

Review Article

Role of Governance for Poverty Alienation in India: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

Recent evidence pertaining to the post-liberalization period, 1991–1997, clearly suggests that despite a significant increase in per capita income, rural poverty did not decline appreciably. This is mainly due to increased inequality not only vis-à-vis the urban areas but also within the rural population. This paper tries to unfold the relations among governance, sustainable development, poverty, and role of judiciary.

Keywords: Democracy; Poverty; Good Governance; Judiciary; Sustainable Development.

Introduction

The government is viewed as an agency or machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and realized. There is no accepted definition of governance but there is divergence of opinion about the meaning of governance between the conservatives and the liberals, between socialists and the communists.

The World Bank has sought to take a middle position to defining governance, particularly as the traditions and the institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (i) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; (ii) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social communications among them (Kaufmann 1999). In recent years the word governance has become a very fashionable term and is being used in a variety of ways and that covers a large number of organizations both in public and private domains (Balmiki 2008). We are

confining governance only to public domain and are concerned here with that form of governance which serves the citizens by safeguarding territorial integrity of the State and securing individual security, rule of law and the delivery of services ranging from education, health to livelihood and food security, no theory of governance would be intelligible unless it is seen in the context of its time. Unfortunately, in spite of numerous government schemes and safety nets, under and malnutrition remain widespread in our country the progress have made in industry and economic growth rate, but reputation in the field of eradication of hunger, poverty and malnutrition is poor (Swaminathan 2010). In the last decade, emphasis in relation to basic human needs has shifted from patronage to a rights approach. Thus, we have now legal rights through Parliament Approved Legislation in the fields of education, information, and employment. Currently, there is an ongoing exercise on National Food Security Act which will confer on every Indian the legal right to food.

Food is the first among the hierarchical needs of a human being. Therefore, food security should have the first charge on the available financial resources. Spoilage of grains through lack of investment in storage is a sad reflection on our sense of priorities.

National Food Security Act, 2013 is giving legal rights to food can be implemented only by attending to the safe storage of both grains and perishable commodities like fruits, vegetables, and milk. At the same time animal nutrition will also require greater attention. Unfortunately, grazing land is fast shrinking. Animals are underfed, and are therefore low yielding. In order to secure nutritive food for human being, animal food security has become essential to provide nutrition security.

An efficient, effective and democratic government is the best guarantor of social justice as well as an orderly society. Similarly, there is also emphasis on the fact that the administrative system has to be country specific and area specific taking in view not only the institutions of governance and its legal and regulatory mechanisms but also its market, its civil society and cultural values of the people. The government would, therefore, have the singular responsibility to create an enabling environment where development programmed get properly implemented and that creative minds do not get stifled or their energies diverted from undertaking new initiatives or enterprises. In present time India is not excluded from the global debate or transition from socialist order to capitalist growth models but fortunately, the Indian State does not have the monopoly of the public sphere. The civil society is increasingly more concerned with public sphere issues and government intervention is considered necessary to provide welfare schemes to cover social safety needs, upgrade health-care to protect children, and help provide opportunities for women and the minorities.

Challenge before Good Governance

The central challenge before good governance relates to social development. Good governance must aim at expansion in social opportunities and removal of poverty. There is no uniform measure of poverty in India and there was no official consensus on what percentage of the population lived below the poverty line. Nationally, there were different definitions of poverty. One of the more accepted definitions of poverty was in nutritional terms: below 2,400 calories daily in rural areas or below 2,100 calories daily in urban areas. However, out of context, these numbers are grossly misleading: in the U.S., the 2,000-calorie daily diet is touted as healthy for the average American. Since its independence, the issue of poverty within India has remained a prevalent concern. As of 2010, more than 37% of India's population of 1.35 billion still lives below the poverty line, more than 22% of the entire rural population

and 15% of the urban population of India (Indian economy 2010). Food security policy in India has for many years favoured extensive government intervention. Farmers are assisted by input subsidies and, if necessary, their harvests will be purchased at guaranteed minimum support prices. A safety net for the poor is provided by the long established Public Distribution System (PDS). This offers BPL families the opportunity to purchase heavily discounted food and cooking essentials through a vast network of 489,000 "fair price shops" (Jadhav 2013).

The persistence of hunger in India has finally persuaded the government that this strategy has failed. Corruption and fraud has ravaged the PDS to the extent that 70% of its resources may be misdirected. The government's food storage facilities have proved woefully inadequate. In short, good governance, as we perceive it, means securing justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services.

- ❑ **Securing Justice** There are several inter-related aspects of securing justice including security of life and property, access to justice, and rule of law.
- ❑ **Threats to Peace** the most important public good is the supply of security especially security of life and property. The responsibility of the Indian nation-state to protect the life and property of every citizen is being seriously threatened particularly in areas affected by terrorism (Jammu and Kashmir), insurgency (north-eastern states), and naxalite violence in 150 districts of India's mainland. The Indian nation-state is aware of complexities of the situation and the need is to show greater determination and relentless in support to its instruments of law and forces of democracy and social cohesion to defeat the elements of terror, insurgency and naxalite violence.

Good Governance and Poverty

People suffer high incidence of poverty and inequality due to lack of resources and skills and assets and the resulting un employment and under employment. The concept of good governance is now on the top of agenda in a major part of the developing world. The reports of the Transparency International bear evidence to this. The object of good governance is to develop certain pre conditions to improve the socio economic condition of the people at the bottom of the pyramid and to drive out poverty from the face of the globe. Every effort to achieve total eradication of poverty At a time of global economic insecurity,

with governments' quick to excuse themselves from international responsibilities, should not forget that a significant proportion of the world's population is excluded from the prevailing model of wealth creation. Whilst the symptoms of this model's inherent unsustainability economic recession, volatile food and fuel prices, and climate change have slowed the advance of consumerism, the disproportionate impact on the poor is yet to be acknowledged in the corridors of global governance [1]. Is at a 'progressive level' of each and every developing country.

The development strategy is now focused on achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to lift 460 million of the poor and deprived above the poverty line of income per day US\$1 or 2. The programmes taken up are not so successful, sustainable due to weak links in the system. The efforts should be multi disciplinary cutting across sectoral lines so as to make them sustainable in the long run, involving all stakeholders i.e. participatory empowerment of the poor (not just through social safety nets) and generating productive systems for the poor. The world wide acceptance of liberalization, privatization globalization etc., started a new phase, new practices and new habits globally. The need to orient the governments and organisations for pro poor² and gender sensitive projects for active participation as partners and stakeholders in governance is the need of the hour. This discussion above calls for a new approach and new policies which are pro active and which ensures political commitment and effective implementation of plans, projects and programmes for the poor and marginalised sections.

Role of Good Government in Poverty Alienation

In ancient times it was about lack of water, food, shelter etc. Nowadays all that is combined with unemployment, lack of energy, infrastructure, resources, etc. and many governments are at a loss at where to begin within and between countries, the poor and the well-off live in completely different worlds, completely insulated from one another. Poverty exists in many forms and arises in a broad range of circumstances. The causes may be man-made and systemic or they may be environmental, meaning people may live in poverty because they are not part of a system. In other words, poverty may be the result of effective as well as ineffective policy interventions. Policies tend to be effective where interdependent systems exist, it is possible to rationally coordinate and direct collective action in a certain direction, and people are sufficiently

dependent on the system to "feel the pinch". This is what is needed to redress mistakes and ensure a policy dynamic that responds to what happens to citizens in a particular country.

The first thing to do is to understand the problem, its causes and effects in different contexts. In the recent years, the discourse on 'good governance' has assumed a lot of significance. It is admitted by Government of India (GOI) that continued deprivation and inequality is the result of poor governance in the country. 'Good governance' has been identified as an instrument which would help overcome the challenges of poverty and deprivation. To GOI, governance means the 'management of all such processes that, in any society, define the environment which permits and enables the individual to raise their capability levels, on one hand, and provide opportunities to realize their potential and enlarge the set of available choices, on the other'. Governance, it is identified, would become 'good governance' if it goes with certain universally accepted features like exercise of legitimate political power, and formulation and implementation of policies and programmes that are equitable, transparent, non-discriminatory, socially sensitive, participatory, and above all accountable to people at large. A close relationship is established between 'good governance' and the success or failure of poverty alleviation efforts in India has been seen as there are 22.15% people living under the poverty line in India (NSSO 2004-2005). The estimate was based on monthly consumption of goods, daily wages, self employment and landless laborers. However Economic growth and positive commercial developments have served to reduce poverty substantially over the years in India. The Tenth Five Year plan specifically takes up the case of rural development programmes to illustrate how governance affects any process, it has identified that, excessive compartmentalization of executive into ministries/departments; has ensured that such programmes are not only spread over host of ministries which encourages a narrow sectoral approach to conceiving, formulating and implementing schemes, but also prevents mutual synergies that are inherent in most social sector programmes to benefit the plan.

Conclusion

The Trinity i.e. Legislature, Judiciary and Executive is an accomplish phenomenon. Their harmonious existence is a theory; the differences a reality. Justice- social, economic and political can only

be achieved if every organ of the Government functions are as per the constitutional mandate. The Constitution of India, having divided the powers of governance among different Institutions, has assigned to the Judiciary a role of supervision and correction, through 'judicial review'. In the Constitution, the Judiciary has the ultimate duty for oversight and maintenance of the rule of law in its dynamic and social justice oriented approach and to fail performing these goals for the Judges is to fail their oath of office. In order to achieve the objectives of constitution judicial activism is only a passing phase. After an analysis, it is not only the Judiciary that should play an activist role for upholding the rule of law in a democracy, but also the legislature and the executive. It is neither able to ensure true participation of people nor able to bring in much needed integration and coordination for better impact on poverty. That's why the proclaimed good governance for the poor hence appears to be more of rhetoric than a reality.

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Endnotes

1. At a time of global economic insecurity, with governments' quick to excuse themselves from international responsibilities, we should not forget that a significant proportion of the world's population is excluded from the prevailing model of wealth creation. Whilst the symptoms of this model's inherent unsustainability – economic recession, volatile food and fuel prices, and climate change have slowed the advance of consumerism, the disproportionate impact on the poor is yet to be acknowledged in the corridors of global governance.
2. India also needs a more effective tax system as its private sector grows. This will give it enough to finance the right pro-poor policies and review their efficiency. Recently, the decentralization of the administration was an attempt to improve such efficiency.