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GOVERNANCE

for Civil Services Exam

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CHAPTER 1

GOVERNMENT & GOVERNANCE CONCEPTS

■ Introduction

The concept of Governance was highlighted for the very first time in the World Bank Document (1989), in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa. Good governance elucidated the parameters of sound development management. **Four key dimensions of good governance identified in this context were:**

- **Public Sector Management**
- **Legal Framework for Development**
- **Information**
- **Transparency**

The World bank document, on Sub-Saharan Africa, wrote "Improving governance would begin with an assessment of the institutional environment (with emphasis on **the key governance elements accountability, rule of law, openness and transparency**) which determines the patrimonial profile of the country high when all other factors are absent and low when they are present."

As per the World bank, **"Governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development**." Good governance is instrumental in "creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies."

Three distinct aspects of Governance enumerated in it are:

- The form of **political regime** (parliamentary or presidential, military or civilian, and authoritarian or democratic);
- The **process** by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources; and
- The **capacity of government to design**, formulate and implement policies and in general, to discharge government functions.

■ Good Governance

- Good governance encompasses an array of issues in the socio-economic order of the country.
- Broadly, good governance can be measured by the rising level of people's participation, free and fair elections, accountability of elected representatives, **people's role in decision-making**, **availability of information**, **women's participation**, **fulfilling the aspirations of the marginalized** and disadvantaged sections of the society etc.

Good Governance means:

- Making **administration responsive**
- Making administration **citizen-friendly**
- Making administration **transparent**
- Making administration **ethical**
- Making **public services excellent**

- Various features of good governance, as elucidated by the United Nations emphasize on system where the authority and its institutions are **accountable, effective and efficient, participatory, responsive, transparent, equitable and consensus-oriented.**
- Good governance is associated with efficient and effective administration within a democratic framework. It indicates the adoption of new values of democratic governance that would establish greater efficiency, legitimacy and credibility of the system.

The Concept of Government

- The state and government is the product of historical evolution. With the emergence of the state, the importance of effective government increased. The government has been created to meet certain common and basic needs of the people formed into a political community.
- The history of political philosophy from Hobbes to Locke or Mill to Rawls, all have emphasized on the fact that government is indispensable.
- The machinery of the government comprises of three organs, political executive, legislature and judiciary. **Government means an established legal framework based on the Rule of Law and independence of Judiciary to protect human rights, secure social justice and check abuse of power.**
- For good governance, the structure of government and an ideal form of government is very important. The measures to bring in transparency in the government and public bodies should be formulated to ensure successful functioning of government.
- In the federal setup, both the central and state governments require to work in a manner that it ensures responsive, accountable, transparent, decentralized and people friendly administration. The government should be citizen friendly and citizen-centric.
- There is a significant difference between the concepts of the government and governance. The term **'governance' has a wider meaning than that of the term 'government'.** Government refers to the machinery and the institutional arrangements of exercising the sovereign power of serving the internal and external interests of the political community, whereas, governance means the process, as well as the result of making authoratative decisions for the benefit of the society".

Attributes of Governance

The aspects of good governance have assumed significance for developed and developing countries to facilitate the development of people and society, at large. "Good governance is a dynamic concept encompassing fast changing political, social and economic milieu along with international environment and conditions of operational governance." Good governance, broadly aim at cohesive, responsive and responsible democratic society. The attributes of good governance are enumerated as below:

Participation

- Participation means that the people should have a voice in the decision-making by participating in the organs of the state, i.e., Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. In the representative democracy, the citizens participate in government through the electoral process and the representatives are ultimately responsible to the electorate.
- There is-general discontentment with the governance as , the governmental policies are unrelated to the priorities of the people and representatives are unaccountable for their actions. The people constitute the heart of the development and they are not only, the ultimate beneficiaries of the development process, but also, should act as active agents of development.

- The periphery of participation is expanded through the involvement of the people in civil society groups like, various voluntary agencies, NGOs, self-help groups, religious groups, trade or business unions, cultural groups, professional groups etc. These institutions are instrumental in mobilizing public opinion and preparing people to support their interests.

Transparency

- Another major premise of good governance is transparency. This implies a features like, free flow of information/ separation of powers, adequate checks and balances between Legislative, Executive and Judicial branches, check on Bureaucracy etc.
- Transparency facilitates and provides information required for formulation of sound public policies and decisions and their implementation in accordance with rules and regulations and evaluation of governmental performance.
- Administration should be-transparent for secrecy in governmental affairs breeds corruption, uncertainty and inefficiency and weakens democracy. Secrecy leads to misuse of public money, whether it is in hands of Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, Defence or Bureaucracy. A number of schemes introduced by the government are for the poor, unprivileged, marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the society and due to corruption; these sections do not receive the desired benefits.

Accountability

- Accountability is related to participation, which ensures and safeguards transparency. In representative democracies, the representatives should be answerable for their governmental behaviour through regular elections and to legitimize the exercise of political power, these representatives should be accountable to the large sections of society from whom they derive their authority.
- Bureaucratic accountability aims to devise and ensure a system that can control the performance of government officials whose aim is to perform and deliver quality of service.
- Accountability should be used to remove hindrances in the functioning and to achieve results rather than just avoiding lapses. In the Indian scenario, P.R. Dubhashi remarks, "Unfortunately the latter is often highlighted while the former is neglected. If this happens, public accountability may even be counter-productive.
- Public servants would like to err on the safe side rather than take decisions, which would expose them to errors and pubic enquiries. Public servants should have full confidence that bonafide mistakes would not expose them to persecution while positive achievement would be recognized and rewarded. "Accountability also covers the role of government as a facilitator for the growth of the private sector and civil society organizations."

Rule of Law

- A major premise of good governance is that the legal framework should be fair, enforced in an impartial manner for protecting human rights, check excesses, secure justice etc. An established legal framework should be based on rule of law, independence of judiciary to protect human rights, check against abuse of discretionary power and exploitation etc.
- In addition to above-mentioned parameters, good governance also includes the following features:
  - **Responsiveness:** Good governance requires that the institutions and process should aim to serve stakeholders with a reasonable time-framework.
  - **Consensus-oriented:** The objective of good governance should be to arrive at a broad consensus through mediation between interests that are different, which is in the best interest of the whole community and sustainable human development.
  - **Equity:** To secure honour and dignity of all human beings, men or women and to provide them

ample opportunities to maintain their weir-being. The vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the society should not feel that they are excluded from the mainstream of the society

- **Efficiency and Effectiveness**: The processes and institutions that are responsible for administration should make optimum use of the available resources to improve the well-being of the society, at large. This would, in turn, reduce the cost of government. The concept of efficiency would broadly cover the sustainable use of natural resources and protection of environment.
- **Strategic Vision**: It is important that the leaders as well as public, both have a long-term perspective on good governance and human development. In order to visualize the depth of the problem, they Should be able to comprehend the historical, cultural and social complexities of the society.

■ MISCELLANEOUS

■ Public Affairs Index

- It ranks States in India based on **10 themes 30 focus subjects and 100 indicators.**
- The index has been **developed by Bengaluru-based think tank Public Affairs Centre**.
- The themes include,
  - Essential Infrastructure,
  - Support to Human Development,
  - Social Protection,
  - Women and Children,
  - Crime,
  - Law and Order,
  - Delivery of Justice,
  - Environment, Transparency and Accountability,
  - Fiscal Management and Economic Freedom.

Good Governance Index (GGI)

- In the interest of furthering this spirit, the Government of India constituted a Group of Secretaries (GoS) on Governance who recommended developing of an index to gauge the performance of the states of India.
- The framework of GGI aims to put forth a comprehensive means of computing an index to measure governance across states and rank them accordingly.
- The intent of the index is to provide information for the State Governments to act on and improve upon and it would also provide some insights to Central Ministries and Departments.
- The GGI framework conceptualises and builds upon the fact that good governance acts as a means to effective delivery of essential services such as education, healthcare, environment protection; enabling economic growth and development in sectors such as agriculture, industry; and access to legal protection and judicial services thereby covering major components of what constitutes governance.

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