

Good Governance: Cornerstone to Development

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Global and Indian history is replete with examples of how good governance has improved the lives of the people and bad governance has destroyed races and nations. In Indian mythology, the emphasis on governance and sustainable development can be traced back to time immemorial. The Bhagavad Gita provides numerous cues for good governance, leadership, dutifulness and self-realisation which are continuously re-interpreted in the modern context. Even in Kautilya's Arthshastra (2nd-3rd century BC), welfare of people was considered paramount in the role of the King. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation also emphasized "su-raj" which essentially means good governance. In a more recent context, the importance of governance is clearly inscribed in the Indian Constitution which is built on the premise of a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic committing itself to democracy, the rule of law and welfare of the people.

While the definition of good governance continues to evolve, the Tenth Plan document had highlighted some manifestations of bad governance which include poor management of economy, denial



of basic needs, threat to life and personal security, marginalisation and exclusion, lack of sensitivity, transparency and accountability in state machinery, delayed justice and existence of voiceless poor with little opportunity for participating in governance and deterioration of physical environment.

The United Nations has defined eight pillars of good governance as- consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsible, equitable and inclusive, effective and efficient, rule of law, and participatory. Under the Sustainable Development goals also, Goal 16 can be considered to be directly linked as it is dedicated towards improvement in governance,

inclusion, participation, rights and security.

Development Agenda - India@75

NITI Aayog has brought out a comprehensive document viz. "Strategy for New India @75" spelling out the broad roadmap for the 75th year of India's Independence. This comprehensive document, comprising 41 chapters covering almost all sectors, spells out current status, binding constraints and strategies to not only enable India to become a 4 trillion dollar economy by 2022 but also lay a solid foundation for clean, inclusive, sustained and sustainable growth for the next three decades. Of these, as many as 7 chapters focus on governance, covering subjects such as balanced regional development, legal, judicial and police reforms, transforming aspirational districts, civil service reforms, city governance, optimizing use of land resources, and data led governance. In the remaining chapters also, especially those relating to social sectors, good governance remains the key for better service delivery and more effective outcomes.

For instance, in the area of education, one of the key reforms suggested is a revamped governance system to

...good governance needs to continue being the cornerstone of various initiatives. Once implemented in letter and spirit, the goals set for not only New India 2022, but also Sustainable Development Goals 2030 will be in the greater realm of achievement, more sooner than later.

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improve monitoring and accountability. Thus, States should develop and formulate robust mechanisms to enforce regulations on teacher qualifications, teacher absenteeism and learning outcomes. Further, learning outcomes should be regularly assessed by bodies independent of the line ministries. Another reform entails an electronic national educational registry for tracking each child's learning outcomes and final exams through a unique ID. This will not only assist in preparing a list of children who drop out after elementary education, but will also enable focused attention to the needs of children from socially deprived groups and those with physical or intellectual disabilities.

Likewise, in the health sector, the document recommends improved governance in medical, nursing, dentistry and pharmacy education. It also suggests revamping the AYUSH, nursing, dentistry and pharmacy councils along the lines of the proposed National Medical Commission Bill, 2017. It is also proposed to establish a Council for Allied Health Professionals to ensure standardization of education and putting in place quality control mechanisms for educational institutions, teaching methods, clinical protocols and workforce management.

Aspirational Districts Programme

The Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) was launched in January 2018 to transform the lives of people in the under-developed areas of the country in a time bound manner.



Anchored in NITI, the programme is aimed at transforming 115 most backward districts with focused interventions in the field of health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water management, financial inclusion and skill development. The ADP is a landmark initiative that aims to address governance issues by using a combination of approaches: lifting

Direct Benefits Transfer

Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) aims to develop a governance regime which ensures a simple and user-friendly Government to People (G2P) interface and directly delivers entitlements to eligible individuals and households in a fair, transparent, efficient and reliable

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levels of aspirations through a vision and district plan, adequate institutional arrangements, convergence in all stakeholders' efforts and above all, ranking-based public competition among the districts by setting up a real-time monitoring mechanism.

manner. It helps in achieving multiple benefits. First of all, it cuts down the multiple layers for delivery of any benefit. Secondly, it reduces the delay in payments. Thirdly, it helps in accurate targeting of the beneficiaries and finally it facilitates

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Judicial Reforms

curbing pilferage and duplication of beneficiaries.

Cumulative transfer of funds through DBT mode has crossed Rs.6 lakh crore. Estimated savings have touched about Rs.1.1 lakh crore upto December 2018, a bulk of which have been made under the scheme for LPG (Rs.56,391 crore), Public Distribution System (Rs.30,3003crore) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (Rs.19,765 crore). The initiative has got a major boost with enactment of Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act., 2016.

Civil Service, Legal, Judicial and Police Reforms

A major area of governance reforms is the reorientation of the administrative set up, legal/ judicial system and maintaining law and order. With change in the socio-economic fabric, emergence of new mechanisms of service delivery and over 2.7 crore cases pending in various courts, this is an area requiring urgent attention. NITI Aayog, in its document on New India @75, has made a number of suggestions in the areas of civil service, legal/judicial and police reforms. These include the following:-

Civil Service Reforms

- Improve the teeth to tail ratio and promote an officer-oriented culture.
- Reduce the number of current 60 plus separate civil services at the central and state level through rationalization and harmonization of services.
- Encourage lateral entry by inducting specialists especially

- at higher levels.
- Bring down entry age in civil services.
- Strengthen municipal cadres and outsource service delivery in possible areas.
- Develop an inclusive citizen-centric framework in terms of service delivery, grievance

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- redressal and public access to information with enhanced use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- Ensure probity in governance by strengthening institutional mechanisms for prevention and detection of corruption, while at the same time protect honest civil servants.

Legal Reforms

- Create a repository of all existing central and state laws, rules and regulations.

- Repeal redundant laws and remove restrictive clauses in existing laws.
- Reform criminal justice and procedural laws with focus on pre-institution mediation.
- Reduce the criminalization of violations, and move towards compounding of minor offences.
- Prioritize court process automation and ICT enablement for electronic court and case management.
- Introduce an administrative cadre in the judicial system.

Police Reforms

- Modernising police forces and implementing the Model Police Act of 2015.

- States to ensure greater representation of women in the police force.
- Introduction of remodeled training modules, refresher courses and continuing education for police personnel.
- Reform of the First Information Report (FIR) lodging mechanism, including introducing filing e-FIRs for minor offences.
- Launch a common nation-wide emergency contact number to



attend to emergency security needs of citizens.

- f. Instituting a separate cadre for cyber-crimes, cyber threats and fraud.

E-Governance

To ensure a New India by 2022, some fundamental principles may need to be prioritized. These include making services available to the public in a faceless, paperless and cashless mode; providing connectivity and digital identity to all; targeting benefits through Aadhaar enabled DBT; simplifying forms and processes and providing e-platforms. Every Ministry/Department needs to have a closer look at the schemes, its implementation, monitoring and evaluation framework with thrust on outcomes, not mere outputs or expenditure incurred. Wherever possible, ICT and in due course, Artificial Intelligence should be used for better outcomes. Likewise civil society, corporates, markets and citizens at large need to be involved in holistic development. Artificial Intelligence can, in due course, play a major role in better implementation. At the same time, portals such as Centralized Public Grievance Redressal and Monitoring System (CPGRAMs), the Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) and the MyGov need to be made more effective in information exchange, seeking feedback and addressing the grievances of citizens.

To summarize, good governance needs to continue being the cornerstone of various initiatives. Once implemented in letter and spirit, the goals set for not only New India 2022, but also Sustainable Development Goals 2030 will be in the greater realm of achievement, more sooner than later. □

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Swachh Shakti 2019: Rural Women Champions for Swachh Bharat

Swachh Shakti 2019, a convention of Women Sarpanches was organized in Kurukshetra recently. Swachh Shakti-2019 is a national event which aims to bring in to focus the leadership role played by rural women in Swachh Bharat Mission. Women Sarpanches and Panches from all over the country attended the event. Around 15,000 women participated in this year's Swachh Shakti event aimed at empowering the women.

Best practices from grass root level in the rural areas for Swachh Bharat were shared by them. The event also showcased the Swachh Sunder Shauchalay, (neat and clean toilet) - a unique and first of its kind in the world campaign.

Swachh Shakti is an example of how at the grass root level, rural women champions are acting as a change agent to mobilize the community and lead from the front.

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