
UNIT 17 CONCEPT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

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17.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the shift of focus in public administration from New Public Management to Good Governance
- Trace the genesis of Good Governance
- Throw light on the concept of Good Governance
- Distinguish ‘Governance’ from Good Governance
- Highlight the significance and key characteristics of Good Governance
- Discuss the ‘Good Governance’ strategies in the Indian context; and
- Analyse the important factors promoting ‘Good Governance’.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

Public administration, as we all are aware, is not a new activity. As a field, it has been there since time immemorial. Public administration is a major constituent of the State as it is an instrument through which the goals and objectives of the State are accomplished. The major goal of the State is and has always been ‘governance’. Now the question that arises is: since ‘governance’ has always been crucial to the State’s performance, why has it suddenly assumed a prominent place in recent times. Isn’t governance the activity of

the government and if we assume that it is, then how is it different from the traditional public administration?

As we discussed in Units 1, 2 and 3 of this Course, the role of the State has been undergoing many changes in terms of the structure, functions, processes, goals and orientation. The entire complexion and nature of public administration is undergoing a change in the present times due to the impact of 'globalisation'. The process of globalisation accompanied by removal of trade barriers, large-scale entry of multinational enterprises, and drastic developments in information technology, is affecting the different domains of our system, be it social, economic, political, or technological. The area of public administration is also not unaffected by this impact.

The impact of globalisation is leading to new managerial orientation in administration. Along with the developed countries, the developing countries including India have introduced managerial reforms in the form of disinvestment, corporatisation, outsourcing of certain activities, reduction of subsidies, and shrinking of the government's sphere of activities, which is gradually concentrating on core activities. As you are aware, traditionally, the practice of public administration has been dominated by the government playing a key role in provision of goods and services. The instrument of bureaucracy has always occupied a predominant place in administration. Slowly, the inadequacies in governmental operations have started focusing attention on looking for alternative modes of service delivery. As a result, the 'publicness', which is distinct to public administration, is getting sidelined.

Due to impact of market, a single mode of operationalising good and services to the citizens, is giving way to a larger collaboration between government, market and civil society. The interaction between the various key actors has started influencing the decision-making process, making it more broad-based. There has been a gradual shift from 'government' to a broader notion of 'governance'. Governance that encompasses the collectiveness of the State, Government, market and community has become dominant. The concept of Good Governance has also gained prominence. This has been a global phenomenon. In this Unit, we shall unfold the various facets of the concept of governance and good governance, by underlining its characteristics, components and key concerns.

17.2 TOWARDS GOOD GOVERNANCE

The recent accent on New Public Management (NPM) has, undoubtedly, triggered the intellectual discourse about evolving ways of optimising resources, and looking at alternative market mechanisms for delivery of public services with a focus on performance measurement, efficiency, economy, and value for money. The State as we all know has come to be regarded as unaccountable and ineffective in discharging developmental activities. The plea for roll back of State, and an increased role of private sector have raised the fears of the skeptics who dread that social concerns and public welfare may be given a rhetorical regard now. But, it is early to give in to such an argument as the element of 'public interest' cannot be overlooked. The earlier Minimalist State approach has slowly given way to establishment of complementary roles to government, market and the people in the form of civil society organisations.

While government is much narrower in scope, which refers to a fixed agency, or department, governance is broad in nature. As Rosenau (1992) explains "Governance is a more encompassing phenomenon than government. It embraces governmental

institutions, but it also subsumes informal, non-governmental mechanisms whereby those persons and organisations within its purview move ahead, satisfy their needs, and fulfill their wants ...Governance is thus a system of rule that is as dependent on inter-subjective meanings as on formally sanctioned constitution and charter it is possible to conceive of governance without government – of regulatory mechanisms in a sphere of activity, which function effectively even though they are not endowed with formal authority”. It is not just about the organs of government, but is concerned more about the quality of the functioning of various governing organs.

There is, no doubt, a distinction between NPM and governance approaches which needs to be put in a perspective. NPM focuses more on processes with a view to achieving efficiency and performance, while governance emphasises on interaction amongst government, market forces, civil society organisations, cooperative endeavours in realising desired outcomes. Both the approaches, however, aim at improving quality aspects. While the former is narrow in focusing on service delivery aspects, the latter aims at enhancing the quality of life. NPM reforms focus on market led growth prescribed by international agencies. Here, the concern is to reform the State institutions but the citizens are considered consumers of services who are to benefit mainly through economic and efficiency concerns. The governance reforms, on the other hand, assign a significant position to the citizens, their collective participation in decision making processes, their experiments with several forms of public service provision and so on.

The public management reforms focus on the achievement of the objectives of efficiency and economy and an explicit emphasis upon the dominance of individual over collective preferences, whereas governance is intended to reflect broader concerns over and above efficiency and economy. This includes:

- Establishing accountability between the State and people
- Treating people not merely as customers or consumers, but as citizens who have the right to hold their government accountable for their actions
- Protecting citizens’ rights, their voices, values and preferences
- Facilitating the participation of people in the governance processes
- Empowering people towards better development; and
- Ensuring responsiveness of public as well as private institutions to the people

Governments have always been entrusted with the task of governing or managing. The traditional approach to governance was based on the premise that the government was solely responsible for formulating and implementing policy decisions. There has been excessive reliance on bureaucratic forms of organisations, hierarchy, adherence to rules and regulations, notions of permanence and neutrality, and citizens have been treated as passive acceptors of goods and services. But the current notion implies greater participation by the citizens in the affairs of the government to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of policy making and outcomes. There is an increasing realisation that State power is immense and hence to check its abuse, effectiveness and efficiency need to be brought into the State institutions and processes. Governance intends to achieve this objective.

Jamil Jreisat (2004) opines that governance refers to two of the most basic questions posed by political scientists since the foundation of their discipline: These are: ‘who governs’ and ‘how well?’ The first question focuses on the issues of distribution of power and resources in the society. The second question is primarily concerned with

'good government' judged by such elements such as effective institutions, efficient methods of operation, and equitable policy outcomes.

Globalisation, which has ushered in changes in the economic, political and social systems the world over, has resulted in not only significant improvements in communications, information technology, science and technology, infrastructure development and so on, but has also led to certain uncertainties, finding manifestations in the form of unemployment, social security, widening gap between income and capabilities and so on. The role of the State has also been in question due to the failure of government in promoting certain priority areas. Hence, this has resulted in government enabling the private sector as well as the civil society organisations to expand their activities. Governance, which earlier remained a closed system, has acquired a wider connotation to take advantage of globalisation in making efforts to provide a stable and secure social and economic domestic environment.

By governance, we do not mean that all the so-called bread and butter issues on the NPM agenda have become irrelevant. Governance should not be interpreted as anti-NPM. Governance is rather the recognition that seemingly technical issues are highly political and may only be tackled by taking a wider political perspective. Moreover, behind all public issues, there is a question mark about the relative role of the decision making through democratic means, through managerialist systems or through professional expertise. In the governance framework, it is not assumed that management solutions are emotionally more rational but, on the other hand, it is also not assumed that democratic decision making channels are always the most appropriate (Bovaird and Löffler, 2002). Governance is broader in nature as it encompasses political, economic, social aspects of the governing systems. It brings within its domain, not just the public authorities, but also the other players in the society such as private sector, interest groups, voluntary organisations, religious groups, mass media and community etc.

17.3 CONCEPT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

The concept of governance, which assumed significance since 1989 with the advocacy by the World Bank, is considered by some as not a new term. Pierre and Peters (2000) consider that the term was first used in France in the 14th century where it meant 'a seat of government'. The World Bank is said to have reinvented it, in a different context, as a new approach to development. Globalisation has resulted in generation of global pressures exerted by institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), in the form of economic reforms programmes to be adhered to, especially by the developing countries. The aid given to these countries is accompanied by certain market-oriented reforms.

It has been observed that after a certain period of time, the results as expected out of this new thinking, have not been forthcoming or the growth has been slower than originally anticipated. The failure of Structural Adjustment Programme, ineffective utilisation of public funds, increasing corruption, the collapse of centrally planned economies, mounting fiscal debt etc. have raised critical questions about governance system. This has actually made the World Bank examine and publish its first major analyses based on the experience of Sub-Saharan Africa in 1989. The Bank published its document entitled "Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth", which brought to light the key factors that thwarted the implementation of successful market-oriented reforms. The major factor was considered to be the failure of public institutions, which has been

responsible for weak economic performance. As a result, the need for Good Governance was emphasised. The Bank considered Good Governance as sound development management. It, as per the Bank, has four main dimensions: a) Public Sector Management, b) Accountability, c) Legal Framework for Development; and d) Transparency and Information Accessibility.

For the first time, the concept of ‘Good Governance’ was formulated by the World Bank in 1992. It was defined as the “Manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”. In the Report titled ‘Governance and Development’, Good Governance was considered central to creating and sustaining an environment, which fosters strong and equitable development and is an essential component of sound economic policies.

Three distinct aspects of governance were identified:

- Form of political regime (parliamentary, presidential, military or civilian)
- Process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources; and
- Capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies

The problems, faced especially by developing countries in the process of governance were highlighted. These include:

- Improper implementation of laws
- Delays in implementation of policies, programmes and projects
- Lack of clarity about the rules, regulations to be adhered to by the private entrepreneurs
- Absence of effective accounting system; and
- Failure to involve beneficiaries and others affected in the design and implementation of projects leading to the substantial erosion of sustainability.

The World Bank outlined the need for Good Governance, which is necessary for economic, human, and institutional development. This was to be achieved through key governance activities and processes. Its conceptualisation of Good Governance included:

- Political accountability
- Freedom of association and participation by different groups in the process of governance
- An established legal framework based on rule of law and independence of judiciary to protect human rights, secure social justice, and guard against exploitation
- Bureaucratic accountability with emphasis on openness and transparency in administration
- Freedom of information and expression needed for formulation of public policies, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation of government performance
- A sound administrative system leading to efficiency and effectiveness; and
- Co-operation between the government and civil society organisations.

The concepts of governance and good governance have gained prominence and presently occupy a key place in promotion of sustained all-round development. Let us now discuss the characteristic features of these concepts.

17.4 GOVERNANCE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

In general, governance is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework. It involves the exercise of political, economic and administrative powers in managing the country's affairs, and includes the processes of formulation as well as implementation of decisions. But as discussed in the preceding Section, over the past decade, the concept of governance has become wider in complexion integrating a number of key elements and principles. Governance is being propagated to promote good government. Government is considered to be effective and good if it is able to fulfill its basic commitments efficiently, effectively and economically. The basic goal of governance is to establish quality relationship between 'good government' and the 'governed' or citizens. Good government has been defined by John Healey and Mark Robinson as a high level of organisational effectiveness in relation to policy formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and its contribution to growth, stability and popular welfare. Good government also implies accountability, transparency, participation, openness and the rule of law.

'Governance', in the present context is an attempt to widen the scope of public administration by stretching beyond formal 'governments'. It is broader in nature extending upto the private sector, non-governmental mechanisms along with governmental institutions. Collective problem-solving is taking the place of individualised decision-making. There are many forms of community organisations, voluntary, and collective self-help groups through which people are organising themselves to achieve common goals and objectives. It intends to make public administration more open, transparent and accountable. According to the UNDP (1994), the challenge for all societies is to create a system of governance that promotes, supports and sustains human development especially for the poorest and the marginal.

According to Kettl (2001), "Government refers to the structure and function of public institutions. Governance is the way government gets its job done. Traditionally government itself managed most service delivery. Toward the end of the 20th century, however, government relied increasingly on non-governmental partners to do its work, through processes that relied less on authority for control". To Kettl, governance, as an approach to public administration, has primarily to do with contracting out and grants to sub-governments.

The process of governance has gained a transformative perspective in recent times due to the changing nature of the concept of 'development'. Development has now acquired a wider meaning; it is not just confined to growth in Gross National Product or increase in national income, or per capita income as was the notion earlier. Development is no longer determined by economic growth, but progress in all spheres-political, social, environmental, and cultural. It encompasses all aspects of human life. The first Human Development Report (HDR) 1990, included three distinct components – longevity, education and income per head as indicators of Human Development Index (HDI).

The HDR 2001, indicated that human development means much more than the rise or fall of national incomes. It is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and

interests. People are the real wealth of nations. Development is about expanding the choices people have in order to lead lives that they value. It is thus much more than mere economic growth.

Development, is being thus looked upon as a process of creating a suitable enabling environment for people to lead long, healthy, productive, and creative lives. In facilitating this, the governance processes need to be effective and efficient. This leads us to the crucial aspect of governance, which is called Good Governance. According to Leftwich (1993), Good Governance involves an efficient public service, an independent judicial system and legal framework to enforce contracts; an accountable administration of public funds; an independent public auditor responsible to a representative legislature; respect for the law and human rights at all levels of government, a pluralistic institutional structure and a free press.

While governance, on the one hand, deals with collaborative partnership, networking which is necessary for policy formulation, and implementation, Good Governance on the other hand, attempts to make this activity not just efficient and effective but also more accountable, democratic and responsive to the public needs. Through good governance, an attempt is being made to establish an all encompassing relationship between government and the governed. We shall be discussing the mechanisms and processes of governance in detail in our Course (013) on Public Systems Management.

17.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance aims at achieving much more than efficient management of economic and financial resources or public services. It is a broad reform strategy to make government more open, responsive, accountable, democratic, as well as strengthen institutions of civil society and regulate private sector. Good Governance is a combination of efficiency concerns of public management and accountability concerns of governance. Good Governance as a prerequisite for promoting people-centred development is assuming importance.

Good Governance aims at:

- Improving the quality of life of citizens
- Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of administration
- Establishing the legitimacy and credibility of institutions
- Securing freedom of information and expression
- Providing citizen-friendly and citizen-caring administration
- Ensuring accountability
- Using Information Technology-based services to improve citizen-government interface
- Improving/enhancing the productivity of employees; and
- Promoting organisational pluralism – State, market and civil society organisations for governance.

Good Governance, hence, relates to the quality of governance through attributes such as participation, empowerment, accountability, equity and justice. Adherence and

promotion of these attributes provides avenues to the citizens, especially the poor and the marginalised to articulate their interests, to exercise their rights and improve their living standards. Good Governance includes the capacity to formulate and implement sound policies by the government with due respect for citizens. From this framework, governance can be construed as consisting of six different elements. These are (1) Voice and accountability, which includes civil liberties and freedom of the press, (2) Political stability, (3) Government effectiveness which includes the quality of policy making, and public service delivery, (4) Quality of regulations, (5) Rule of law, which includes protection of property rights and an independent judiciary, and (6) Control of corruption (Jain, 2004).

Good Governance aims at enhancing the quality of life and entails governing processes which strive for maximum good for the maximum number of people. Tony Bovaird and Löffler (2003) consider Good Governance as the negotiation by all the stakeholders in an issue (or area) of improved public policy outcomes and agreed governance principles, which are both implemented and regularly evaluated by all stakeholders. Presently, efforts are on globally to provide for evaluation of Good Governance initiatives on several parameters. We shall be discussing this later in this Unit.

17.6 GOOD GOVERNANCE: CHARACTERISTICS

The goal of governance initiatives should be to develop capacities that are needed to realise development that gives priority to the poor, advances women's issues, sustains the environment and creates necessary opportunities for employment and other livelihoods (UNDP, 1994). A strong viewpoint that has emerged is that globalisation could provide the necessary impetus for bringing about efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the government and administrative system. Hence, efforts are on in several countries to reexamine, assess and remove dysfunctions threatening the governance system.

Good governance relates to enhancing the quality of governance through empowerment, participation, accountability, equity and justice. Without transparent and accountable institutions and the capacity to develop the policies and laws to enable a country to manage its markets and its political life in an open but just way, development is not sustainable (Brown, 2000).

Researchers, policy makers, international institutions have attempted to conceptualise the concept of governance and identify its basic characteristics. These include:

Participation: This is considered to be the core of Good Governance. Governments aiming to ensure the requisite freedom to the citizens in order to participate in the decision-making process, articulate and represent their interests, which get reflected in policies and programmes.

Rule of Law: Governance does not imply arbitrary use of authority. Any type of governance to be effective needs to be supplemented by a fair legal framework. This should be supported by appropriate enforcement machinery, independent judiciary, which instills confidence in the people.

Transparency: This is based on the premise of free flow of information and its accessibility to those affected by the decisions taken in the governance process. People, especially shall be in a position to understand as well as monitor governmental and other

sectors' activities, on the basis of information that is accessible to them within reasonable limits.

Responsiveness: The earlier governance mechanisms lacked in their approach of bringing all the stakeholders in their ambit. In the present times, the emphasis is more on institutions being responsive to the needs of all those who are going to be affected by their actions.

Equity: Since governance structures and mechanisms aim at participation, they have to promote equity. A society's well-being and development depends on ensuring that all the members have a stake and role in it and are not excluded from the mainstream activities.

Effectiveness and Efficiency: Good Governance and, NPM need to aim at effectiveness and efficiency in usage of resources in consonance with the societal needs and demands. Result-orientation needs to be the key concern.

Accountability: This occupies a central place in Good Governance. The norm of accountability has to ensure answerability as well as proper enforcement of correct procedure in case of violation of certain laid down norms. Not only the public institutions, but also the private sector and the civil society organisations need to be accountable to the public at large and to the other related institutions and stakeholders.

These characteristics reinforce each other. A proper governance strategy needs to take cognisance of these features. Many countries in the present times, are trying to bring about administrative reforms to foster Good Governance. The World Bank has also outlined certain basics of Good Governance. These include:

- Operation of rule of law, which involves adequate laws to ensure personal security and to facilitate the functioning of the market. The laws need to be adequately enforced through an independent and predictable judiciary in an ambience of absence of official corruption.
- A policy environment, which facilitates economic growth and poverty reduction. This includes sound macro-economic and fiscal policies, sound budgetary institutions and good prioritisation of government expenditure as well as predictable and efficient regulation of the private sector, including the financial sector.
- Adequate investment in people (particularly through public expenditures on basic health and education) and in infrastructure, involving good allocation of public expenditures between and within different sectors.
- Protection to the vulnerable through affordable and targeted safety nets and generally ensuring an appropriate 'pro-poor' emphasis in public expenditure.
- Protection of the environment assuring that economic growth does not cause environmental degradation (Shand, 2001).

Governance, with its emphasis on rule of law, human rights, empowerment, and participatory development, attempts to provide a countervailing force to the excessive managerial orientation. The World Bank (1992) observes "Governance is a continuum and not necessarily unidirectional, it does not automatically improve over time. It is a plant that needs constant tending. Citizens need to demand Good Governance. Their ability to do so is enhanced by literacy, education and employment opportunities. Governments need to prove responsive to their demands. Neither of these can be taken

for granted. Change occurs sometimes in response to external or internal threats. It also occurs through pressures from different internal groups, some of which may be in the form of populist demands. Although lenders and aid agencies and other outsiders can contribute resources and ideas to improve governance, for change to be effective, it must be rooted firmly in the societies concerned and cannot be imposed from outside”.

In a UNDP Workshop on Governance for Sustainable Human Development, (1994) certain characteristics of Good Governance were identified. These include:

- Participation
- Responsiveness to people
- Development of resources and methods of governance
- Mobilisation of resources for social purposes
- Operation by Rule of Law
- Enabling and Facilitative Environment
- Regulation rather than Control
- Service-orientation
- Sustainability
- Acceptability to people
- Promotion of equity and equality
- Promotion of gender balance
- Accountability (Sobhan, 1998, *paraphrased*)

Bovaird and Löffler (2003) postulate ten characteristics of ‘Good Governance’ which have recurred frequently both in the literature and in the political and practitioner debates on the subject.

These include:

- Citizens’ engagement
- Transparency
- Accountability
- The equalities agenda and social inclusion (gender, ethnicity, age, religion, etc.)
- Ethical and honest behaviour
- Equity (fair procedures and due process)
- Ability to compete in a global environment
- Ability to work effectively in a partnership
- Sustainability; and
- Respect for the Rule of Law

17.7 GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES: THE INDIAN CONTEXT

In India, efforts are afoot and have also in some respects gained momentum in the direction of Good Governance reforms. The major administrative reforms in our country during the 1950s and 1960s were basically structural in nature with a view to improving the administrative machinery. With the nature of administration undergoing a change in the 1990s (from traditional bureaucratic to responsive, citizen – oriented), the reforms are also now geared in this direction. Evolving a citizen-centred bureaucracy, ensuring transparency and right to information, streamlining the public grievances machinery, providing for code of ethics, and citizens' charters are some landmarks in this effort. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments are important reform measures fostering empowerment and participation of people in the governance process.

The current changes in government under the impact of reinvention are often considered to be the market-oriented neo-liberal approach, and initiatives towards furthering this are visible in both developed as well as developing countries. The role of the government, which was earlier direct in nature, is now assuming a facilitating and indirect role. Good Governance, as a strategy in the context of managerial reforms, assigns a steering and regulating role to the government vis-à-vis the private sector and a productive partnership between the government and societal organisations.

In India, efforts have been initiated since independence to improve the governmental functioning. Several measures were taken in this direction as the then administrative system suited the British government's needs of revenue; and law and order administration. The post-independence scenario was more in favour of Welfare State in order to ensure responsiveness to the needs of People. The adoption of the Constitution, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State policy, planning as the means of achieving social and economic development made the reorientation of the administrative machinery imperative. The governance structure, and systems had to undergo a major revamping from revenue collection and maintenance of law and order towards socio-economic development, social welfare and citizens' satisfaction.

During 1950s and 1960s, in order to ensure responsiveness, several committees were set up which went into systematic review of the organisational structure and functioning of the Government of India. These include Secretariat Reorganisation Committee (1947), Gopalaswamy Ayyangar Committee on Reorganisation of Government Machinery (1949), and Gorwala Committee (1951). In 1953, on the Government of India's request, Paul H. Appleby of Syracuse University, USA submitted two reports on reforms in Indian administration. Based on these recommendations in 1964, a separate Department of Administrative Reforms was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The most comprehensive set of recommendations including that of administrative efficiency, were made by the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) set up in January 1966. It examined the entire gamut of administration at the Centre as well as the states and submitted twenty major reports during its working of nearly four and a half years. Based on the recommendations of ARC, a Department of Personnel was created in 1970, which was later transformed into a full-fledged Ministry of Personnel and Training, Administrative Reforms, Public Grievance, Pensions and Pensioners' welfare.

Several institutions, such as, Central Vigilance Commission, Central Bureau of Investigation, Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta have also been created. These reform measures

basically attempted to look into the structural changes that were desired at that time to strengthen and streamline the administrative machinery.

As we have discussed in the earlier sections, since the '80s, globally, many changes have taken place in social, economic and political spheres. Even in India also, the realisation has dawned that the bureaucracy is inaccessible and indifferent to common citizens and is more bothered about adherence to procedures, rules and regulations. Hence, there is a need for administration to be more efficient, responsive and accountable for promoting Good Governance. It is now perceived that governance structure has to extend beyond traditional bureaucracy and involve citizens, consumer groups, local bodies, etc.

The Conference of Chief Secretaries and Chief Ministers of all the Indian states and Union Territories in 1996 and 1997 deliberated on the issue of improving governance, and an action plan was formulated to bring about accountable and citizen-friendly government. In accordance with this, several initiatives were taken by the Union and state governments. Let us highlight some of these measures in the following section:

Citizens' Charters

The concept of Citizens' Charters originated in Britain. Citizens Charters are formulated by all those public organisations providing different kinds of services to the people. These Charters are statements that provide information to the general public about the nature of services being provided by that organisation, procedures, costs involved, mechanisms for lodging complaints in case the citizens are not satisfied, time taken for its redressal and so on. Nearly 68 organisations at the Central government level in India have formulated Citizens' Charters. These are being done by state governments also. Next time you visit any government organisation, including a hospital, municipal body, you can have a look at their Citizens' Charters.

Redressal of Citizens' Grievances

The machinery for getting redressal of any grievance that the citizen has against any government organisation has been strengthened. A Directorate of Public Grievances has been set up in the Cabinet Secretariat in 1988 to examine complaints relating to various ministries and departments which have direct public dealings. Also, the organisations keep a track of the complaints or grievances the citizens have lodged. You can also notice certain counters set up by government organisations as Information and Facilitation Counters (IFCs) including "May I Help You" counters. These help the citizens get the necessary information to facilitate their work done.

Use of Information Technology

Good Governance gives importance to use of Information Technology (IT) for efficient and effective service delivery. As you know, train, airline, bus reservations are now computerised and at the village level also computerisation of land records, registration of births, deaths, and application for necessary documents from district headquarters is making the tasks easier for the community. For example, in the State of Madhya Pradesh, the Gyandoot Programme launched in Dhar District has been a tremendous success. It has even won the Stockholm Award in 2000. Under this, initially, computers in 31 villages have been set up in Gram Panchayats which provide user-charge based services to the people. The services include agriculture produce, auction centre rates, online public grievance redressal information regarding the government programmes. Also, one-stop services are being offered to the people in some state governments where supply of ration card, registration of vehicles, payment of property tax, electricity bills,

issue of land holding certificates, etc. are done at one place. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has started many 'e-seva' centres. Maharashtra has set up Setu Project in Thane for this purpose.

Right to Information

It has been increasingly felt that secrecy and lack of openness in government operations results in administration using powers arbitrarily in their dealings with people. Hence, efforts have been on in recent years to ensure and bring about greater transparency in administrative decisions to enable people to have an easy access to information except those related to national defence and security. After several efforts, a "Freedom of Information Bill" was introduced in the Parliament, which aims to provide freedom to every citizen to secure access to information under the control of public authorities. This Bill has been passed by the Parliament in 2001 and several state governments including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have passed the Right to Information Acts. At the central a averment level the, Right to Information Act 2005 was passed by the Parliament on 11 may, 2005 You will be learning more about the Right to Information Act in Course (013) on Public Systems Management.

People's Participation and Decentralisation

The government is ensuring people's participation in governance through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments by which Constitutional status is conferred on rural and urban local bodies. These bodies are given necessary powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government. State governments have passed necessary legislation to this effect by providing for the constitution of these bodies, functions, conduct of elections, devolution of resources, etc.

These are, in brief, some of the key initiatives taken by Indian government in fostering responsive governance. Any reform measure to be effective, has to be sustained in the long run. Similarly, Good Governance can bring results by concentrating on certain key concerns that can ensure its longevity and success. Let us now throw light on these issues.

17.8 PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good Governance, in the context of market-oriented reforms, assumes a new form that harnesses the efforts of varied economic, political, social, and administrative players in the society, which strive to create something new by establishing a balance between different problems and desired ways of resolving them. Governance has assumed a prominent place in the present changing scenario. It involves, as we have discussed earlier, not just the executive, legislature and judiciary, but also the private sector and civil society organisations. The objective of Good Governance is to promote an effective framework. which is democratic, participative and responsive. Modern government is striving towards not just achievement of economic objectives but also attempting to bridge the gap between citizens and administration. Governance, to be effective, needs Good Government. If has to pay attention to several key issues in political, economic and civil spheres.

Political governance needs to be strengthened through appropriate decentralisation measures, making elected representatives responsive and accountable to the citizens, increasing their capacities through education, awareness and training, holding regular periodic and fair elections, ensuring an impartial judiciary as well as improving the functioning of the civil service. NP Economic governance needs to be given importance through sufficient budgetary allocations to socially prioritised areas such as education,

health, housing, appropriate taxation and subsidy systems. This also requires the government to promote private sector development through sound business practices, creation of stable economic environment, appropriate regulatory framework and protection of interests of all concerned including employees, consumers and society at large.

Civic governance includes harnessing the self-initiatives of people, improving their capacities to govern their lives; creating awareness in them, and enabling them to play an active role in democratic governance processes. Pursuing Good Governance by any country requires measures in ensuring a proper balance in the role of public, private and civic sectors, economic development and social justice. The State, private sector and civil society, in pursuit of Good Governance, need to strike an appropriate balance in their roles in order to ensure people-oriented development.

Good Governance requires reforms on several fronts such as political, economic, social, and administrative. Pursuing of Good Governance is a multi-pronged strategy, which includes:

- Reorienting the priorities of State through appropriate investment in the human needs, provision of social safety nets for the poor and marginalised
- Strengthening the State institutions
- Introducing appropriate reforms in the functioning of parliament and increasing its effectiveness
- Enhancing the civil services' capacity through appropriate reform measures that matches performance and accountability
- Forging new alliances with the civil society; and
- Evolving a new framework for government-business cooperation.

Good or effective governance being pursued by several countries at different levels for the last few years is raising certain key concerns. Measuring the quality of governance is assuming importance; while New Public Management is considered to focus on processes of public service delivery, good governance is said to ensure effective outcomes. Governance outcomes are basically intended to be measured, to assess the policy outcomes, whether they have made any difference to the quality of life of all involved stakeholders. This could include several issues such as health, social well-being, environment, conditions of work and so on. An important approach, in this direction is the Human Development Report which since 1990s has developed important composite indices for human development that include Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Related Development Index, Gender Empowerment Measure and the Human Poverty Index. Similarly, Transparency International brings out the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) which ranks countries on the basis of prevalence of corruption.

Another organisation, Governance International, has introduced the governance international health check, which involves an assessment by organisations and their key stakeholders in the public and non-profit sectors, and evaluation of the achievement of key governance principles and policies on the basis of focus group sessions with key stakeholders such as citizens, politicians, third sector representatives, business sector, media, etc.

Pursuing Good Governance by any country requires measures to ensure proper balance in the roles of the public, private and civic sectors, economic development and social

justice. The State, private sector and civil society with their strengths and weaknesses, in pursuit of Good Governance, need to strike an appropriate balance in their roles to strive toward people-oriented development. Good Governance attempts to integrate political elements, economic aspects and social processes to foster holistic development. If managed well, the interplay between globalisation and Good Governance could become a transformative process to stabilise society. Such type of stabilisation can be achieved through:

- Improvement in public security, economic management and public administration
- Shared system of values through core public and private sector institutions
- Development of civil society and indigenous executive, legislative, judicial and administrative institutions; and
- Good governance, democratic development and an effective capacity for development (Kiggundu, 2002).

17. 9 CRITIQUE OF ‘GOVERNANCE’ DISCOURSE

Good governance has to be understood contextually. The circumstances giving birth to this idea are a mix of Neo-liberal thrust in governmental arrangement and the impact of ‘globalisation’ – or a socio-economic integration of the world propelled by economic, technological, and political considerations. There are many views of ‘Good Governance’ seeking to prove as a panacea for ‘bad governance’ in a changing world demanding more dynamic, result-oriented, transparent, and accountable government on the one hand and a networking of formal institutions of government, the market and the private sector, and the civil society on the other.

As it has been rightly cautioned, Good Governance also has its pitfalls, as the tendency seems to ‘depoliticise’ government and bring in more technicism and expertise at the cost of citizen’s age-old and hard fought, democratic right to govern politically. The concern with Good Governance in international development arose out of a particular politics at a time when there were major arguments regarding the need to downsize the State. Throughout the ‘governance’ discourse, references are made to the current approaches to improving governance that is calculated to reduce the act of governing to an apolitical and technical exercise. A key issue, however, is that governance is about power and politics. As various forms of confrontations and people’s struggles for their ‘rights’ in various parts of the Third World clearly point out, for democracy to survive ‘governance’ has to be seen as a project of continuous struggle for social construction, which includes issues of inclusion, equity and equality.

George Frederickson, in his seminal paper “Whatever happened to Public Administration? Governance Governance’s Everywhere” challenges the validity and usefulness of the concept of governance, on five grounds. *First*, much of the governance literature, as Strange (1983), argued (1983), is a rehash of old academic debates and it is not clear whether something new is brought to the discipline of Public Administration. *Second*, the concept, does not have an agreed upon meaning and is imprecise, wooly, and when applied, so broad that virtually any meaning can be attached to it. *Third*, the concept of governance is freighted with values. Some models of governance reflect anti-bureaucratic and anti-governmental sentiments, while other models are deeply contextual, based on Constitutional, legal, organisational and political influences. This perspective

on governance in public administration makes the subject both bigger and grander, a kind of un-public administration.

Fourth, scholars who use the word governance, particularly in Europe, claim that the concept is primarily about change, reforms and getting things right. Investment in the prevailing institutions, cities, states, nations and their established governments, as well as the accomplishment of the institutions, are devalued. Order stability and predictability are likewise undervalued. It is felt that despite the rhetoric of reforms governance is mostly about order and has politicians and bureaucrats adapt in orderly ways to changing circumstances and values. For example, most of elements of governance – networks, inter-organisational and inter-jurisdictional cooperation, power-sharing federations, public-private partnerships and contracting out are terms of institutional adaption in the face of increasing interdependence. *Fifth*, governances often centered on non-state, institutions, both profit and for profit contracts, non-governmental organisations, parastatals, third parties etc. It is a general feeling amongst the advocates for governance that there can be governance without government. But it is still the States and their sub-jurisdictions that deal with the vexing problems of race, poverty and justice.

Governance, in spite of certain weaknesses, is the most useful available concept that attempts to explain the powerful forces at work in the world. Frederickson suggests that the application of governance to public administration would be improved by narrowing the scope of the subject. There needs to be a fundamental distinction between public administration as the internal day to day management of an agency or organisation on the one hand and public administration as governance, the management of the extended state on the other.

17.10 CONCLUSION

The concept and practice of governance, with several interpretations including Good Governance has gained prominence over the past decade. While, in a narrow sense, it focuses on improving public administration structures, processes, institutional development, broadly speaking, it places emphasis on qualitative improvements in the administration. Hence, principles such as accountability, transparency, participation, and empowerment are emphasised to make governance good or effective, to enable the development move towards new and productive directions. Good Governance, as we have observed, is bringing about creative intervention, and participation by not just a sole actor, but by various key players to enhance the legitimacy of public realm. Good Governance emphasises the involvement of institutions, actors from and beyond government, encouraging flexibility in public service provisions and cost-effective policy outcomes.

Globalisation has positive as well as negative repercussions. It is for the country concerned, to adopt locally specific governance strategies to exploit the benefits of globalisation and work towards sustainable development. The market forces continue to play a key role but the State cannot be wished away. What is needed, in the present scenario, is a coordination of efforts amongst the State, market and civil society organisations with an aim on long-term stability.

17.11 KEY CONCEPTS

Human Development Index

Measurement of human progress introduced by the United Nation Development programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Report 1990. By combining indicators of real purchasing power, education and health, the Human Development Index provides a more comprehensive measure of development than does the Gross National Product alone

lcweb2.gov/frd/cs/chile/cl-glos.html

Organisational Pluralism

It is a multi-paradigmatic approach to organisation's functioning. It talks of multiple organisations in a specific area and the impact of varied organisations on a particular field. It all organisations ranging from government private sector, NGOs and other non-state actors pursuing development objectives.

User Charges

These are charges imposed for providing services or sale of products in connection with government activities. These are paid by the citizens for consumption of goods and services and do not include capital fees.

17.12 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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17.13 ACTIVITIES

1. Visit your near by municipal or any other local body responsible for civic governance of your area and enquire about governance measures introduced in recent times.
2. Talk to your neighbours, shopkeepers, and business community in your area and elicit their opinions and views on the effectiveness of prevailing governance strategies; pen down your observations.