and its enforcement. It is about how the government and the civil society arrive at a decision and implementation of the decision in meeting their needs. It is thus a two pronged process of decision making and the procedures followed for the implementation of these decisions.

But with the passage of time and advent of technology, it was felt necessary that the system of governance must take a step forward and

Evolution of Good Governance

The foundation of the concept of good governance can be traced back to the ancient period when the men and women of that primitive era demanded for a 'good living' rather than existence for the sake of mere life. The evolution of human values, culture and desire for so called 'good living', from generation to generation, gave birth to the foundation of good governance which we discussed in modern time [1].

In the modern era of globalisation and innovation, the term 'good governance' is fervently used in literature. In particular, the notion of 'good governance' is considered as a necessary pre-requisite for creating an environment amicable for eradicating poverty and ensuring sustainable human development. Good governance has also gained importance all across the globe particularly in the socio-economic forum, multi-national platforms including the WTO, UNESCO, IMF, etc. In the Indian perspective the notion of good governance has been earmarked in the five year plan and greater emphasis has been laid upon by the government to ensure healthy public participation in achieving the target of absolute governance. It has become one of the essential priorities of formulating the principle of "less government and more governance" [2]. The basic ingredients of good governance are believed to be participatory in nature, transparent, accountable, effective, and equitable and promotes rule of law.

Good governance has become a buzzword in development today. Combating corruption, raising accountability of the actors and promoting transparency in the functioning of the state are being increasingly perceived as being indispensable for achieving good governance. A sense of realisation has developed that robust

engagement with the society is at the heart of good governance and active participation of the stake holders has become a persistent premise in the phenomenon of imparting the essence of the inherent policies of good governance to the end users i.e. impact on the citizens - the ultimate beneficiaries [3].

Good governance has grown rapidly in the developed countries and has become a major ingredient for economic and political development. Buoyed by the emphatic success rate of the policies adopted for good governance in the developed countries, the third world countries have also made a far flung approach in this area and prioritised to boost the use of effective and efficient means of good governance for sustainable development in the socio, economic and political scenario. Innumerable steps were taken in this domain to establish an ardent and sophisticated scenario and set right the very concept of governance over government. By the 21st century, a substantial quantum of the development agenda was related to good governance. National and International agencies were set up, departments of governance were created, advisors and researchers were employed, and above all funding for good governance planning were increased. Through these effective measures and with the advent of science and technology, the notion was achieved to a large extent [4]. The principle of good governance over government leaped into its culmination.

Characteristics of Good Governance

In order to have the attributes of good governance, the policies adopted by the administration should have the following features:

Good governance should be accountable

Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Every decision taken has its own consequences and the decision maker has an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of such decisions. Accountability in this context is about bridging the gap between the actors and the stake holders.

Good governance should be transparent

People should be able to follow and understand the decision-making process. This means that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made. For an effective and a result oriented transparent policy, it is not only about informing the people about decisions that affect them, but also lets them know the grounds on which such decisions have been taken. An informed citizen is always a resourceful one.

Good governance should follow the rule of law

“*No one is above the law*” and “*Parity before Law*” is the maxim that defines the principle of the rule of law. Rule of law not only guarantees the liberty of the stake holders with respect to their participation in the process of attainment of governance but it also set forth the parameters of goals to be achieved by the government and thereby it makes government more coherent and responsible in decision-making. The principle of rule of law is abiding by the principle of jurisprudence [5].

Good governance should be responsive

An administration who works for the betterment of its people and who is attentive as well as responsive to the demands of its stakeholders is said to set a paradigm of responsive governance. With its handful of

resources and pro-active planning, it must effectively cope with emerging challenges in society. Governance is said to be successful if it is receptive to the needs of the masses and cater to the demands of the community at stake in appropriate and responsive manner.

Good governance should be equitable and inclusive

If the interest of the stake holders is considered by the actors in the decision making process, it leads to the well-being of the entire community and entails to sustainable development of the mankind. This inclusive nature of governance will curb down the vulnerability in the society and will provide equal opportunities to all member groups particularly the lower strata of the society to participate in the decision making process [6]. A society's well-being depends on how the members are being ensured of their social status and inclusion in the architect of their good living.

Good governance should be effective and efficient

Government should implement its decisions in such a manner so that resources available at its disposal are effectively and efficiently utilized. It will have a qualitative impact on the functioning of the administration and will ensure the best possible results for their community. State should produce outcome based results that cater to the needs of the society.

Good governance should be participatory

Participation of the people in the development and decision making process is one of the epitome of good governance. In any kind of decision making process, the stake holders should be allowed to participate and have their say in the setting of the governance. The concept of good governance originated from the maxim of democracy viz. of the people, for the people and by the people. The very nature of this hypothesis should be preserved at all cost. Any policy or decision of the state where it is of participatory in nature will bear the fruits of success. Participation of the stake holders can happen in several ways - they may be provided with the information, asked for their opinion, representations submitted by them should be given due consideration in the decision making process. The participation in order to be effective needs to be informed and organized [7]. The top-down mechanism of participation in an organisation and the existence of an organised civil society are the core factors that determine the success of a participatory prone governance system.

Good Governance: Hindrance and Opportunities

Undoubtedly, good governance can help to secure human well-being and sustainable development. But at the same time, in a developing country like India where population explosion has been a major concern, there are many issues which hinders the growth and productivity of the nation thereby retarding the scope of establishing the notion of ‘*absolute good governance*’ [8]. Some of the factors which adversely affect the process are enumerated hereunder.

- Poverty, growing population and gender inequality.
- Unemployment, lack of awareness among the masses and digital divide.
- Non-transparency and non-accountability in the working of the state.
- Lack of equality of opportunity and participation in the functioning of state mechanism.

Though there are ample roadblocks in the path of achieving good governance, but there are also certain attributes that can be contemplated for improving the efficiency of governance. Need of the hour is combatting the social menace of corruption, poverty and other factors that hinders the development of the mechanism. Greater mass awareness on socio-economic diversity, strengthening human rights, securing gender equality, galvanizing accountability and large scale political participation are characteristics of good governance and essential ingredients to ensure probity and equity.

Steps for ensuring Good Governance

Good governance is not a state that can be created by chance nor can it be built over night. It must be demanded and nourished explicitly so that the foundation of the pyramid is deep rooted and it has a strong binding characteristics upon the society to which it belongs consciously [9,10]. Without good governance, no amount of developmental schemes can bring in improvement in the quality of life of the citizens. Good governance must strive to achieve all the essential traits of the civilized society. In short, it means security, justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services [11]. An effective, efficient and democratic government that fulfills all the requirements of the community is the best sponsor of social justice as well as protector of an orderly civil society.

In a nutshell it can be assessed that good governance plays a key role in the socio-economic development of any nation and thus it is imperative to ensure good and efficient governance for all round upliftment. A number of steps can be taken for improving the quality of governance which are enumerated below-

- Good Governance can be strengthened by democratic decentralization and active participation of people.
- An informed citizenry is an essential parameter for achieving good governance. Emphasis must be laid upon disclosure of information in the public domain and its easy access for the citizens.
- The use of information technology should be prioritised. Awareness must be created among the masses about the benefits of IT.
- Illiteracy is a major cause of hindrance for socio-economic development. Participation of all classes in the process of governance will help in curbing this impediment from the society.
- One of the major hindrances observed in enhancing the quality of good governance is corruption. It is that blatant evil in the civil society which has caused maximum damage on the process of achieving maximum governance. Its adverse impact on the economy is deep rooted. Mobilising public awareness and empowering anticorruption agencies will eradicate this menace from the society, further ensuring that the resources which belong to the masses are used effectively in a right direction.
- Empowering women and deprived class of the society is an important aspect in achieving the target of good governance. This will also safeguard the constitutional rights of these sections of the society and will motivate the educationally and economically backward ones to engage in the development process. Empowering the society would also act as a panacea in curbing corruption from the society.

Conclusion

The traditional philosophy of good governance was perceived as a rule abiding government that preserves the rule of law, work for the physical, social and cultural infrastructural development, creates an environment for growth that is acceptable to the society, and ensures justice, equality and political freedoms. But with the changing scenario demand for good governance has taken a new turn. Today, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, equitability, sustainable development, have become the key ingredients of good governance.

In this era of globalisation and innovation, the notion of good governance has been a key ideology for an effective and efficient state. To ensure sustainable human development the ethos and ethics of good governance must be adhered to in principle. Though there are numerous challenges in achieving the paradigm of good governance in totality, but adequate steps in creating awareness among the masses and ensuring their active participation in large scale from grass root level will enable the state to curb the menace. In order to ensure a transparent and efficient administration along with safeguarding the essence of democracy, the civil society should actively participate in the architect of good governance, which would lay down the foundation of a developed nation. The invent of Information Technology and its wide applications in all spheres has created yet another challenge to cope up with.

Thus, it is a well-established doctrine that in order to achieve sustainable development, economic prosperity, infrastructural growth and upliftment of mankind, the essence of good governance must be preserved at all cost and all the actors should be pro-active to attain the ideal paradigm. Good governance sets the path of a successful and good government, which finally lay the foundation of a developed and civilized society.

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