

POLITICS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

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"Strong Government doesn't mean simply military power or an efficient intelligence apparatus . Instead, it should mean effective, fair administration - in other words, Good Governance"

- Raghuram Rajan

1.0 Introduction

This paper analysis the concept of good governance and the development of the concept from governance to good governance. This concept has changed over the past 20-30 years, and focusing especially on the interdependence of good governance and politics.

It is fair to say that until the late 1980's, Governance was not a word heard frequently within the development community. But since then from an unheard word, it has changed into a buzzword

used frequently in government institutions, international agencies, and academics institutions, even it has caught the attention of laymen. International and Multilateral Agencies have adopted it as a general guiding principle to improve the capacity of the recipient countries to handle development assistance better and utilize it more efficiently.

The term Good Governance was introduced in the development process by a world bank study, which focused on the role of state in the development process. So now politics, good governance, democracy, human rights, and administration are all concept and concern associated with the process of governance.

After a brief study of governance and its importance this paper will focus on the politics, by defining the politics and its relation with the governance because it is governance which sets the course the country takes, direction of development and future of politics. Good governance is not possible without political institutions themselves being accountable, transparent and responsive to people.

After that a small section of this paper will focus on political parties also because it is the starting point from where problem of opaqueness and corruption emerges.

2.0 Governance

This section describes the concept of governance and its emergence. The complexity of this concept is difficult to capture in a simple definition.

Establishment of policies and continuous monitoring of their proper implementation by the member of the governing body of an organization. It includes the mechanism required to balance the power of members (with the associated accountability) and their primary duty of enhancing the prosperity and viability of the organization (business dictionary: definition) .

The need for governance exist any time a group of people come together to accomplish an end. Though the governance literature proposes several definitions, most rest on three dimensions: Authority, Decision making, and Accountability.

Governance determines who has power, who makes decision, how other players make their voice heard and account is rendered. *"Governance is how society or group within it, organize to make decision."*(institute of governance: definition)

2.1 Origin and Ascendency of the Concept

The Concept of "Governance" is not new. However it means different things to different people. The concept has been around in both political and academic discourse for a long time, referring in a generic sense to the task of running a government. In this regard the general definition provided by Webster's third new international dictionary (1986:982) is of some assistance, indicating only that governance is synonym for government. The rise in the popularity in the use of the term governance is closely linked with the redefinition of the role of state.

In effective development policies and poor implementation of policies by state together with inefficient and incompetent absorption of international aid, triggered the search for alternative framework for policy making and alternative institution for delivering public services(kuldeep mathur 2013).

It is now widely known that governance was first used by The World Bank in its report on Sub-Saharan Africa in 1989. In this report, the bank suggests that the program of fiscal adjustment and investment in the region were being rendered ineffective by a "Crisis of Governance". What the bank saw in its experience of advancing structural adjustment program was the weak role of the state and its institution in implementing these program. This led bank, in its initial formulation, to focus on managerial and administrative competence as a strategy to improve governance (World Bank 1989, World Bank 1992) and committed itself to the seemingly more apolitical and largely technical strategy of improving governance. What was advocated was a slim but efficient administrative state, detached from its prior pervasive involvement in economic matters.

The role of state was redefined in the world development report 1992. State could undertake basic investment in and management of, essential social and physical infrastructure, but its central role to encourage a free and fair play of market forces in an impartial, open and accountable manner. So what the World Bank did in redefining the state was to shift the focus from the government to governance. But this shift reflected the ascendance of Neo-Liberal ideology in economic theory in public policy from the 1970's in the western world.

2.2 Governance to Good Governance

The 1989 study on Sub-Saharan Africa introduced governance without explicitly referring to connotation "Good". It was only in the forward that former world bank President "Barber Conable" used the form "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"(kuldeep mathur 2013). In following publication the bank firstly avoided the frequent use of the word "good" in connection with governance. According to Frischtak a reason for this reluctance could have been that the use of adjective "Good" referred to a subjective view on the performance of a state and that interpretation of the meaning of "Good Governance" could vary (nicole maldone doctoral workshop). Nevertheless, the bank started using the term "Good Governance" more and more frequently.

3.0 Dimensions of Governance

The concept of governance indicates a shift away from well-established notion of the way government sought to resolve social issues through top-down approach.

In summarizing the perspective of governance identified in the literature, stocker lays down five dimensions Anneme ek jaer 2004).

These dimensions are:

- A. Governance refers to a complex set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond the government.
- B. Governance recognize the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.
- C. Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institution involved in collective action.
- D. Governance is about autonomous self- governing network of actors.

More simply put, governance is concerned with network of relationship of three actors- State, Market, and Civil-Society (kuldeep Mathur 2013) . So it is an interactive process where government may like to impose its will but its acceptance will depend on compliance and action of other.

4.0 Indicator of Good Governance

Eight indicator of good governance Anneme ek jaer 2004).

Good Governance is understand through its eight indicators as characteristics : 1.Participatory 2.Rule of Law 3.Effective and Efficient 4.Transparent 5.Responsive 6.Equitable and Inclusive 7.Consenses Oriented 8.Accountability

They are inextricably related to each other.

4.1 Participation : Good Governance essentially requires participation of different section of the society. Participation means "Active involvement of all affected and interested parties in the decision making". It also means gender-equality, recognizing the vital role of both men and women in decision making.

4.2 Rule of Law: Democracy is essentially the Rule of Law. It is through the law that people express their will and exercise their sovereignty. That the government is of law and not of men is an underlying democratic principle which puts no one, however rich and powerful, above the law. Not even the government can arbitrarily act in contravention of law. Thus good democratic governance is fundamentally adherence to the rule of law.

4.3 Effectiveness and Efficiency: Good Governance requires that the institutions processes and actors could deliver and meet the necessities of the society in a way that available resources are utilized well. Concretely, effectiveness and efficiency demands enhancement and standardization of the quality of public service delivery consistent with international standard "Professionalization of Bureaucracy" "focusing of government effort on its vital functions, and operation." A citizen centered government, and "An improved financial management system of the government"(yap kio sheng: online)

4.4 Transparent: People should be able to follow and understand the decision making process. This mean that they will be able to clearly see how and why a decision was made - what information, advice and consultation council considered and which legislative requirement council followed.

4.5 Responsive: Local government should always try to serve the need of the entire community while balancing competing interest in a timely, appropriate and responsive manner.

4.6 Equitable and Inclusive: A community well-being result from all of its member filling their interest have been considered by council in the decision making process. This mean all groups, particularly the most vulnerable, should have opportunity to participate in the process.

4.7 Consensus Oriented : The most important task of a government is to take decision for its public. Government represent the different section of the society. So if a decision is taken without consensus of all the element of the society, that decision would not be acceptable to its people. Without acceptance, a decision taken by the government turn its authority into power that is not legitimate. So for legitimacy it is essential that decision taken by the government should be based on the consensus of all its element.

4.8 Accountability: Accountability is a fundamental requirement of good governance. Local government has an obligation to report, explain and be answerable for the consequences of its decisions it has made on behalf of the community it represent. Without accountability there cannot be any kind of governance. Accountability is the most essential element of the government to make it a answerable government.

5.0 Politics and Good Governance

Importance of the institutional set-up, effective accountability system are largely dependent on associated government structure, rules, procedure and the individual responsible for implementing them.

It is very important to care about politics because you should know what is going on around you? Also it is important to have a say in what is going on around you? The political decision people make will affect many lives. Many people see politics as the government and the law being made and that is true, but it is way more complicated than that. Every law that is made will impact many. Sometime the decision will affect people in bad way.

Some people think that politics is not their cup of tea. So they decided not to take part in it. But

"Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you"

- Pericels

5.1 What is Politics?

"Men is either a political animal (The natural state) or an outcast like a bird which flies alone"

- Aristotle

Politics are the action or activities concerned with achieving and using power in a country or society. Your politics are your belief about how a country ought to be governed. Politics is associated with decision making for the common good of the society.

5.2 Why Need to Study Politics?

When looking into the ideas of political theorist regarding the politics and governance some concept comes in our mind like power, authority, accountability, transparency and many more. So in this section explaining about

politics and its role in governance there will be focus on these few concept like power and how it can be used, effectiveness, authority, transparency, and accountability.

5.2.1 Authority: It is similar to the idea of power and politics. A person who has authority not only has the ability to influence a person and perhaps change a person's behavior But also have the right to do so. Having authority often comes with a occupational role, for example a policeman, a fireman, or a judge often have the right to tell what to do? This is also knows as legitimate power. So authority must be used in a manner which is effective and efficient. People may not be agreeing with what they are being asked to do, but because they have legitimate power they do so anyway.

5.2.2 Accountability: Accountability in politics referred to the process of being held liable for your own action. Many people such as politicians and executives have a different degree to which they are held responsible for their actions and consequences that may come as a result of such an action. So if politicians and executives are held accountable properly for their action that can help in bringing good governance because accountability is most essential part of good governance(SK das 1998).

5.2.3 Transparency: Politics is all making decisions which tries to bring changes in the society or state. So it is essential that these decisions are taken with proper participation of its citizens and in a transparent manner. Because transparency in decision making promotes the people to participate in political activity and help in bringing good governance.

5.3 Is Good Governance Possible Without Good Politics?

It is governance which sets the course the country takes, direction of development and future of political parties. Good governance is not possible without political parties themselves being accountable, transparent and responsive to people. Can anyone disagree? But what have we done to make sure that our political parties compete to be more transparent and accountable?

While everything else is witnessing change in the country, our political parties do not seem to realize those compulsions even in their own interest. Despite every session of Parliament in last couple of decades witnessing a discussion on political and electoral reforms, the core of the issues could not even be taking. It is against that background that we must thank and complement our civil society groups for what they were able to achieve recently in that direction.

First it was long drawn fight to get the RTI Act passed by the Parliament, and second, get contesting candidates declare as an obligation their wealth, criminal background, etc. While filing nomination to contest an election. Since that has become part of the poll process, we had seen in the country two rounds of elections for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. Both these land mark measures have shown the country what amazing sensitivities could be generated and changes could be thought of. A wealth of data and analysis that ADR and Election Watch Groups across the States has brought to fore in the last couple of years has activated more people in the country than anything else Parliament has done prefatory for good governance in the country(Roy Guha 2006)

What the Central Information Commission (CIC) and the Courts have come up in response to public interest litigations go a long way in unleashing much needed political reforms. The CIC has given an equally land mark order that political parties are public authorities and as such come under RTI. *Dr N Bhaskara Rao* article in Hans India discussed "How RTI is the best bet for political parties".

More recently the Supreme Court has stuck down Clause 8(4) of Representation Act thus disqualifying politicians from holding office once convicted and also debarred those in police or judicial custody from contesting elections to Assembly and Lok Sabha. Think of its implications – not less than 30 percent of all MLAs and MPs in the country have declared themselves criminal background. And about 14 percent are even convicted.

Against the background of increase in "competitive populism" among political parties, the Supreme Court viewed that free-SP will shake the roots of free and fair elections hence it called upon the Election Commission to frame guidelines on such free for all or lures to sway voters as part of code of conduct of elections. This is what Supreme Court felt despite not considering such free-SP as "corrupt practice" and an "electoral offence" under Representation of People Act.

Transparency Review warned in its June 2012 issue with "Six Threatening Trends in our Poll Process". One of them is that of opinion polls the way they are conducted and covered in news media. Now the Election Commission has taken the initiative against such surveys as they erode free and fair character of elections. The

attorney too has concurred with EC in this regard. It needs to be seen how the EC will pursue the matter in the coming weeks.

There are other issues too that are being debated with no initiative insight as a way forward. Most critical one is regarding election expenditure. CMS nationwide survey four years ago brought out state wide percent of voters who are paid for their vote. Should the State fund parties? Should the limits on poll expenditure by candidate be lifted? Altogether or modify the limit practically? Another issue is regarding internal democratic functioning of parties in choosing their functionaries. Level playing and equal opportunity to get into legislative roles is not only desirable but essential to sustain democracy and ensure good governance. Another issue is regarding conflict of interest. Once transparency and accountability becomes a condition, adverse implications of conflict of interest could be minimized and kept under control. But how that is possible without parties coming under the purview of RTI?

Today we have a range of instruments available both for citizens and Govt. Apart from the ones mentioned above there is Citizen Charter, Social Audit, Time bound Service Guarantee, complaint, Redressal and Whistleblower and Lokpal Bills are under way. I am sure better governance is not far away. Together they could bring much needed transparency for a paradigm shifts in our democratic practices.

6.0 Conclusion

So now it can be seen that politics and governance are totally intertwined and both these go simultaneously, because both good governance and politics is related with the decision making and their proper implementation. If there is transparency in decision making and the person who is responsible for their implementation are accountable, then it leads to good governance. Other than accountability the other important thing for good governance is participation of civil society in decision making. So if people are involved at level of decision making then the decision will be consensus oriented and acceptable to the people. So for good governance it is essential to bring good politics in action.

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