



Good Governance: Promotion of Ethics and Moral Values

KEYWORDS

Administration, Good governance, moral values, Transparency, Accountability, National interest, Excellence.

Dr. Mandeep Gaur

Asst. Prof. Religious Studies, Punjabi University TPD Malwa College, Rampura Phul (Punjab)

ABSTRACT *In the last few years issues of good governance have been receiving considerable attention in the political discourse in India. Presently, a set of strategies to achieve good governance is being put forward by international lending agencies such as the world bank as also by our own government. Andhra Pradesh has even set up a centre for good governance to guide reforms in the state and train the officials.*

In ancient India, good governance was conceptualized as Ram Rajya. The cardinal maxim of be good and do good was applied to all the realms, whether personal or professional; and the governmental system was no exception. Kautilya in his magnum opus (Arthashastra) exhorted the rulers to be compassionate to their subjects.

In modern India, more and more citizens are becoming educated, enlightened and aware of their rights. Hence, ethics in governance are attracting attention of all the people who talk of good governance. Actually, good governance is a value laden concept. The word good is derived from the word God and carries an innate sense of judgement, i.e. what is right and what is wrong; what is just and what is unjust. So when the judgement or deed is just or right -- it is good. In the context of good governance, it means right or just or moral judgement made by those exerting authority in the public interest.

The overall objective of morality is to ensure good governance with prime concern for moral values, practices and behaviour. These moral values are inculcated in an individual by her parents, teachers, religion, society and the environment of workplace.

The essential duty of governance is to effectively and equitably implement what is called the social contract. Hence, it demands a highly competent, well informed and caring administration. It envisages the government institutions to become innovative, participatory and have a good deal of sound policy formulation, open-mindedness, and distinct citizen orientation.

The promotion of ethics and moral values in good governance implies legality of government action, rationality in policy and decision making, evolving a sense of responsibility, ensuring accountability, strengthening work commitment, creating excellence, facilitating spirit of individual and organizational goals, developing responsiveness, showing compassion, protecting the national interests, safeguarding the spirit of justice, bringing transparency and elevating integrity. Actually, these values expect the masters of ancient India to be the civil servants of modern India that are guided by a spirit of service.

INTRODUCTION

These days, ethics in governance are attracting attention of all the people who talk of good governance. Nowadays most of the citizens are educated, enlightened and aware of their rights. The spread of democracy in various countries of the world has brought to fore the issue of ethics in governance. In ancient times, there is mention of this also. When Lord Buddha was asked by his eminent disciple, Anand, to explain what true religion was, Buddha responded, "Forget about all the dogmas and theories of religion just be good and do good". This Cardinal maxim of ethics applies to all realms, whether personnel or professional and the governmental system is no exception..... Kautilya in his magnum opus, Arthashastra, exhorted the rulers to be compassionate to their subjects. Plato expected from the statesmen to be the *men of wisdom* and empathy. Ethics in Good Governance has many facets and it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It includes legality of government action, rationality in policy and decision-making, evolving a sense of responsibility, ensuring accountability, strengthening work commitment, creating excellence, facilitating spirit of individual and organizational goals, developing responsiveness, showing compassion, protecting the national interest, safeguarding the spirit of justice, bringing transparency and elevating integrity. The Bureaucracy in India is now a totally changed one from ICS to IAS and it is good that new symptoms are very important. Masters are now *Civil Servants* and they are guided by a *spirit of service*.

DEFINITION OF ETHICS

"Ethics" is a system of accepted beliefs, mores and values

which control human behaviour. More specifically, it is a system based on morals. Ethics is the study of what is morally right, and what is not. The Latin origin of the word 'ethics' is 'ethicus' that means character. Ethics may be briefly defined as *the science of morality* or as *the study of right conduct or duty*. It is thus a science which explains the objectives of moral life and indicates the course in which human activities should be directed. It is essentially an investigation into the notions of good and bad, right and wrong, as applied to the conduct or voluntary action. We see, then, that ethics is concerned with the rightness and wrongness of conduct. But conduct is the exponent of character, and is good or bad, right or wrong, only as revealing a character. In other words, ethics is an inquiry into the nature of morality and its foundation, particularly the way in which human conduct is ordered, guided and appraised. Ethics also involves reflecting on and evaluating a given set of values.

Currently, the notion of ethics has expanded itself to involve all major realms of human existence, such as:

1. Maxim of Legality and Rationality.
2. Maxim of Responsibility and Accountability.
3. Maxim of work commitment.
4. Maxim of Excellence.
5. Maxim of Fusion.
6. Maxim of Responsiveness and Resilience.
7. Maxim of Utilitarianism.
8. Maxim of Justice.
9. Maxim of Transparency.
10. Maxim of Integrity.

The Overall objective of ethics is to ensure *good governance* with prime concern for ethical principles, practices and behaviour. There are no dogmas involved in defining administrative ethics.

There are three sources of ethics. The first source is individual's *sense of values* which is inculcated by his parents, teachers and religion. Religion provides the basic frame work for moral values to an individual. It has been an important factor in influencing work ethics in many societies. The second source is the *value system of the society*. In a society where there is appreciation for good work and where success achieved by hook or crook is not appreciated, there will be tendency to do more hard work. The third source of ethics is the system in which an employee works. It is observed that the environment in which a government employee works is not conducive to work culture. The senior officers sit in comforts whereas the junior staff sits in dingy and humid rooms.

MEANING OF GOVERNANCE

Governance is about how an organization takes itself and the processes and structure that are used to achieve its goals. Governance is also crucially concerned with how organizations relate to each other, how they relate to citizens and the way in which citizens are given a voice. The essential duty of governance is to effectively and equitably implement what is called the *social contract*. Transition to liberalization and economic reforms, and to new types of managerial set-ups is a complex and difficult task which demands a highly competent, well informed and caring administration. Government institutions should become innovative, participatory and have a good deal of sound policy formulation, open-mindedness, and distinct citizen orientation.

Governance can be understood as a set of eight major characteristics such as:

Participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability. Governance has been used as synonym with government, as the definition in the concise Oxford Dictionary implies. Here, governance is the act or manner of governing, the office or function of governing; to govern is *to rule or control with authority to be in government*. At the apex of governance lies the *role of the State as a sovereign functionary*. All activities of the government related to its sovereign functions represent the heart of its domain.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Concept of *good Governance* is not a new one as ensuring *goodness* in governance and raising its level has always been the considered goal of the people and persistent demand of the articulate sections in any society. In ancient India, it was conceptualized as '*Ram Rajya*'. However, in modern western sense, the term *good governance* is of recent origin. Good governance meant sound development management. Referring to the background conditions of the *good governance* concept, Audrain leftish points out the three redeeming features of the *contemporary western aid and overseas development*. 'Governance' as a process denotes a value free dispensation where as good governance connotes certain value assumption. Thus, good governance is a value laden concept. The word *good* derives from the word God and carries an innate sense of judgement, i.e. what is right, what is wrong; what is just, what is unjust; what is fair, what is unfair; what is moral, what is immoral. Therefore, when the judgement or deed is just, right, fair or moral—It is good. In the context of Good governance it means right or just or moral judgement made by those exerting authority in the public interest. We are living in the 21st century in which the people in every part of the globe want peaceful coexistence and harmony. The bad elements of communalism, racial discrimination, religious fundamentalism and terrorism are raising their ugly heads to destabilize the life in the world. If the respective governments of 193 countries of the world govern

over their people with a spirit of ethics and moral values in good governance, it can reverse the dangerous trends and only then it will be possible to establish mutual brotherhood, sense of belongingness and love for each other. In the world, much depends on the role played by political masters as guided by their bureaucrats and positive participation by the people. The elected representatives of people should come up to the expectations of the people who have voted in favour of them. Maintaining high ethical values and bringing good governance in the real sense is a very big challenge these days, when corruption is rampant; highly placed persons suffer from moral degradation and government officials toe to the line of their political bosses and the whole society is in a chaos.

India is the largest democracy in the world and the people have got complete freedom to express themselves to convey their resentment to the government if it does not work, or works contrary to the aspirations of the people. Even after more than 66 years of our independence, India has not been able to develop a system of ethics and moral values in good governance. However, the form of the government in India offers vast scope to the government in power as well as to the citizen to make the cherished dream come true if sincere efforts are made in this direction by all concerned.

SUGGESTIONS TO PROMOTE ETHICS AND MORAL VALUES IN GOVERNANCE:

As role of ethics and moral values is very important in bringing good governance, this study briefly attempts to highlight the following suggestions:

1. Principle of Selflessness: Holders of public offices should take decision solely in terms of public interest. They should not do anything to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
2. High Integrity: Holders of public life should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
3. Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices only on merit.
4. Accountability: Holders of public offices should be as open as possible on all the decisions and actions that they take. They should record reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interests clearly demand.
5. Honesty: Holders of public offices have a duty to declare any private interest relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.
6. Leadership: Holders of public offices should promote and support these principles by way of leadership and examples.
7. Sense of belongingness with the Public: In order to implement ethics in governance, the elected representative like village Panchayat members, Block Smiti members, Zilla Parishad members, Elected members to the local bodies, MLAs and MPs should develop a sense of belongingness with voters of their constituencies; and listen and redress their grievances by visiting them periodically. There should not be any communication gap between the two.
8. Responsible and Responsive Civil Servants: Each Ministry is headed by a spiritry level bureaucrat who is a link between the public and the government. These high level officers should give proper feed-back on the problems faced by the public to the concerned Minister and suggest the feasible measure which can be taken to solve the problem within the ambit of law. If possible they can also suggest to amend the law to address the problem properly.
9. Cordial relation with people: If there are cordial relations

between the government and the people at different levels, then governance will transform into good governance. People will feel that they are part of the administration, and they shall better understand the position of the government if any of their critical demand is not met with, due to any technical reason.

CONCLUSION

Although, these may appear very simple suggestions, yet their role is great in bringing ethics and moral values to governance. Only ethics and moral values can bring good governance and maximum public welfare.

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