



Challenges to good governance and way out to these challenges in India: An exploration

Dr. Saroj Devi

Lecturer in Political science

M.S.J. College Bharatpur, Rajasthan

Precisely governance refers to forms of political system and the manner in which power is exercised in utilizing country's economic and social resources for development (Moore 1993).

Locke's limited government can be overthrown when it fails to protect 'right to property'. In Hobbes 'Leviathan' we find that the people surrendered all their rights to their sovereign on the condition of assured security to their life and liberty. Hence a good governance is that which defends this right the best. The entire trend of Indian constitution is dedicated to establishment of good governance. The charter of rights, directive principles of state policy, the theory of separation of powers, the rule of law etc. all these constitutional principles have a single target i.e good governance. Various commissions for administrative reforms, human rights, women and child development, SCS & STS etc. are meant for ensuring good governance. Good governance is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework (Asmerom, 1995).

Good governance is, in short anti- corruption, whereas authority and its institutions are accountable, effective and efficient, participatory, transparent, responsive, consumer oriented and equitable. These are the major characteristic of good governance as outlined by the United Nations. It ensures a corruption free administration where there will be pro-people policies and whose implementation and administration percolates to the well being of a common man with a responsive attitude towards present and future needs of people and society in which they live.

World Bank report defined "good governance as a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable and an administration that is accountable to the public". The World Bank has identified three distinct aspects of good governance. "First, the form of political regime, second, the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development and third, the capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions" (Bandyopadhyay, 1996). The world leaders at the 2005 World Summit concluded that good governance is integral to economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger, and sustainable development. The views of all oppressed groups including women, youth and poor must be heard and considered by governing bodies. Thus good governance means such deeds those engaged in the process of welfare of all. It is considered a citizen-friendly, citizen -caring and responsive administration. Good governance is supposed to exist if three objectives are achieved. The first, there should be quality of law and effective implementation of laws. Secondly, there should be opportunity for every individual to realize his full human potential and thirdly, there should be effective productivity and no waste. The classical models of administrative system extended by Weber and Taylor expanded various principles like rule orientation, division of work, specialization, rationality, neutrality, impersonality to ensure good governance (Blunt, 1995).

Good governance is when people feel equally responsible for the progress of country. Good governance is achieved when all sections of the 1 society irrespective of the caste, creed, race, colour, sex, religion

and other differences get equal opportunities and access to the facilities available in country especially education, health, drinking water, proper sanitation etc. Thus the main objective of good governance is 'human welfare and development'. Hence, good governance is not only an end in itself, but also always a means to achieve the welfare goal.

Challenges before India to good Governance-

It is an established fact that in a country like India political, Economic, Social and sustainable development can be possible only with a sound and effective political and administrative structure which facilitates good governance. India is unique in many respects with its dimensions, cultures, languages and many stages. Unfortunately after nearly seven decades of history of functioning of Indian Republic and Government reveals that people are yet to achieve the fruit of good governance. People of some states enjoy good prosperity, high literacy, developed infrastructure and rule of law while many are wanting in some or all parameters although they are all under a common union government with the same financial, legal and administrative system. In this regard the country requires a good governance to move forward progressively towards development and prosperity. In such an ambient the people can enjoy higher per capita income at all levels, widespread literacy, employment, adequate health facilities, with longer average life. Now the time has come to see where and why India has lagged behind in terms of good governance.

As the good governance agenda grows to unachievable levels, the challenge is for reformers, policy makers, administrations, government and researchers to shift the focus on how to leverage improvements in governance. After all, governance is all about putting the administrative, political and financial structures in order for maximizing the benefits of the people. The major changes that India is facing are as follows -

Illiteracy -

The level of education of the people is a key to the good governance. Literacy enables the citizens to participate in elections and exercise their voting right effectively to elect honest and efficient leaders. Illiterate people are not able to participate in the governing process effectively. It also makes the people conscious of the principles of liberty and equality of all. After seventy years of independence it continues to a major challenge to good governance in India. Although the level of literacy has increased from 18.33 per cent in 1951 to 74.04 per cent in 2011, still one fourth of our population remained illiterate (Shroff and Shourie, 2002). Illiteracy among people is a matter of grave concern for development and good governance.

Criminalization of Politics -

In recent times there has been an unprecedented growth of crime and violence in India. The criminalization of politics has a baneful influence in public policy formulation and governance. Elections in many parts of the country have become associated with a host of criminal activities. Threatening voters to vote for a particular candidate or physically preventing voters from going to polling booth especially weaker sections of society like Dalits, Tribals and rural women occurs frequently in several parts of the country. Muscle power is thought to be the most effective tool for capturing polling booths and casting vote in favour of a particular candidate. All these acts of lawlessness and violence have become possible because of the growing nexus between politicians and criminals (Bhattacharya, 2005). It has become a shocking reality to hinder the process of good governance in India.

Regionalism -

Although development process in the country aims at growth and development of all regions, the regional disparities and imbalances in terms of differences in per capita income, literacy rate, health, educational infrastructure and service, population situation and levels of industrial and agricultural development

continue to exist. Existence and continuation of regional inequalities both among states and within states creates a feeling of neglect, deprivation and discrimination. This situation has led to regionalism manifested in demands for new states, special status for state, autonomy or more power to states or even secession from the country. Further continuous regional imbalances have given rise to economic blockades, river water disputes, even some times militant movement in certain parts of the country. Separatist demands in Jammu and Kashmir, Khalistan demand in Punjab or by ULFA in Assam or by different groups in the north-eastern regions are matter of great concern for the good governance in India. Thus good governance has been struggling with regional disparities and imbalances in development.

Corruption -

India is the world's largest democracy which can be converted into a vibrant political culture, a vigilant press, an outspoken civil society and an impartial judiciary. Yet the most disheartening fact of Indian society and polity is the rising tide of corruption in almost all walks of life. Corruption is eating into the vitals of our country. The source of corruption are mostly found where public officials have wide authority with little accountability and bad incentives. This means the more activities public officials control or regulate; the more opportunities exist for corruption. More importantly, the lower the probability of detection and punishment, the greater the risk that corruption will take place (Halayya, 1985). The government of India has implemented many laws to eradicate corruption. But unfortunately, in spite of its best efforts the government has failed to eradicate corruption in the country. And corruption is a major obstacle in improving the quality of governance.

Poverty -

Poverty has also been widely perceived as a major obstacle in improving the quality of 2 governance in India. Though India boasts of a high economic growth, it is shameful that there is still large scale poverty in India. Poverty in India can be defined as a situation when a certain section of people are unable to fulfill their basic needs. India has the world's largest number of poor people living in a single country. India with 17.5% of total world's population had 20.6% share of worlds poorest in 2011.

Gender Inequality -

Gender inequality has adverse impact on development goals and reduces economic growth. It hampers the overall well being because blocking women from participation in social, political and economic activities can adversely affect the whole society. Many developing countries including India have displayed gender inequality in education, employment and health. To ensure gender equality, Indian constitution has made provisions in the chapters of Fundamental Rights (Part-iii) and Directive Principles (Part-iv) to create equality among men and women. The state has also enacted much legislation to eradicate discriminations against women. In spite of such provisions discrimination against women continues to exist and this discrimination hamper the goal of achieving good governance.

Insurgency -

In recent times naxalite problem is posing a serious threat to the good governance in India. This problem is considered as the biggest internal security challenge. Some people also acknowledged that naxalite activity is a particular set of terrorism at the internal level of the country. Presently the naxal activities are found in hilly, backward and tribal areas in different states like Odisha, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Telengana etc. In recent times the naxals are well equipped with modern arms and ammunitions. They are using guerilla warfare to kill police personnels.

These all act hamper the process of good governance in India. They are also ambushing on the patrol parties, attacking local police stations to seize arms and ammunitions.

Inequality –

Since immemorial time of history inequality continues to exist and posing a great challenge to good governance in India. Since independence Indian government have taken various measures to respond the challenges of inequality in Indian society. In spite of the efforts, inequality continues to exist both at social and economic level. Inequality at the social level implies social discrimination and unequal distribution of social prestige, honour, opportunities and facilities where as economic inequality implies unequal distribution of wealth and income among the people in the society. All types of inequality work as an obstacle in the way of good governance.

Suggestions to facilitate good governance in India -

On the basis of prevailing challenges to good governance in the country the following suggestions may be taken to facilitate the process of good governance.

1. For eradication of poverty the government should take some measures like population control, increase in employment, equal distribution of income, special attention to backward regions, strengthening of public distribution system, fulfillment of minimum needs of the poor, increase in the productivity of the poor, changes in the techniques of production, stability in the price level, development of agriculture etc.
2. To combat the challenges of regionalism strong action against secessionist forces, balanced development of different backward states and regions, cooperative federalism should be adopted by the government of India.
3. In order to stop criminal activities in politics the persons charge- sheeted for heinous offences and corrupt practices should be debarred from contesting elections. It will encourage honest persons to join the electoral politics.
4. To ensure gender equality there is a great need for positive attitudinal changes of the manfolk in favour of women. The can also act as an agent of political socialization for inculcating the values of gender equality.
5. Excess force and state power should not be used to combat naxalite violence. Attempt should made to involve the naxals into the national mainstream. At the same time. developmental work should be undertaken in the backward regions.
6. To check the high level rising of corruption requires a conscious programme for strengthening of public awareness and also empowering the existing anti-corruption agencies. The statutory right to information has been one of the most significant reform in this sphere. It should be empowered.
7. The government and NGOs should make awareness among the people about the evils of social inequalities. Again for the eradication of economic inequality right to work should be provided to every individual.
8. Universal literacy is a pre-requisite for effective functions of good governance. The government and NGOs have vast role to play in this field.
9. The formation of coalition governments in the centre and States happen only due to the growing influence of small regional parties in different provinces. The electoral laws are to be changed to overcome this to enable a two or three party systems evolve which would allow the government to carry on good administration with no let or hindrance.

CONCLUSION-

There are no easy solutions for good governance. But one perspective which clearly stands out is empowerment of people of every region, community. When people are given the opportunity, an enabling environment for developing their own avenues of livelihoods and a role in the delivery of public services improvements in governance become spontaneous. It further means that there must be transparency, clear

accountability and freedom of right to information. Still we have to cover a long journey to reach the destination of good governance in India.

References -

1. Moore, Mick. 1993. ' Declining to learn from the East: The World Bank on Governmence and Development ', IDS Bulletin, Vol 24, No. 1.
2. Asmerom, H.K. and K. Borgman, R. Hoppe. 1995. 'Good Governance, Decentralization and Democratization in Post - Colonial State ', Indian journal of Public Administration, Vol 4 . No. 4, Oct - Dec.
3. Bandyopadhyay, D. 1996. ' Administration , Decentralization and Good Governance ' , Economic and political weekly, Vol 31 , No. 48.
4. Blunt, Peter 1995. ' Cultural Relativism, Good Governance and Sustainable Human Development ' , Public Administration and Development, Vol 15.
5. Shroff, M.R. and H. D. Shourie. 2002. " Good Governance in India", Forum of Free Enterprise, Peninsula House, Mumbai.
6. Bhattacharya, Mohit. " Conceptualizing Good Governance", Indian journal of Public Administration.
7. Halayya, M. 1985. " Corruption in India", New Delhi, East - West press private limited.