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Research Paper

Good Governance and Decentralized Planning: An Appraisal

Political Science

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ABSTRACT

Good Governance is one of the very essential conditions for the development of the country. It has realized that good governance is absolutely necessary to provide the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Therefore process of good governance in all level of the government is very much vital.Decentralization is one of the vital prerequisite for good governance. Decentralization is an organizational setting that may improve the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of various level of the government under suitable condition. With decentralization, local people can directly be involved in decisions that affect services in their community. So, Decentralization facilitates, good governance through empowering local people, allowing them to participate in decisions affecting their life. In this paper attempt has been made to discuss the concept of good governance and significance of decentralized planning for good governance.

Introduction

In recent times good governance is increasingly viewed as an essential element of any well functioning society. Good governance includes the mechanisms and processes, which enable a society to achieve more sustainable human development (Report of Planning commission, 2013). Major donors and international financial institutions argued that poor governance is one of the root cause of underdevelopment, poverty etc.Decentralization is one of the vital prerequisite of good governance; Decentralization is an organizational setting that may improve the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of various level of the government under suitable condition. With decentralization, local people can directly be involved in decisions that affect services in their community. So, Decentralization facilitates, good governance through empowering local people, allowing them to participate in decisions affecting their life. In this paper an attempt has been made to discuss the following objectives.

Objectives:

- To discuss the concept of Good Governance and Decentralization
- To analyze the significance of decentralized planning for good governance.

Concept of Good Governance:

The concept of good governance is as old as the discipline of Political Science (Singh and Singh, 2011). In *Republic* Plato indicated an ideal framework for good governance through the concept of Justice, Rule of Philosopher King, and elaborate system of Education and communism of wives. In Aristotrle's writing the idea of good Governance is found by concept of rule of middle class, rule of law, small size of state etc((Singh and Singh,2011).The parameters of Good governance is also seen in the *Arthashastra*, In it, Kautilya presented key pillars of the 'art of governance', emphasizing justice, ethics, and anti-autocratic tendencies (Kautilya, Book I,)

In recent time the concept of good governance was for the first time highlighted in World Bank document on Sub Saharan, 1989.World Bank argued that economic development cannot be generated and sustained in Africa due to deficit in governance World Bank identified four dimensions to transform from malgovernance to good governance. (i) public sector managment (ii)accountablity (iii) legal framework for development (iv) information and transpareency.(World Bank Report ,1989)

In 1992, the World Bank Report on Governance and Development defined governance as manner in which power is exercised in the management of the country's economic and social resources for development. Good Governance is only way to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies. The World Bank has identified six indicators of good governance (World Bank Report, 1992).

- Accountability;
- Political stability and lack of violence;
- Effectiveness;
- Quality;
- Rule of law; and
- Control of corruption

Good governance is a concept that has come into regular use in political science, public administration and, more particularly, development management. It appears alongside such terms such as democracy, civil society, participation, human rights and sustainable development. Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. (OECD, 2001).

Good Governance has also been described elsewhere as striving for Rule of Law, transparency, responsiveness, accountability and strategic vision, of Political economic and administrative authority (UNDP, 2002).

Commonwealth Local Government Forum campaigned for an alternative view on Good Governance. The General Meeting of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, convened on 18th March 2005 in Scotland, put forwarded significance of good governance in the present era. Commonwealth Principles on Local Democracy and Good Governance has highlighted the few indicators as important for Good Governance. This are-

- Constitutional and legal recognition for local democracy, The ability to elect local representatives,
- Opportunity to participate in local decision-making
- Open local government accountability,
- Open local government transparency,
- Openness to scrutiny,
- Inclusiveness and equitable service delivery.

The Commonwealth Secretariat, through its Governance & Institutional Development Division, helps member governments to develop administrative structures that facilitate economic development while adhering to the five principles of good governance: accountability, transparency, predictability, capacity and participation.

In a nutshell, Good governance is associated with accountability efficiency transparency and responsible behavior on the part of ruler in a democratic framework. It ensures political social and economic priorities which are based on broad consensus in

society and the voice of the poorest. Thus Good governance simply refers to the Governance that provides greatest good of the greatest number of people

Concept of Decentralization and Decentralized Planning:
The word "Decentralization" is originally derived from Latin word and its means away from center. Decentralization is a process of transfer of responsibilities, authority, functions from superior governmental unities to local level unities. In the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* denotes decentralization as "the transference of authority, legislative, judicial or administrative from a higher level of government to a lower level". These authorities related to planning, management, and resource raising and allocation. Although the basic idea of decentralization is sharing the decision making authority with lower level.

Decentralization in the context of planning refers to the transfer of decision making, administrative functions to the local level organization. It involves the process of conferring powers and authority on the formally created local authorities (Singh, 1992). The basic premise of decentralized planning is involvement of local level organizations in the formulation and implementation of plans for development. Under the decentralized planning, plans are formulated independently either by the local bureaucracy or the locally elected body according to local priorities and needs within the allotted financial grants and implemented locally.

Decentralized Planning brought planning close to people who are the ultimate target of development. It is a 'multi level' planning system in which planning is attempted at different politico-administrative and executive levels so that there is greater integration between the development needs and priorities of smaller areas and different socio-economic groups with the regional and sub regional and national level developmental policies and goals. Actually it also can be defined as 'planning at different level' or 'multi level' planning system, that consists of planning at national level, state level, district level, and block level. Finally decentralized planning is based on ground realities, helps to utilize the resources properly and judiciously and ensures more equitable sharing of benefits from the development (Mishra, 1994).

Good Governance and Decentralized Planning:
Good governance and decentralization that are in vogue these days, are closely connected to each other. If good governance is goal, decentralization can be regard as means. In general, good governance stand for welfare of the people and well being of the people. Good governance is not that government in which the interest of the few are protected rather it stand for the welfare of all particularly for those who are deprived and need state's assistance(Sharma & Bareth,2004).The World Development Report (1999-2000) devoted one whole chapter on decentralization and argues that successful decentralization improve the efficiency and responsiveness. The report emphasized on that localization which is praised for raising level of people participation in decision making and for giving people more of a chance to shape the context of their own lives (World Development Report,1999-2000). The UNDP also recognize the importance of decentralization for good governance (Bagchi, 2009)

Good Governance and development both are inter related. The real goals of development can be achieved through decentralization. The centralized planning was considered essential to control and augment national economy and to gear up national development in India after her emergence from the long period of colonial exploitation. But as a federal system, India is a vast country with a huge number of populations and the natural environments typified by extreme differences in climate, typography, vegetation and so on. The resource endowment is very uneven over geographical space. Socially the country is highly differentiated in terms of language, culture, food habits etc and level of economic and social development enormously different in the different regions. In such a situation centralized planning cannot adequately take care of the entire requirement at different territorial and sectional level of planning process for overall development of the country. At this stage, there is a need for type of planning covering various layers of territorial spaces, extending from center through the state, region, district, and sub district and grass root level units. Such planning specifies the requirements of the respective areas and people for whom the development benefits are intended. In this context, decentralization of planning play a significant role to bring about functional, financial and administrative deconcentration to the various levels for achieving varieties of development objectives as end of national development. The primary objectives of Decentralised planning, planning by the grassroot government (Panchayati Raj Institutions) is to promote rural development, meet basic needs of people, especially of weaker sections, and to alleviate poverty by providing to the poor the required support system. The decentralized planning helps the planners to decide on objectives and priorities in the light of specific requirements of a locality and the availability of the resources. Moreover a well organized planning body at the grass root level is capable of comprehending the situation so as to identify specifically the bottlenecks standing on the way of growth and development. It also helps to adopt suitable effective remedial measures through intuitional arrangement for removing the bottlenecked. Objectives formulation and successful implementation of planning demand adequate understanding of the nature of the problems, proper identification of the target groups, examination of their socio economic constraints and the factors regarding the process of development. Decentralized planning lays greater emphasis on a systematic assessment of local needs and priorities as well as utilizing local resources to the fullest extent by adoption innovative approaches relevant to endogenous development. Moreover one of the basic objectives of planning is to balance the disparities among different parts of the country, the decentralized planning through its trust on area specific development programme within a multilevel framework helps to solve the problems of regional imbalances and intra regional differences. Finally Decentralized planning regarded as a necessary precondition for economic, social and political development.

Conclusion
Mahatma Gandhi has rightly realized that only through decentralized governance the goals good governance can be achieve. Decentralization is necessary condition for good governance and decentralization ensure the essential ingredients transparency, accountability responsiveness in government activities by connecting with all levels of the government. Decentralized planning is can regard a means of good governance through which concept of greatest good for people can carry into reality. If all developing nations like India properly execute the model of decentralized planning in true sense than good governance for sustainable development would be not a distance dream.

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