Good Governance, People's Participation and Challenges Ahead

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Introduction

Every system of governance is about the relationship between the rulers and ruled. The scope is enhanced further and here comes the idea of good governance. In a democratic setup, the aspirations of the people are comparatively high. The decency of a democratic polity is that it enhances every remotest possible area of people's participation and prepares the ground as one aspect of Good Governance. Governance is the embodiment of the structure and processes of the government. One can find the genesis of governance with a group of people living together, forming a society and maintaining a common thread of governance of command and obedience. Governance is management of all the resources and providing a sense of security to all those who are accepting and respecting the authority. Good governance demands the participation and contribution of all the stakeholders. The cherished goals of good governance can be achieved only through the equal partnership and awareness. On the one hand it need strengthening the institutions of governance and on the other it is also necessary to build a cordial relationship between and among various organs of government. Good Governance forms the nucleus of all governmental activities, plans and programs. The major plank of a democratic government is people's participation. The concerns of democratic development implies that a meaningful development policy and an inclusive growth concern is must and it is possible only through the intense participation by all stakeholders and a constitutional guarantee of all rights to citizens is essentially required. Commitment to all the components of good governance especially political will, people's participation, democratic governance must find a suitable place in policy framing.

Abstract

Every system of governance is about the relationship between the rulers and ruled. The scope is enhanced further and here comes the idea of good governance. In a democratic setup, the aspirations of the people are comparatively high. The decency of a democratic polity is that it enhances every remotest possible area of people's participation and prepares the ground as one aspect of Good Governance. Governance is the embodiment of the structure and processes of the government. One can find the genesis of governance with a group of people living together, forming a society and maintaining a common thread of governance of command and obedience. Governance is management of all the resources and providing a sense of security to all those who are accepting and respecting the authority. Good governance demands the participation and contribution of all the stakeholders. The cherished goals of good governance can be achieved only through the equal partnership and awareness. On the one hand it need strengthening the institutions of governance and on the other it is also necessary to build a cordial relationship between and among various organs of government. Good Governance forms the nucleus of all governmental activities, plans and programs. The major plank of a democratic government is people's participation. The concerns of democratic development implies that a meaningful development policy and an inclusive growth concern is must and it is possible only through the intense participation by all stakeholders and a constitutional guarantee of all rights to citizens is essentially required. Commitment to all the components of good governance especially political will, people's participation, democratic governance must find a suitable place in policy framing.
participation can be considered one of the ways of actualizing good governance. Greater participation is important to increase efficiency and effectiveness of all governments plans, to encourage self-reliance among the participants and to increase the numbers of people who potentially can benefit from development.

Governance to Good Governance

Governance is the embodiment of the structure and processes of the government. One can find the genesis of governance with a group of people living together, forming a society and maintaining a common thread of governance of command and obedience. Governance is management of all the resources and providing a sense of security to all those who are accepting and respecting the authority. "The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put governance means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)." Good governance is a step further and it is discussed especially in the context of developing countries. A term coined to give birth to the idea that the resources need better management and the goals of socio-economic planning may be achieved soon and in an equitable manner if governed properly. According to the United Nations, "Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society."

Participation demands the equal share of all the communities living together and sharing the resources and abided by the same laws. It is to ensure that there is no gap between rich and poor or minority and majority. Consensus Oriented means reaching to a consensus by coordinating all the decisions, policies and programs. Policies are to be formulated in such a manner that caters to the needs of all and every section of society. Accountability refers to all institutions being accountable to the people. It is essential for smooth functioning of government. Transparency denotes that citizens are aware about the way decisions and policies are formulated and have understood the aims and objectives of the programs and policies of government. People should strive towards participation in such activities at all levels. Responsiveness is a necessary element in the sense that policies and government machinery must be sensitive to people and follow time frame strictly. Effectiveness and Efficiency are developed through the sustainable use of resources to meet the needs of a society. Sustainability refers to both ensuring social investments carry through and natural resources are maintained for future generations. The scarce resources are to be utilized in a much efficient and economical way. They are not going to last forever if utilized mindlessly and unplanned manner. Every society wants equitable and justified use of them. Equity and Inclusiveness is the assurance that all stakeholders are equitably involve in the processes of development. This in turn would give all of them a sense of security on socio economic and political arena which would ultimately empower the whole. Rule of Law is to ensure unbiased legal processes to protect the human rights and civil liberties of all citizens, particularly poorer sections of society. Law must not differentiate and discriminate. So it may be summarized as, "Good governance is a broad concept used by many international organizations to spell out how states or countries should be governed. Definitions vary, but there is a clear core of common public values, such as transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and the rule of law. It is quite likely, however, that national views of good governance reflect different political cultures and institutional heritages." Let us go deep further and discuss the objectives of it.

General Objectives of Good Governance

a) Improvements in delivery of essential services to the citizens
b) Empowerment of people through the dissemination of information
c) Ensuring transparency in government business and transactions and right to information in governmental activities
d) Elimination of undesirable practices such as touts, speed money, deliberate delays, harassment, bogus documents and corruption
e) Encouraging broad based public awareness and participation in key areas of developmental efforts
f) Maintaining due control over assets, revenues and expenditures
g) Establishing better information base for decision making process including forecasting critical phenomenon
h) Enhancing productivity and efficiency of the administrative functions through the promotion of knowledge network
i) Making administration responsive, citizen friendly and ensuring accountability
j) Establishing legitimacy and credibility of institutions
k) Interests of citizens in general and specific beneficiaries in particular should be safe guarded; l) Improvement in critical, contemporary measures of performance such as cost, quality, service, and speed of an institution.

People's participation, Governance and development

Governance is a participatory process. Participation needs the involvement of all the classes. Development must be eyeing towards the benefit of all. "The concept of participation in democratic governance
focuses attention on the interaction and linkages between state and society and how the people can take part in public life. A very important pillar of democracy is the involvement of citizens in political decision making process. Democratic practice of citizens does not end in choosing public representatives.”

Public Policy is a framed by the government but not for the benefit of a particular class or section. When it aims to extend benefits to all it must ensure the participation and contribution of all also. Development is a continuous process and it will be successful only when it brings everyone within its ambit. “In a democracy, citizens, in addition to being customers, really are the “owners” of public services. Through tax payments, citizens are investors in public services and publicly owned assets. A key question from the owner’s perspective with respect to government performance is whether government is getting job done.” This end can be achieved only when people are responsive and aware. They must question the performance of government. Only the opposition in a parliamentary process is not the sufficient condition to maintain a check on government. People’s participation is to ensure the same.

Challenges before Good Governance

Good governance demands the participation and contribution of all the stakeholders. The cherished goals of good governance can be achieved only through the equal partnership and awareness. On the one hand it need strengthening the institutions of governance and on the other it is also necessary to build a cordial relationship between and among various organs of government. The role of bureaucracy cannot be ignored in achieving the targets. Their mode of functioning must change. An independent and accountable judiciary is also the need of hour to ensure justice. It is the last resort in a democracy because when government turns autocratic, the only way to look forward is the judicial system. It is also necessary to educate the citizens about their legal rights and obligations. They must be partners in all development activities. Apart from them some of the challenges can be identified as:

Distribution of natural resources

Nature has not blessed the entire earth with similar resources. At one place some natural resource is available and at some other place another is available. The developed societies have plenty of resources and the developing countries are always short of them. Even in those areas where they are available in plenty, there is no technique to use them properly. All the developing societies of the world are struggling hard with fewer resources available to them. It becomes all the more challenging when they are committed to the ideals of good governance, sustainable development, millennium development goals of United Nations and more particularly sustainable development goals because the whole concept of Sustainable Development apprise that the available resources have to be utilized in a very economical and efficient manner and future generations also should have them. But at the same time the challenge of rising population and to achieve goals for all sections of society particularly the marginalized section of society, the basic resources, and then it becomes very pressurizing. The democratic setup of the country provides opportunity to the people to have more and more demands on the State for example the demand of the clean air from the government along with all demands in the political, social and economic field. The international economic organizations and other global organizations bring new issues for the governance. The constitutional democracies manage all such demands on the basis of rule of law and conflict management.

Unemployment

Despite the existence of various policies of government for employment generation, unemployment has been a biggest challenge to be overcome although social security measures are being applied and implemented in the form of policy of the government at various levels in the rural and urban areas both. Alongside, the problem of migration within the country from rural areas to urban areas for livelihood is also one of the biggest emerging issues that needs to be taken into consideration because now we analyze development not only in terms of economic prosperity but also we do take into account the social and psychological components attached with the whole concept and the practice of development. Materialistic economic development is naturally one of the foremost and significant parts of policy but overall human development in terms of socio-psychological factors are also being considered in an important way because we take development as an overall development. The parameters of analyses have widened but we do need to be careful about the scarce resources available to governments. The only way out is balanced development.

Poverty and Hunger

There is no one point solution of the issue of poverty and hunger. Different societies have different issues. Various policies and programs have been innovated to deal with the issue but it is still prevalent. Raising the level of income and their proper utilization have always been a major issue for all the societies. Governments at various levels have been trying to eradicate poverty. Without the support of welfare society it is not possible. Everything cannot be handled by framing policies or making laws only. It is necessary to rope in the society in between and the same holds true for different nations also. It is here that the Non-Governmental organizations are also working to support this cause as the demand on the state is rising high.
Women empowerment

Women empowerment is an important goal of any governance mechanism in the modern world. The rights of women need to be preserved in the society for which many international and national organizations along with the state that are working through various programs and policies. There are national policies and programs apart from that, the most important document the constitutional guarantee to the rights of women are a step forward for the development of women. The egalitarian social order would demand equal rights for men and women more so in developing countries. The initiatives by the state in these countries are strengthening the position of women to establish developmental goals. The full participation and partnership of both women and men is required. Education is an important means which provides empowerment of women. Another basic component is required, to have good thoughts towards considering a woman as a person and individual also along with her different roles in the society. The cooperation of both men and women hold the key for true development.

Environmental protection

All the countries of the world, developed and developing are committed towards protection of the environment which has become a significant issue and challenge. Environment has become an entity in itself. The national level policies to protect the environment is complimented by international initiatives and policy programs to combat environmental problems at world level. The features of sustainable development in all societies makes it convenient for all the governments to have a specific agenda for the protection of the environment. The existence of human beings cannot be at stake. Along with that we need to go ahead with scientific and technological advancement also. The challenge before all the governments is to have fine balance between scientific and technological advancements and environmental protection. It is to re-emphasize that technology and growth have provided new avenues of development. At the same time the degradation of the environment has also been an important agenda of all the countries of the world. Various international summits beginning from Stockholm conference 1972 and Kyoto Protocol, summit on sustainable development, Paris summit and many more are testimony to this fact. The challenges of rapid urbanization, migration and related issues of citizenship, food security, rural and urban divide, free and fair elections in a democracy, natural calamities and rehabilitation, are some other issues and challenges among many more, of governance of developing societies. These countries are trying to combat these challenges through their national level policies and programs and try to meet national goals and international institutional commitment for overall development of humanity as a whole. We can here reemphasize following points for a sustained, peaceful, all round, and meaningful development all over. Thus, in the overall analysis of Governance and Governed, one can establish the fact with utmost ease that complexities and increased volume of the functions of the state, the governments of developed, more the developing countries direct their efforts towards development meant for every section of population, particularly the marginalized. Second, the existence of constitutional democracies and welfare states allow programs and policies of the governments to dent the problems and challenges of development and explore solutions with people’s participation.

Health Care Infrastructure

The growing concerns of health care facilities have become a reality in today’s world. Every society has been realizing that it is necessary to save the population and maintain them healthy. The number is not important but the quality is important. In case of a pandemic or health crisis situation the poor infrastructure for health facilities have forced the nations to give attention in this direction. Some of them have been facing the issue of population explosion and some of them are facing reducing population day by day. Life expectancy is increasing day by day due to better health care facilities but still a lot is to be done in this field.

Conclusion

Good Governance forms the nucleus of all governmental activities, plans and programs. The major plank of a democratic government is people’s participation. The concerns of democratic development implies that a meaningful development policy and an inclusive growth concern is must and it possible only through the intense participation by all stakeholders and a constitutional guarantee of all rights to citizens is essentially required. Commitment to all the components of good governance especially political will, people’s participation, democratic governance must find a suitable place in policy framing. It must be reminded that people’s participation is a means and not an end. New public Administration will pave way for Good Governance. Role of Public Institutions must be strengthened and widened. “At a time of rapid social change and relentless technological advancement, efforts to improve governance – at the local, national, or international level – will require careful thought and experimentation, in order to determine how to balance inclusive decision-making with the ever-evolving needs of markets.”

The complexities of functions of state and changing demands of people in a globalized world have absorbed all components of Good Governance and people’s participation as a natural corollary. The complete success of emancipator and innovative ideas and policies of the government for
development falls heavily on the participatory zeal and new channels of their participation. This relationship between governance and governed is to be understood in the light of governmental policies and people’s participation to facilitate good governance.

References