

Challenges and Reforms of Good Governance in North East India with special reference in Assam

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Introduction:

In recent years the word governance has become a very fashionable term and is being used in a variety of ways and covers a large number of organizations both in public and private domain. This is not a new concept. It is as old as human civilization on this earth. Generally the term 'Governance' refers to the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). It can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, local governance, national governance, international governance or to the interactions between other sectors of society. Governance is necessary in each sector of nation for smooth and efficient working. It is one of the actors of governance and takes decisions at local and national level and implements those decisions for human welfare. The quality of governance plays a vital role in the economic development of countries as everybody knows that without good governance there can be no sustainable development in a country. Good Governance is purposive and development oriented administration, which concerns the improvement of quality of life of the mass people. It requires effective participation of people in state, civil society and private sector of activities that are conducive to humane development. This paper makes an effort to provide a framework for good governance in North-East India by identifying its essential features and shortcomings in its working and emphasizes need for reforms. .

Objectives:

- The study highlights the major challenges of good Governance in Assam.
- To find out the need for reforms.

Methodology:

The entire paper has been formulated within the historical cum analytical method of study. The work has been based on historical document and data has been analyzed in the context of the present day's reality.

Concept of Good Governance:

Good governance means governing the people in a way that the interests of the people of all sections are preserved rightfully. A good and generous government is one where all the individuals, in today's world say almost all the individual's rights are protected and they feel that they are not discriminated from one another on the grounds of cast, creed, sex, race and religion. Good governance is a normative concept and can be traced back to the ancient times. Plato's concept of 'Ideal State', where he laid stress on rule of knowledge, justice through the philosopher kings, is nothing but stress on good governance. Also,

Rousseau prescribed the primacy of “General Will” in the affairs of the state. The utilitarian philosophers like Bentham and James Mill asserted the principle of greatest good or happiness of the greatest number. Gandhiji’s concept of ‘*Ram-Rajya*’ or ‘*Gram-Swaraj*’ and J. Nehru’s belief in the democracy and freedom of press, humanism and human rights are the basis of good governance. But today in this 21st Century sadly it is very difficult to find countries and states with good governance. The simplest proof of good governance is found in a state or a country if poverty and illiteracy is absent. It is essential to clear one thing; the term “good governance” does not only signify the government of a country or state but it signifies proper governance in any organization or institution. According to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Good Governance is the key to a nation’s progress. Our government is committed to providing a transparent and accountable administration which works for the betterment and welfare of the common citizen.

Challenges to good governance in Assam:

There are many challenges to good governance in Assam. These are mentioned below-

- a. Lack of transparency:** One of the major problems of good governance is lack of transparency. It is the duty of the government to make aware of the people regarding plans and programmes. Bureaucratic complexities and procedures make it difficult for a citizen as well as the civil society to navigate the system for timely and quality delivery of services. The lack of transparency and secrecy that have been associated with the administrative system from colonial times, besides generating corruption, has also led to injustice and favoritism.
- b. Underdevelopment:** Underdevelopment is also the challenge of good governance. The fact is that substantial development has flowed into the Assam; its impact on target populations has been negligible because of the corruption and violence of the prevailing politics. Much of this investment, moreover, has indirectly ended up financing militancy through the enveloping economy of extortion and collusion.
- c. 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 and insurgency.
- d. Corruption:** Corruption is the major problem to Good Governance in Assam. The high level of corruption in Assam has been widely perceived as a major obstacle in improving the quality of governance. While human greed is obviously a driver of corruption, it is the structural incentives and poor enforcement system to punish the corrupt that have contributed to the rising curve of graft in Assam. The complex and non-transparent system of command and control, monopoly of the government as a service provider, underdeveloped legal framework, and lack of information and weak notion of citizens’ rights have provided incentives for corruption in Assam.
- e. Red Tapism:** Non-responsiveness on some important issues is also the problems of good governance. Delay in doing work for the people also produced bad governance.

f. Ethnic Conflict: Ethnic Conflict also produced bad governance. There are many ethnic groups inhabits in Assam. These different ethnic groups of people, race, religion etc makes Assam is unique in character. But many times conflict among these different groups for the reasons of political, cultural etc.

8. Areas of reforms and Institutional Mechanism in Assam:

The administrative reform as well as political reforms is an essential component of good governance. Good governance can not be attended with out appropriate politico-administrative reforms. **I am trying to explain the areas of reforms for Good Governance below-**

A) Transparency and Responsiveness: The most important is the introduction of greater tranfarency in the functioning of government departments and public bodies. Public institution should be operate free of bias and established a fair, predictable set of roles arround which people can organise social, economic and political enterprise.

b) Strong initiatives for Corruption: Corruption is a major obstacle to Good Governance. Strong law should be introduce for effective Governance and people also awareness about the Corruption. Otherwise good governance can't possible in Assam.

c) Access to Information & Open Government: In our democratic envionment, people should participate in the process of governance and involved governmental plan and programmes. And also citizen must have eduquite access to the information and analysis on which government buisness is based. In this respect 'Right to Information' can play a crucial role.

d) Public Grievances: Public grievances primarily arise out of the inaccessibility of public servants, non-enforcement of any kind of time limit, insensitivity and unsympathetic attitude of public servants at various levels. A number of grievance-redressed cells are created at various levels but they lack effectiveness. The problem is that, this cell has further added to the citizen grievances, as most of them remain unresponsive and ineffective.

e) Introducing E-Governance: There is need to make the government intelligent by introducing national programme for e-governance which will be helpful in many areas such as empowerment of rural citizens, improved government effectiveness and promotion of private sector growth. E-Governance can be an effective and efficient tool for good governance.

f) Extend the quality of service: It is need to improve the quality of service by the government. The idea of quality management originated in the private sector but has became increasingly relevant to the government, as rising expectations have highlighted areas of unacceptable low standards of service to the public. The principal feature of the scheme of effective delivery of services needs to be seen in the context of the fact that demands have to flow from the bottom up and not the top down.

9. Conclusion:

From the above discussion we can say that the relevance of good governance increasing day by day. Without good governance we can't properly develop economically politically and socially in our society and state. The main pillars of 'good governance' are—political stability, lack of violence, free and fair election process, effective formulation and reimplementaion of sound policies, active and alert judicial system, Citizen's participation in the decision making process, Citizen's RTI i.e., Right to Information,

Gender equality, lack of corruption etc. It is only in a system of ‘good governance’ that democracy can become a success in the true sense of the term. The quality of life of the citizens cannot be improved without good governance. But we can’t ignore that there are lot of challenges to good governance. So first of all we should try to reduce that challenges and after that good governance will automatically come.

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