

## Good Governance and Development

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### *Abstract*

*The term development is closely related to the process of governance. Governance is necessary for smooth and efficient working of all the sectors of a nation. However, it is not the exclusive preserve of the government. It extends to the other non-political branches like the civil society and the private sector which also perform public functions. All nations of the world initiate a number of development activities in order to bring about a positive change in the economy, society and the lives of the citizens. In this direction good governance always plays a vital role. Because without good governance there can be no sustainable development in a country. Good governance is responsive to the present and future needs of society. It is a tool of development which helps a nation to become a developed one where everybody can get equal opportunities to prosper in his life. It is not simply something that government can achieve or do by itself. Good governance depends on the cooperation and an *involvement of citizens and organizations in large numbers.**

**Keywords:** *Governance, Good Governance, Civil Society, Development, Sustainable Development*

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### **Introduction**

Governance as a term may be described as the process by which society steers itself. “In this process, the State, Private enterprise and Civil Society interact with each other, articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences” (Saxena, 2005, p. 313). The concept of governance is not new. It is as old as human civilization. It refers to the ability to deliver goods to the stakeholders, which also refers to the elimination of mal governance and the establishment of good governance through democratic processes and rule of law so

that citizens of a country and members of a society do not suffer. It also means to make the various agents of a political system work for the betterment of all the citizens, especially of the marginalized and the vulnerable communities (Singh, 2008). The World Bank has defined governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources”.

“The concept of good governance is the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels” (Singh, 2008, p. 83). According to the concise Oxford Dictionary, Good Governance is an “act or manner of governing” and “the office or function of governing”. Governance here is not only confined to political governance but would include all types of governance, such as international governance, national governance, state or provincial governance or local governance (Singh et al., 2009).

“Good governance is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework” (Bhattacharya, 2016, p. 43). It assures that corruption is minimised, the views of minorities are taken into account and that voice of the most vulnerable segments of people in the society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. In essence to World Bank, good governance consists of (Singh et al., 2009):

- Political accountability
- Regular elections to legitimize the exercise of political power
- Participation by various social, economic, cultural and professional groups in the process of governance
- Rule of law
- Independence of judiciary
- Bureaucratic accountability
- Freedom of information
- Transparency
- Efficient and effective administrative system
- Co-operation between government and the civil society (p. 1111).

From the discussion above it is clear that good governance is not simply something that government can achieve or do by itself. Good governance depends on the cooperation and an involvement of citizens and organizations in large numbers.

Good Governance has 8 major characteristics. These are (Singh et al., 2009):

- Participatory
- Consensus oriented
- Accountable
- Transparent
- Responsive
- Effective and efficient
- Equitable and inclusive and
- Follows the rule of law (p. 1111).

### **Governance, Good Governance and Development**

Governance is necessary for smooth and efficient working of all the sectors of a nation. However, the quality of governance plays a vital role in the economic development of countries. Because without good governance there can be no sustainable development in a country. Good governance is a key development concept in today's world. The World Bank in 1992 used the term 'good governance' for the first time. Good governance, according to World Bank's concept, is an essential component for overall economic development (Dab, 2014).

It is to be noted that the term development is closely related to the process of governance. All nations of the world initiate a number of development activities in order to bring about a positive change in the economy, society and the lives of the citizens. It is the state which has played a dominant role in the entire process of development. It is widely recognized that good governance is absolutely necessary for economic development of developing countries. It helps create an environment in which sustained economic growth becomes achievable. Good governance assures that corruption is minimized, views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable sections in society are heard in decision making. When good governance is guaranteed, residents of all over the world go about their personal business and pursuits with enhanced expectations (Dab, 2014). Against this, poor governance is characterized by arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, un-enforced or unjust legal systems, the abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life and widespread corruption (Singh, 2008).

According to Dab (2014), good governance is a tool of development which helps a nation to become a developed one where everybody can get equal opportunities to prosper in his life. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has identified four key areas of interrelationship between governance and development. These are:

- Accountability
- Participation
- Predictability and
- Transparency (p. 40).

Good governance is specifically linked to sustainable development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) holds that developing capacity for good governance furthers the four critical elements of sustainable human development. These are (Singh, 2008):

- eliminating poverty
- creating jobs and sustaining livelihoods
- protecting and generating the environment and
- promoting the advancement of women (p. 85).

It may be noted that governance is not the exclusive preserve of the government. It extends to the other non-political branches like the civil society and the private sector which are performing public functions. Basically, it covers every institution, organization, from family to the state (Jain, 2012).

It is also very necessary to mention here that civil society plays an important role for societal development and in enhancing the rule of law. It is composed of the totality of voluntary civil and social organizations and institutions that form the basis of a

functioning society as opposed to the forced backed structures of a state (regardless of that State's political system) and commercial institutions of the market. Civil Society, as explained by UNDP, refers to non-profit organizations and institutions, distinct from the state, the market and the family. It includes community groups, academics and research institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations, cultural groups, professional associations and religious groups (Gupta, 2011). It is due to some reasons like corruption, lack of budget etc. sometimes it becomes very difficult for the governmental structures to cope with the functions assigned to them. In such situations, civil society organizations and the state structures can and should play a mutually supplementary role to each other. Because it is the civil society organizations which can resolve a number of vulnerable issues relating to human development much better than the governments can. These organizations can also help governments in developing better strategies for resolution of various issues such as ensuring gender equality, protection of rights of people with limited physical opportunities, etc. Not only this, apart from contributing to effective governance at national level, civil society organizations can help support establishment of good governance principles at community levels as well. This would help in developing and creating capacities amongst the communities to govern themselves on modern democratic principles which in turn would lead to decrease in costs and improvement of governance, allowing the governmental structures to concentrate on priority areas, basic directions of social, economic and political development (Singh, 2008). However, it has been pointed out that existence of civil society organizations does not guarantee good governance. "For that purpose, institutional structures are required to be in place to ensure that the civil society has the opportunities to effectively participate in decision making process and thereby ensure good governance". "In this respect it is important to lay stress on those institutional structures of local self-governance which ensure the participation of civil society groups, apart from the individual of course, in decision making processes of governance structures" (Singh, 2008, p. 85).

## Conclusion

Good governance is the key to a nation's progress. "The whole idea of good and responsive governance is that of giving, of serving and or doing good to the people, or solving their problems and making their lives more liveable, satisfying and enjoyable". "It comes close to Gandhiji's concept of politics for service of the people and not for becoming masters of the people" (Bhattacharjee, 2016, p. 44). Good governance facilitates development, and in turn development ensures furtherance of good governance. It is with better institutional mechanism and good governance; nations of the world can put their development process in the higher ladder of growth and human development. The systems should, therefore, be good and suited to the needs, aspirations as well as ethos of the people concerned and that those selected for operating the system should be endowed with competence and motivated by the spirit of public service.

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### Author's Profile



books.

**D. Dutta**, Completed graduation in Political Science in Cotton College, Guwahati, Assam and post-graduation in Political Science in Gauhati University, Assam. Recently he has completed his M. Phil in Krishnakanta Handiqui State Open University, Assam. He poses 7 years of teaching experience. He has presented 10 papers in national level seminars. He has also published 8 articles/papers in different journals and research