



GOOD GOVERNANCE: AN INDIAN THEORY

Dr. GOVADA VEERRAJU

Associate Professor & Head
Dept. of Political Science & Public
Administration
Andhra University, Visakhapatnam

BURADA VYKUNTA RAO

Research Scholar (Part-Time)
Dept. of Political Science and Public
Administration, Andhra University
Visakhapatnam

Abstract: *The term 'governance' had become popular especially since 1990s with the usage of the term by international donor agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme. These included no availability of information to the people, lack of accountability, poor management of the public sector and lack of appropriate legal framework. By the mid-16th century, however, government denoted a "system by which something is governed" and by the early 18th century it further evolved to acquire the meaning of a "governing authority." In this process the term governance gradually became marginalized, and by the 19th century it was deemed to reflect an incipient archaism. Today's world has been changing very rapidly which influence a lot at the day today functioning of the Government. With the development of science and technology the society has been changing which influence a lot to the concept of governance. The develop countries of the world today give importance to the concept of good governance. Since modern people are very conscious about the day today activities of the government therefore government also try to make their system more transparent and accountable so that it can fulfil the wishes of the modern democratic system. Good governance creates an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is essential complement to sound economic policies.*

Key Words: *Good Governance, India, Local, Society, People.*

Introduction

Governance in simple terms means the process of decision-making and its implementation in collective problem situations. The term 'governance' had become popular especially since 1990s with the usage of the term by international donor agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) etc. The developing countries including India, as we all know, are dependent on the developed countries for technical and financial assistance. The international institutions, for the first time in the

beginning of 1990s, drew attention to certain crucial deficiencies in the governance system of the developing countries. These included no availability of information to the people, lack of accountability, poor management of the public sector and lack of appropriate legal framework. Governance emphasizes not just routine implementation of policies and programmes but making the entire activity accountable, democratic, participative and responsive to people's needs.

The concept of 'Governance' is not new. It is as old as government itself. Both



the terms are derived respectively, from the old French word's governance and government. Initially their meanings were very close, referring to acts or manner of government. By the mid-16th century, however, government denoted a "system by which something is governed" and by the early 18th century it further evolved to acquire the meaning of a "governing authority." In this process the term governance gradually became marginalized, and by the 19th century it was deemed to reflect an incipient archaism. For the next 100 years, it would hardly be used as a political term. Dictionaries would define government in terms of a governing authority, including the political order and its institutional framework, while governance was treated as the agency and process of governing, and was often viewed as archaic. However, during 1980s under economic reforms, especially under globalization the use of term governance became popular with its emphasis on the process and manner of governing to the notion of sustainable development. Meanwhile, organizations such as the IMF, NGOs, the UN and its agencies, the World Bank and international media were quick to pick up the term and use it in a variety of ways. Together with its derived term, good governance, the catch-all term governance has since become a buzzword in the vocabulary of polity and administrative reform in developing countries dependent on support from international development agencies.² The concept of Good Governance has gained prominence around the world in recent times. It has become a buzzword in the vocabulary of polity and administrative reform, mainly due to the importance given to it by international community. Actually the term governance has become synonymous to sound development management. In

recent times the concept of Good Governance first emerged in the mid-1980s as governability with the emphasis on adherence to the rule of law. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, the term governance came to be used to define the reinventing of public administration, particularly in the developing countries, to make it more receptive to the needs of globalization.

Today's world has been changing very rapidly which influence a lot at the day today functioning of the Government. With the development of science and technology the society has been changing which influence a lot to the concept of governance. The develop countries of the world today give importance to the concept of good governance. Since modern people are very conscious about the day today activities of the government therefore government also try to make their system more transparent and accountable so that it can fulfill the wishes of the modern democratic system. Good governance creates an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is essential complement to sound economic policies

Meaning of Good Governance In 1989 World Bank study "Sub-Saharan Africa-from Crisis to Sustainable Growth", the term 'Governance' was first used to describe the need for institutional reform and a better and more efficient public sector in Sub-Saharan countries. It defined governance as "the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs."³ However, it did not explicitly refer to the connotation 'good'. It was only in the foreword, that former World Bank President Barber Conable (1986-1991) used the term 'good governance', referring to it as a "public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable and an administration that is accountable to its



public.”⁴ The concept of governance was further developed in the Bank’s 1992 publication ‘Governance and Development’. In this publication, governance was defined as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development.”⁵ Later on in 1994, the Bank substantiated this definition, “Governance is epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions; and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law”.⁶ Subsequently in 1998 World Bank’s annual report Governance in Asia: From crisis to Opportunity, presented a more cogent concept of good governance. The report elaborates four key components of good governance: accountability, transparency, predictability and participation.⁷ The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines governance as “the use of political authority and exercise of control in a society in relation to the management of its resources for social and economic development”⁸ The United Nations Development Programme, defines governance as “the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels. Governance comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their political rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.”⁹ So, Good Governance signifies a participative manner of governing that functions in a responsible, accountable, and transparent manner based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy, and consensus for

the purpose of promoting the rights of individual citizens and the public interest, thus indicating the existence of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustainable development with social justice.

History of Good Governance in India

The idea of Good Governance is as old as Indian civilization. The rulers were bound by *dharma*, popularly called as ‘*Raj Dharma*’, which precisely meant for ensuring good governance to the people. Even though monarchy prevailed, there was no place for any theory of the divine rights of the kings or of arbitrary rule. *Raj Dharma* was the code of conduct or the rule of law that was superior to the will of the ruler and governed all his actions. This description of Good Governance founded 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. Bhisma Pitamaha, who had mastered the art of governance and had dedicated himself to the throne of his kingdom. The *Rig Veda* states the dual purposes of our life are emancipation of the soul and welfare of the world. *Brihadarany Upanishad* while recognizing the importance of good governance stressed that, it is the responsibility of the king to protect Dharma, the public good, so that all citizens get equal opportunity Good



Governance has been the proclaimed aim of government since ever before the attainment of independence. This is reflected in the Independence resolution passed in Lahore on 26th Jan 1930. An Administrative Reform Commission was appointed on Jan. 5th, 1966 with Shri Morarji Desai as its chairman, and it had submitted its report to government by June 1970. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) was constituted on 31 August 2005, as a Commission of Inquiry, under the Chairmanship of Veerappa Moily for preparing a detailed blueprint for revamping the public administrative system.

Good Governance Characteristics

The United Nations (UN) has given 8 major characteristics of good governance. They are briefly described below:

Participation

- A vital cornerstone of good governance is participation by all sections of society.
- This includes men and women, vulnerable sections of society, backward classes, minorities, etc.
- Representative democracy does not necessarily translate into the representation of all people. This is where good governance comes into play.
- Participation also implies freedom of association and expression.

Transparency

- This means easy access to information to all concerned and especially to those being affected by the decisions made.
- This also implies information is available to the media.
- Another important fact is that all decisions are taken and enforced in such a manner that all rules and regulations are followed.

Rule of Law

- Rule of law warrants that fair legal frameworks are implemented impartially.
- It also means protection of human rights.
- This also requires an adequate and impartial judiciary and police force.

Responsiveness

- This implies that processes and institutions should serve all stakeholders within a reasonable time frame.

Consensus oriented

- Consensus oriented decision-making ensures that even if everyone does not achieve what they want to the fullest, a common minimum can be achieved by everyone which will not be detrimental to anyone.
- Good governance is consensus-oriented. A broad consensus should be reached by proper mediation.
- For this, a proper understanding of the society's historical, cultural and social contexts is needed; along with sustainable human development.

Equity and inclusiveness

- Good governance assures an equitable society.
- In such a society, no one or no section feels left out and marginalized.
- Opportunities should be given to all irrespective of their backgrounds, and no one should be discriminated.

Effectiveness and efficiency

- Good governance implies that institutions and processes create results that meet the wants of



society while making optimal use of resources at their disposal.

- This also encompasses the sustainable use of natural resources and the conservation of the environment.

Accountability

- This is a key trait of good governance.
- Accountability is not possible without the rule of law and transparency.
- Accountability should be there not just for the government, but also for citizens, the private sector, industry, NGOs, and all stakeholders.

Nature of Good Governance in India

- The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) highlighted the following features of Good Governance in India:
- 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.
- This is a basic requirement for the legitimacy of the government and its responsibility to the electorate.
- 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.
- Transparency is also critical, both to ensure accountability, and also to enable genuine participation
- The government must be effective and efficient in delivering social and economic public services, which are its primary responsibilities.
- Where the responsibility for delivery of key services such as primary

education and health is at the local level, this requires a special attention for ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of local governments.

- . This is particularly relevant for the *Panchayati Raj* Institutions
- The rule of law must be firmly established. This is relevant not only for relations between the government and individuals, enabling individuals to demand their rights, but also for relations between individuals or businesses.
- A modern economic society depends upon increasingly complex interactions among private entities and these interactions can be efficiently performed only if legal rights are clear and legal remedies for enforcing these rights are swift.
- The entire system must function in a manner which is seen to be fair and inclusive

Attributes of Poor Governance

- Poor management of economies, persisting fiscal imbalances, and level of development across regions and across districts.
- Denial of basic needs of food, water and shelter to a substantial proportion of the population;
- Threat to life and personal security in the face of inadequate State control on law and order;
- Marginalization, exclusion or even persecution of people on account of social, religious, caste or even gender affiliations
- Lack of sensitivity, transparency and accountability in many facets of the working of State machinery, particularly those that have an interface with the public;
- Lack of credibility – the gap between the intent and the actions – of some institutions in society;



- Inadequate system of incentives/disincentives for people (particularly for a civil servant), subversion of rules, evasion of taxes and failure in getting timely justice;
- Existence of a significant number of voiceless poor with little opportunities for participating even in institutions of local self-governance, despite a visible movement towards decentralization through the Panchayati Raj institutions; and
- Deterioration of physical environment, particularly in urban areas.
- Reservation of not less than 1/3rd of the elected seats in each panchayat for women,
- Rotation of reservations of chairpersons of village Panchayats at intermediate level, and at district level.
- By the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, an attempt was made to revamp the Urban Local Government with a view to ensure for its stability, more representativeness and more powerful role.
- By this act three tier urban local bodies have been set up i.e.

Steps Taken for Good Governance in India

- Good Governance can be ensured and strengthened by democratic decentralization and active participation of people in the process of governance.
- By the 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, a serious attempt was made to ensure regular, active and efficient working of the local bodies in the rural areas i.e *Panchayati Raj* institutions.
- The Act also added the Eleventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The new act recognized the three-tier structure of the *Panchayati Raj* i.e
 - ❖ The *Gram Sabha* and *Gram Panchayat* at the village level,
 - ❖ A *Panchayat* or *Panchayat Samiti* at the intermediate level and
 - ❖ The *Zila Parishad* at the district level.
- The other important provisions of the act are; reservation of seats for SCs, STs and BCs in proportion of their population.
- Reservation of the posts of chairpersons for the SCs and STs in a state,
- Nagar Panchayats for fast urbanizing rural areas,
- Municipal Councils for smaller urban areas and
- Municipal Corporations for larger urban areas.
- The act has fixed the term of five years for urban bodies.
- The provision for reservation of seats for SCs, STs, OBCs and women has also been made.
- Right to Information Act was passed by the Parliament on June 15th 2005.
- The main thrust of the act is to change the culture of secrecy that has long continual troubles to India's monolithic bureaucracy.
- In this way the RTI Act 2005 seeks to deepen Indian democracy by empowering the citizens to obtain the needed information from the public authorities at the national, state and local levels and aims at good governance
- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), 2005, which has now been renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a step towards



- implementing the provision of Right to Work.
- It is the largest social welfare scheme of its kind in the world.
 - Illiteracy is the major hurdle in the way of Good Governance
 - In this respect the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, may be legitimately hailed as one of major landmark legislations that have been enacted by Parliament with a view to achieve the objectives of Good Governance.
 - The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 popularly known as RTE seeks to make free and compulsory education a fundamental Right for all children in the age-group 6-14 years.
 - National Health Mission is another initiative undertaken with a view to ensure good governance by providing health care to the people.
 - Under it a sub mission The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) 2005, was launched to provide effective rural health care with special focus on 18 poor performing states on different health indicators.
 - Similarly National Urban Health Mission (NUHM) was launched in 2013 as being the other sub-mission under the overarching National Health Mission to meet the healthcare challenges of the urban poor
 - The mission comes at a time when poverty in India is becoming urbanized. By 2030, urbanization rate will touch 50 per cent.
 - The National Food Security Bill 2013, also known as Right to Food Act, for wiping out hunger and malnutrition from the country, is another step to establish good governance in India.
 - It provides for food subsidy to two-thirds of the population and enables them to satisfy their basic needs of food.
- The landmark legislation aimed at providing cheap food grain to nearly 82 crore people in the country
 - The Direct Benefits Transfer Scheme, launched in January 2013, leverages the *Aadhaar* system to usher in greater transparency and improve targeting, eliminate wastage and enhance efficiency.
 - E-governance is a powerful tool of good governance. The National e-Governance Plan has the vision to “Make all Government services accessible to the common man

Conclusion:

Our Constitution provides a clear mandate for democratic decentralization not only through the Directive Principles of State Policy which exhorts the State to promote Panchayati Raj Institutions but more specifically through the 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution which seek to create an institutional framework for ushering in grassroots democracy through the medium of genuinely self-governing local bodies in both urban and rural areas of the country. These self-governing local bodies are the third tier of governance in the country. Therefore, when we evaluate the growth and development of the self-governing local bodies, we understand our position in Good Governance.

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