ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE   **Open Access**

GOOD GOVERNANCE: ORIGIN, IMPORTANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

*Dr. Rahul Tripathi

Associate Professor, Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur (India)

ABSTRACT

The concept of 'Governance' is not new. It is as old as government itself. Both the terms are derived respectively, from the old French words *gouvernance* and *governement*. Initially their meanings were very close, referring to acts or manner of government. 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. 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.

Citation: Dr. Rahul Tripathi, 2017. "Good governance: origin, importance and development in India", *International Journal of Development Research*, 7, (11), 16968-16970.

INTRODUCTION

Origin of the Concept of Good Governance

The concept of 'Governance' is not new. It is as old as government itself. Both the terms are derived respectively, from the old French words *gouvernance* and *governement*. 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.[1] 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.

---

[1] Mikhail Ilyin, "Governance: What is Behind the Word?", IPSA, Participation, Vol. 37, No.1, May 2013, p. 4.

[2] Ibid

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.[10]

Good Governance in India: Ancient and Modern

The idea of Good Governance is as old as Indian civilization. The rulers were bound by *dharma,* popularly called *'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.[11]

This description of Good Governance found 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."[12]

Shanti Parva of Mahabharat has devoted considerable space to *Raj Dharma*[13] which aims to establish Good Governance in the society. It stressed that, it is the duty of the king to seek and promote the welfare of its subject.

The king must be compassionate to the people of all section of society and concentrate on the welfare of the people.[14] Bhishma Pitamaha, who had mastered the art of governance and had dedicated himself to the throne of his kingdom, Hastinapur, says: "the foundation for good governance is righteousness in public affairs. The king, his son—including relatives—his ministers, andthe State employees who have taken the oath of their offices to uphold Dharma and to take care of the public needs, must not act unjustly or unethically because if they do so, they will not only destroy the moral basis of governance but will also turn the State into a hell"[15]
The *Rig Veda* states *"Atmano mokshartham jagat hitayacha"* i.e., the dual purposes of our life are emancipation of the soul and welfare of the world. Thus, the public good should be the welfare of the society; or in other words, the private good or self-promotion should be subservient to the greatest good of all. *Brihadaranya 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 and that the weak are not exploited and harassed by the strong. So in Indian scriptures Good Governance is called *Raj Dharma*, i.e., righteous duty of the king. It means those who are involved in governance must adhere to righteousness and do justice to the public. It has inseparable link to social welfare and inclusive development. Absence of good governance has been identified as the root cause of many of the deficiencies in society. It robs the citizenry of their social and economic rights. Good governance signifies basic parameters such as rule of law,

[3] World Bank 1989, p. 55
[4] Ibid., p. XII
[5] World Bank 1992, p. 1
[6] World Bank 1994, VII also see World Bank 1994: Governance: The World Bank's Experience
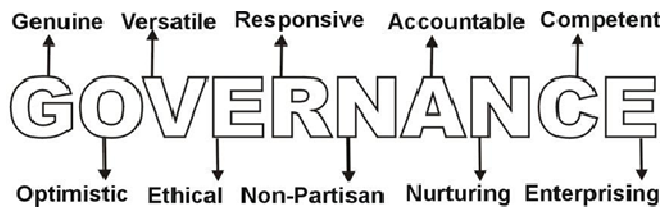[7] World Bank, "Governance in Asia: From Crisis to Opportunity," Annual Report 1998
[8] OECD, 1995, p.14
[9] UNDP 1997, p. IV
[10] Surendra, Munshi, Good Governance, Democratic Societies and Globalization, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000, p. 15

[11] Subhash C Kashyap, Concept of Good Governance and Kautilya's Arthashastra, in Good Governance: Stimuli and Strategies, (ed) Rajiv Sharma, Ramesh K. Arora, Aalekh Publishers, Jaipur, 2010, p. 31
[12] Arthashastra, Book I, Chapter XIX, p. 39
[13] Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Good Governance in Ancient India: Remembering Kingship in Shantiparavam of Mahabharat, Meerut Journal of Political Science and Public Administration, Meeurt, Vol. VI, No-1, January-June 2003, p. 109.
[14] The Mahabharata, Book12, Santi Parva, Section-V (There is one huge Rajdharama section discussing various aspects of governance besides Sabhaparvam and Vanaparvam.
[15] The Mahabharata, Book 12, Santi Parva, Section-V also see O.P. Dwivedi and D.S Mishra, Good Governance: A Model for India, in Handbook of Globalization, Governance, and Public Administration, Ali Farazmand and Jack Pinkowski, (ed), Taylor and Francis, New York, 2007, p. 711

participatory decision-making structure, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, equity and inclusiveness. The country's administration has to run on these principles. This necessitates a reorientation in the outlook of the civil services.[16]

When during 1990s World Bank raised the issue of governance, this immediately, became an issue of concern in India. The document of the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997- 2002) released in April 1999 included a Chapter on "Implementation, Delivery Mechanism and Institutional Development." In this chapter a review had been done on implementation of five year plans in India with a view to identify weak spots in the formulation and implementation of plan programmes to find solution to the weaknesses. The issue of decentralization in development planning, accountability of the implementing agencies and monitoring and evaluation of programmes were raised.

This was followed by a more specific chapter titled, "Governance and Implementation" in the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007). It defines Governance as "the management of all such processes that, in any society, define the environment which permits and enables individuals to raise their capability levels, on one hand, and provide opportunities to realize their potential and enlarge the set of available choices, on the other.

These processes, covering the political, social and economic aspects of life impact every level of human enterprise, be it the individual, the household, the village, the region or the national level. It covers the State, civil society and the market, each of which is critical for sustaining human development.

Good Governance in India: Ancient and Modern

The State is responsible for creating a conducive political, legal and economic environment for building individual capabilities and encouraging private initiative. The market is expected to create opportunities for people. Civil society facilitates the mobilization of public opinion and peoples' participation in economic, social and political activities."[17] It further added that "The universally accepted features of good governance are the exercise of legitimate political power; and formulation and implementation of policies and programmes that are equitable, transparent, non-discriminatory, socially sensitive, participatory, and above all accountable to the people at large."[18] The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) signifies that the vision of inclusive growth, reducing poverty and bridging the various divides that continue to fragment our society can only be achieved if there is a significant improvement in the quality of governance. There are many different definitions of good governance but it is generally agreed that good governance must be broadly defined to cover all aspects of the interface between individuals and businesses on the one hand and government on the other.[19] The twelfth five year plan (2012-2017) defines good governance as an essential element of any well-functioning society. It ensures effective use of resources and deliverance of services to citizens and also provides social legitimacy to the system.[20]

[16] Pranab Mukherjee, Speech by the President of India on the Occasion of Fourth UPSC Foundation Day, "Governance and Public Service" New Delhi: November 29, 2013.

[17] Planning Commission, Government of India, Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) Vol-I, p. 177
[18] Planning Commission, Government of India, Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) Vol-I, p. 177
[19] Planning Commission, Government of India, Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) Vol-I, p. 223
[20] Planning Commission, Government of India, Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) Faster, More Inclusive and Sustainable Growth, Vol-I, 2013, p. 286