

Good Governance

Dr. Deepika Agrawal

Associate Professor

Abstract – Nearly every major development agency now says that the promotion of good governance is an important aspect of its objective. Despite this accord, "good governance" is an extraordinarily elusive goal: it signifies different things to various organisations and to various players within them. This paper reviews the approach of donors and explores the concept of good governance. The study argues that, though often esoteric, methodological discussions have a real relevance to development policies because donor agencies regularly measure and evaluate the quality of governance, make sure that assistance is provided, try to design evidence-based policies and justify their focus on governance on the grounds, among other things, that better governance promotes e-government. Each of these undertakings is questioned by the fragility of the concept of good governance. Future study would do well to break up the concept of good governance and to focus on its many components as defined above (e.g., democracy, the rule of law, efficient public management).

-----X-----

INTRODUCTION

Governance has received serious concern and due attention from research scholars, policy makers, bureaucrats, politicians and the International community. It has gained not only vital importance in the development of any society but has become indispensable part in the development strategy, since 1990's onwards, the topic has become so dear that everybody including the leaders, the masses, the ruling party, the big business man, the common man. Every one examines governance as per their respective preference. However, it is beyond doubt that the government is the most powerful institution. But in the present era of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, free market economy contracts, structural adjustments and the formulation and implementation of public policy has not only been influenced but sometimes undertaken by the Non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The corporate sector and civil society, multinational corporations and transnational corporations are also influencing in managing the affairs of the country. Here it has become necessary to understand the difference between governance & government.

Oxford dictionary defines Governance as, "*The act or manner of governing or the way of control*". Government refers to the machinery and institutional arrangement to exercise sovereign power to serve the political community or people at large, whereas governance is the art of ruling. It is the process of exercising control and power and mobilizing society in such a way that people at large accept it and continues their patronage constantly.

Governance as a process denotes a value free dispensation, or the action or manner of governing a state whereas good governance requires certain value assumptions.

The word good is derived from the word God and carries a sense of judgment i.e. what is right, what is wrong, what is just, what is unjust, what is fair, what is unfair, what is moral and what is immoral.

Thus the action or manner of governance is right, just fair and moral etc., then it is good. It also means that the authority if exercised, or the judgments if made, are in public interest, then it comes within the ambit of good governance, there the question then arises what is public interest. The very word public interest comes closer to western thinking represented by Bentham, 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people'. Public interest, on the contrary according to Hindu concept 'served' signifies common good i.e. good of all and everyone, instead good of maximum possible. Thus from the Indian perspective, the dictum 'sarvajana hitaya, sarvajana Sukhaya, aimed at the welfare of all and every one. Thus public service as an 'ideal' is the classical view of good governance.

The concept of governance has been an age- old concept and from 14th century onwards, has been in use with different meaning from the concept of rule to serve. It derives its relevance in the context of mis-governance, non-management, misuse of power, fraud, scams, cheat, bribery etc. found all around, especially in the developing and third world countries. The concept of good governance becomes an attractive remedy/panacea against

these ills of the state and government. It included both process and procedure to save the states and societies, so that sustainable development is really possible.

Good governance as a concept has certain value assumptions i.e. value caring, citizen friendly, and people partaking. Good governance is a commitment to improve in quality of life of people. It refers to establishing greater efficiency, legitimacy and credibility. It is committed to provide effective administration within the framework of democracy with considerable efficiency.

Thus, good governance consists of Rule of law, accountability decentralization, and honesty in public affairs, independence of judiciary, availability of human rights, equality of treatment, absence of inequality on the foundation of caste, creed, color, race, sex, region or religion or language etc.

Against the mal governance, the World Bank has focused some key features of good governance, such as public sector management, accountability, the legal- frame for development, information and transparency. The following administrative aspects had been identified by World Bank as crucial for the developed and developing countries:

- (1) Political accountability
- (2) Regular Elections of political Institution to legitimize their political power
- (3) People's participation
- (4) Rule of Law
- (5) Independence of Judiciary
- (6) Bureaucratic Accountability
- (7) Freedom of information
- (8) Transparency
- (9) Effective and efficient administrative system
- (10) Cooperation between government and civil society
- (11) Improving quality of public service
- (12) Improving productivity of employees
- (13) Eradicating corruption & re-establish credibility of government.

The logical conclusion that follows from the above discussion, is that the 19th as well as the 20th centuries predominantly had overtone of constitutionalism i.e. constitutional development, rule of Law etc. but towards the fag end of 20th century,

the requirement and demand of good governance overshadowed all other aspects. The maxim of J. Stuart Mill- The great political thinker, that, 'that government is best that governs the least', with the onset of the notion of good governance the aforesaid maxim is becoming a reality.

In the Indian context and otherwise also, good governance is the prerequisite of a welfare state, as Welfare state and good governance goes hand in hand and are synonym with each other. The goal of good governance is being realized through the effective implementation of instruments such as Right to information, Citizens charter, Downsizing the government and Privatization of Public Enterprises, so as to keep the government out of business since the state is to govern and not to get into running business & Industry. In the Modern Era, the present government is taking people friendly measures so as to realize the goal of 'welfare state'.

The major welfare schemes devised and implemented by the present day government such as Jan Dhan Yojna, Skill India Mission, Make in India, Swachh Bharat mission, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna, Shramew Jayate Yojna, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao since 2014 and programmes like Digital India mission, smart city scheme etc. from 2015 onwards. More such programmes like Prime Minister Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna, Bharat Nirman Yojna etc. the present government has made it possible to translate good governance into a reality and through these programmes and schemes the notion of welfare state and good governance have become the cardinal principle of governance.

Good Governance has become akin to the government and state apparatus to carry out its task. The good governance is inseparable from the government and if anybody makes an attempt to govern devoid of good governance whether state or union, in such an event such government will become unpopular and shall be voted out sooner or later.

REFERENCES

1. Abrahamsen, R. (2000). Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa. London: Zed Books.
2. Besançon, M. (2003). 'Good Governance Rankings: The Art of Measurement'. Cambridge, Massachusetts: World Peace Foundation and WPF Program on Intrastate Conflict and Conflict Resolution, Harvard University. WPF Reports, No. 36.
3. Collier, D., and J. Gerring (2009). Concepts & Method in Social Science: The

Tradition of Giovanni Sartori. Oxford and New York: Routledge.

4. Doorenspleet, R. (2004). 'The Structural Context of Recent Transitions to Democracy'. *European Journal of Political Research*, 43(3): pp. 309-35.
5. Doornbos, M. (2001). "'Good Governance': The Rise and Decline of a Policy Metaphor?" *Journal of Development Studies*, 37(6): pp. 93-108.
6. Gerring, J. (1999). 'What Makes a Concept Good? A Criteria Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences'. *Polity*, 31(3): pp. 357-93.
7. Grindle, M. (2004). 'Good Enough Governance: Poverty Reduction and Reform in Developing Countries'. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 17(4): pp. 525-48.
8. Grindle, M. (2010). 'Good Governance: The Inflation of an Idea'. *Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, RWP 10-023, Harvard Kennedy School.
9. Kurtz, M., and A. Schrank (2007a). 'Growth and Governance: Models, Measures, and Mechanisms'. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(2): pp. 538-54.
10. Mauro, P. (1995). 'Corruption and Growth'. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 110(3): pp. 681-712.
11. Resnick, D., and R. Birner (2006). 'Does Good Governance Contribute to Pro-poor Growth?: A Review of the Evidence from Cross-country Studies'. *DSGD Discussion Paper 30*, Development Strategy and Governance Division, International Food Policy Research Institute.
12. Santiso, C. (2001). 'Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: The World Bank and Conditionality'. *The Georgetown Public Policy Review*, 7(1): pp. 1-22.
13. Williams, G. (2009). 'Good Governance'. In R. Kitchin and N. Thrift (eds), *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*. London: Elsevier. 606-14.