

Building Trust in Government

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Abstract

Developing countries of the world especially South Asia are facing constant dilemma of poor governance, that has generated mistrust and has undermined the proficient and transparent delivery of public services and the implementation of programmes in an efficient manner. This Paper focuses on the role of Government and how the issue of governance has erupted over time. There is a brief discussion on the conceptual framework that looks into the theoretical context of government's role. The emerging challenges of governance have been identified under the title of major characteristics of good governance, different areas have been studied and analyzed and how these factors have played on the issue of credibility of government. The paper has also analyzed those factors which led to the deterioration or the wellbeing of people in South Asian Countries. The conclusion chapter sums up the discussion.

BUILDING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT: INTRODUCTION

Professor Sajjad Naseer

The Soviet collapse and the paradigm shift towards Globalization raised serious concerns about Governance and its attendant functions both in the developed and the developing world in their respective contexts. The developed world, in most cases, living in a post-industrial era, faced little difficulty in negotiating with the post 90 change internally but the developing countries capacity was tested to the full as they struggled to mediate with the globalizing forces. In the latter case, the issue of Governance assumed crisis proportions, raising alarm bells and the expressions, 'Rogue state'. 'Failing State' and 'Failed state' were used with regular frequency to indicate the gravity of the emerging situations. Consequently, literature started pouring out, seeking to address the Governance crisis. Besides, advocating a holistic approach to meet the emerging situations in the developing countries, it was identified and considered imperative to 'build trust in the Government' as a recipe to the governance crisis. If this is the route to improve governance, particularly in the case of South Asia, then it will be appropriate to briefly dwell on the nature of the crisis and contextualize the issue.

The onset of the cold war coincided with the decolonization process giving birth to a large number of independent states. Inheriting a colonial structure with its 'orientations' was allowed to continue. Euphoria of independence and imbued with a sense of nationalism, the political leadership in these countries sought to embrace a wide-ranging agenda, including the welfare orientations, in a bid to come up to the expectations and

aspirations of the people. This was a formidable and challenging task and the inherited structures were not designed to accommodate such significant changes. Additionally, the attempts to strengthen and consolidate the state, the nation –building functions were usurped by the state-building activities. The magnitude and the tall order of the agenda caused lapses and failures on the part of the governments.

While the performance of the governments were constantly declining, the cold war milieu kept many pressing socio-economic, ethnic, regional and religious issues under the carpet. With the end of the cold war, these ‘suppressed issues’ erupted with severity and in some cases accompanied by violence, and challenged the governments for their lack of performance.

As the multiple crises deepened, the governance and competencies of governments were tested to the full. The globalization paradigm also demanded major shift in their orientations. The exhausted developing countries states were hard pressed to embrace the new agenda of free- market economy, privatization and deregulation and were also pushed to democratize by opening up spaces for the civil society organizations.

Obviously, the new strategy would enable the governments to unburden themselves either through privatization or through private/public partnership or having joint ventures with foreign investors. It clearly ignored the fact that the private sector in most developing countries is weak and did not experience the same evolution as the developed world did during their phase of industrialization. Consequently, the unburdening process did not have a clear and a comprehensive view about the new role of the state.

Whereas the enfeebled and exhausted state embraced the globalization forces, its role was not defined nor was the capacity of the private sector evaluated. The private sector and the civil society organizations, which are in its infancy state found it difficult to cope with the rapid change. The dialectics between the private and public is causing confusion and fall in the credibility of governments. The issue of the loyalty to the state is further aggravating this crisis, as capacity of the state to provide safe drinking water, electricity and security etc is fast eroding. The situation is problematic, more so, because the poverty levels have arisen high in the post- cold war decades. This uneasy interaction between the private and the public sector is, however, explained that such conditions do emerge during a period of transition. However, the signs of 'transition' terminating are not insight.

On the agenda of democracy and human rights, there seems to be no visible evidence of improvements or progress. The thesis about the 'future wave of democracy' advanced during the early 90s does not appear to be a fulfilling prophecy. The current political situation in Bangladesh and the ongoing judicial crisis in Pakistan are examples among many others. Democracy, therefore, playing hide and seek, where different stakeholders have yet to harmonize their interests for the sake of viable democracy.

Comparative Politics literature has wrestled with these issues and problems facing the developing world. The political development and dependency schools offered explanations, which in fact, approached the political system in search for structural

determinants, which were seldom present. The cause is best served by studies which provide a sophisticated understanding of how things actually work in developing countries.

To come to terms with the complexities in the developing world, it will be equally appropriate to see the governance paradigm in the context of three variables: Security, Development and Participation. This may appear to be a slice of reality and a simplified representation. It also dismisses to think of politics in terms of dichotomies like Modern vs. Traditional forces or democratic and non-democratic political systems.

Instead of imposing a paradigm, we can ask open-ended questions and two issues seem paramount viz; the need in the developing countries to quickly construct themselves politically and the need to increase their income.

In order to make some reasonable sense of the issues of security, development and participation, it seems appropriate to examine and discuss the South Asian Context. It is the management of these issues that had serious implications on the kind of trust in government that obtained in this region.

The Participation Context

The issue of Participation is of paramount importance, as it establishes the link between the people and the political system. The link is formalized through political process, activated by the instrument of electoral politics of free and fair elections, which confers credibility and legitimacy on the political system. Additionally, it stimulates hope and a sense of empowerment among the people that they can change the government, if its performance is inadequate. The continuous political process operated through democratic

electoral activity reinforces the belief and faith in the political system. Surely, this settles the issue about the viability of the state and its future potential.

As successor states to the British Raj, both India and Pakistan inherited the same federal structures at the time of independence. India, borrowing heavily from the government of India Act 1935 for its constitution, kept the flavor of federal centrism, yet was successful in operating its political system with formal democracy. The mature and seasoned political leaders, supported by a well-knit nationally organized congress party contributed to the political process. Additionally, the secular ideology served as a facilitator in a diverse society like India and the Indian army in the absence of one dominant ethnic group dampened its appetite for military intervention. However, the civil bureaucracy continued to play a dominant role aiding and assisting the elected government's overtime. The participatory politics through electoral activity is institutionalized in India.

In obvious contrast to the Indian case, Pakistan took to a different constitutional and political route, though sharing the same historical experience with India. In its history of sixty years, Pakistan has changed its governance document from vice-regal system to Parliamentary to presidential to extended periods of Martial law and now a hybrid splitting the system between presidential and parliamentary, tilting the balance of power in favor of the president. The jockeying for power runs as a recurring theme throughout. Pakistan, unlike India missed out on the contribution that a charismatic leader could have made in stabilizing and consolidating the working of the political system. Mr. Jinnah along with a weak and loosely organized Muslim League did not yield the desired

political results. The Islamic ideology was used as a national blanket to cover and suppress the ethno-religious, linguistic, sectarian and regional divisions in the name of national unity and integration. The civil-military dominance continued to be most pronounced and entrenched interest group in the politics of Pakistan. The legitimization by the Judiciary of every military ruler did not help in creating the ambience where rule of law and supremacy of constitution was respected. In the process, Pakistan experienced 'guided', 'controlled', 'indirect', 'remote controlled' or 'military democracy'. As of November 2, 2007, Pakistani Constitution is suspended and the 'emergency rule' has been imposed under a provisional constitutional order which infact is another martial law. In its wake, the Supreme Court has been dismantled and hand picked judges were asked to take oath under the PCO. Federalism though declared as a part of each constitution remained allusive, causing alienation among groups and regions resulting in greater demand for autonomy, accompanied by eruption of violence, insurgency and pull towards secession. Pakistan is still a long way from establishing democracy .The Participatory politics in Pakistan manifest through protests, demonstrations and agitation. Electoral activity is manipulated and the rigged elections keep alive the issue of legitimacy of successive governments. The constitutional deviation on the intervention of military, change the rules of politics, away from the constitution. This disfigures and distorts the constitution and the gulf between the original constitution and the actual practice of politics widens. The consensus document of 1973 constitution awaits implementation. The participatory politics with reference to the constitution is yet to be institutionalized.

Sri Lanka presents another deviant case in the South Asian context. As a former British Colony, it inherited the colonial structures with a tinge of parliamentary democracy. With the highest literacy rate in the region (96%), it is in the throes of a bloody civil war for nearly three decades and no end to this civil strife seems insight in the near future.

Ethnicity has surfaced and locked the country into an intriguing spiral of bloody violence. Armed confrontation between the ethnic rival groups is the order of the day .

In these seemingly abnormal circumstances, the business of the government moved on and elections were held at regular intervals providing some sort of continuity to parliamentary politics. In view of the violence visiting Sri Lanka, it seems problematic and difficult to argue that participatory politics has the friendly political environment to institutionalize itself.

Bangladesh, which seceded from Pakistan, after a bloody civil war in 1971, and the Indian army, played the role of a mid-wife to deliver it. The British and Pakistani legacy combined seem to shape the political landscape in Bangladesh. Declared as an international 'basket case' by Henry Kissinger, Bangladesh has survived and continued to function with its own set of problems and difficulties. The assassination of Sh. Mujib-ur-Rehman (father of the nation) disrupted the political process and the Pakistani legacy of military rule intervened to complicate the political affairs. The return of the civil rule and the completion of full five year term suggested a significant movement towards political development. It seems that the indicator of the five year term of government is not adequate to denote political advancement. For almost two years, interim government is running the affairs of government and the leading national political leaders are facing the

charges of corruption. This has injected political uncertainty in Bangladesh. The dialectics of military and civilian rule has created conditions which inhibit prophecising the institutionalization of participatory politics in Bangladesh.

Nepal presents another fascinating case. As heir to centuries old monarchy, punctuated with British Influence, it remained stable for few years under a monarchical rule to be upset by the demands for participation and end to the rule by a King. The 90s saw major upsurge and demands for clipping the powers of the King intensified. Insurgency by the Maoist group intensified violence forcing their cooption in the government. The general election has been deferred twice and the Maoists have opted out of the government insisting that the institution of 'Monarchy' be terminated before holding the elections. The contests between the monarchical and anti-monarchical forces have clouded the political scene in Nepal. It is difficult at this moment to argue that Nepal will make a smooth transition to participatory politics.

The Development context

The development paradigm has occupied the center stage among social scientists for many decades and distilled concepts, theories and development literature. Whereas anthropologists, Sociologists and political Scientists explained development and its processes from their respective perspective, it is the economists who dominated the field and influenced decision makers around the world. The impact of these policies emerged in 'governance crises' during the 90s in most of the developing countries. The Globalisation paradigm in terms of privatization free- market economy and de-regulation

is currently seeking to correct the imbalances and results of these initiatives don't seem encouraging at the moment.

It will be interesting to briefly review the South Asian countries and how they have negotiated with the development paradigm. The inherited colonial structures, the construction of state system in the region and economic philosophies more or less defined the parameters. The colonial structures remained unchanged except for minor changes or modifications. The accent remained on state construction through different instruments and economic policies were directed in favour of centralization.

India persisted with the inherited civil bureaucracy and the central command economy further expanded the scope of its operations. The public sector developed to accommodate the rising expectations of the people. The imperatives of state construction aided the expansion of public sector and also provided limited space for the private sector to grow. The state building functions remained dominant and led to the imposition of 'emergency rule' under Indra Gandhi. The pace of economic growth stayed slow until 1990. With the infrastructural development in place, India was in a much better position to negotiate with the globalizing paradigm. The pace of economic growth picked up and is growing around 10%. The 'Shining India' slogan of the BJP government did not help her to win the elections as the poor rural population was not touched by the economic growth. The expanded public sector was sluggish and inefficient and this transition to private sector has yet to benefit the 40% poor of Indian Population.

Pakistan in haste to build a strong center focused on state construction. The dialectics between state and nation building saw an uneasy and conflict ridden interaction. The extended military rule in Pakistan strengthened the centralizing tendencies. The attempt

to build a strong center alienated the federating units and federation appears to be weak, facing many intractable issues and problems. Pakistan practiced the capitalist model of 'functional inequality' in the 60s and switched to the socialist model in the 70s. The 80s saw Pakistan in the grip of 'islamization' and the so called Islamic economy was introduced. During the turbulent period of political instability of 90s Pakistan made some half hearted attempts to privatize. Since 9/11, Pakistan is fully engaged in the war against terrorism and making some modest attempts to privatize. It is interesting to note that the Pakistan economy registered a growth above 6% when it was closely engaged with the United States. As a nuclear state, Pakistan faces serious internal threats and political instability remains a persistent problem giving rise to serious governance problems and law and order issues.

Sri Lanka continued to function with inherited colonial structures but is in the midst of a bloody civil war for almost 30 years with no end to it visible in the near future. It is difficult to be speculative about the outcome. Sri Lanka is still engaged in the struggle of state construction and development does not seem to be a priority.

Bangladesh inherited the British and the Pakistani legacies. This mixture did not facilitate its evolution smoothly. Though declared as an international basket case, it has managed to survive. It has interacted with the globalizing forces but this has made no significant impact on its poor and the governmental apparatus is suffering from exhaustion. The current political crisis adds to the complexities of governance as an interim government is ruling the country for two years. It seems problematic as to how elections will be held and how elected political managers will assume office. In this climate of uncertainty, development will suffer raising more problems for any elected government to handle.

Nepal, as a monarchy continued to operate after 1947, without any major change, until the electoral national politics intervened. The current crisis centers around the end of monarchy. The issue of state construction is paramount and subordinates other concerns and issues. Nepal has poor economy and it is difficult to speculate about its future prospects.

The Security Context

Two states of South Asia are locked in a security contest from their respective perspective. India as a continental size state pursued an ambitious policy to emerge as a regional power. Pakistan, suffering from an acute sense of insecurity followed an India centric policy, attempted to bolster its defence capabilities. Both countries fought three wars. They entered into an arms race and spent huge amount of money on their defence. As poor and developing countries, they have the unique distinction of acquiring a nuclear status in 1998. Whereas the cold war has ended globally, these countries are continuing with arms race and trying to improve their missile technologies. The 9/11 events forced these countries to enter into a peace process. Many confidence building measures are in place but there is no progress towards resolving the outstanding dispute of Kashmir and there is no movement towards settling even the minor disputes.

Huge defence expenditures prevented both countries to address their basic socio-economic problems. Poverty stands out as a serious problem and the continued neglect provides the sources of violence and conflict. In its pursuit for security, Pakistan is the worst hit, where army has emerged as a dominant player, overwhelming other institutions of the state. Today, India feels more confident yet faces knotty internal security problems

(Maoist movement in 29 states and uprising in Kashmir). Pakistani internal security problems are more acute coupled with political instability. It is paradoxical that the two nuclear states are still facing the internal security issues. The issues of participation, development and security have played out in south Asian Countries in an uneasy interaction. The agenda for these countries was awesome and challenging. Their engagement with these issues left the governance problems unattended in many ways. Hence, the trust deficit in government looks so obvious in these countries but to a lesser degree in India.

DEFINING THE TERM

Professor Sajjad Naseer

The concept of "governance" is not new. It is as old as human civilization. In simple terms "governance" means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). Governance is the exercise of power or authority political, economic, and administrative or other wise to manage country's resources. It comprises the mechanism, processes and institution through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences ¹. The working of government encompasses decision making that apply to all levels of government, whether global, national, regional, or local. They also have implications for policy substance. According to the Pakistan Development gateway "*Governance has three constituent components: economic, political and administrative*". Economic governance includes decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. It clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy. Administrative governance is the system

¹ Good governance: Guiding principles for implementation 2000: The Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program

of policy implementation. Encompassing all three, good governance defines the processes and structures that guide political and socio-economic relationships.”²

Human development of south Asia report of 2006 points out, that all the developing countries of South Asia are facing identical problems of governance. The report identifies certain governance issues in, “South Asian countries continue to recur in different degrees in various projects. These include limited coverage; poor targeting; a high degree of political interference in identifying beneficiaries; leakage due to corruption and lack of transparency; weak administrative capacity and the lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms”. All these factors adversely impacted the performances of governance in South Asian countries .The report further adds, “public service delivery is fraught with failure of governance that tends to hit the poor more than the rich”³

² Pakistan Development gateway

³ Human Development in South Asia 2006. (2007) Oxford, Karachi, Pakistan

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: Professor Sajjad Naseer

Most of the Developing countries were the former colonies of the British. After their stepping out of the British System, majority of these countries followed the same pattern with minor changes. The successive governments in these countries have adopted the same system that includes the unchanged structures of Judiciary; bureaucratic systems and police apparatus which continued to be the basis of governance.

After independence, most of these counties were either ruled by autocratic, monarchial or Democratic style of governance. Pakistan, in its 60 years of history has been ruled by autocratic rulers for more than 30 years. With the abrupt changes in the government and with the frequent intrusion of Army in the affairs of the state undermined the credibility of successive government. These changes did not allow the democratic system to flourish and function in the country. Monarchs ruled in Nepal and Bhutan. Nepal had always been a monarchy resisting any social change. Political commitments in Nepal have always been deficient in addressing the welfare of the poor people⁴; they have no choice but to accept all dictates of the ruler. Countries like India and Sri Lanka have a democratic system. Sri Lanka 'being a flourishing democracy throughout its history, the government of Sri Lanka showed a strong political commitment to develop the country as a 'social

⁴ Ibid.,as no. 3

welfare state' right from the beginning when the country became independent in 1948. At present, around 7-10 per cent of the GDP of Sri Lanka is used to finance free health and education, food subsidies'.⁵ Despite these features, Sri Lanka is in the grip of a civil strife for over two decades. While India, on the other hand is also democratic state but as compared to Sri Lanka, India is facing multi-faceted problems of communal violence, Maoist insurgency and sectarian unrest in different parts of the country. Bangladesh attempted to move towards a democratic order, but the intrusion of military is a complicating factor. Governments in Bangladesh through the 1990s worked for the betterment of people but lately the successive governments has lost its footing because of corruption and other malpractices by the elected governments that gave way to military involvement into the political system.

According to Mahbub ul Huq report of 2006 South Asia share in the world population is 22 per cent, it contains more than 40 per cent of the world's poor. There are over 867 million people without access to basic sanitation, more than 400 million adults are unable to read or write, and 300 million are undernourished⁶. According to Human Rights Commission Report, South Asian governments have failed miserably to address the needs of people. To generate trust in government can be established by relying on the democratic government model and through it functions. (Figure-1). As Cheema, points out the vicious circle of democratic government model, he highlights three edges which can prove worth while in establishing strong democratic system, the top most priority lies with different "Institutions and Processes of Democratic Governance Electoral body and system, parliament, judiciary, ombudsman, local government, political parties, civil

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

society in implementing and running the government strongly”⁷.

The second factor comprises of “Quality of the Institutions and Processes, degree of access, participation, accountability, transparency, rule of law, equity, subsidiary, effectiveness, responsiveness, efficiency, sustainability”⁸ are of paramount importance. As all these factors would lead to the smooth working of democratic system in a state. With people being concerned and aware of these problems and their involvement can make the working and the development of the state functionaries in a more sustainable and efficient manner. When all the decisions and worksheets would be transparent, the rule of law will be established to keep a check and balance on the accountability and this will definitely bring forth fruitful results for a society.

While the third edge that would complete the circle of a democratic system are, “Contextual Factors that Impact on Content and Quality of Governance National culture, viz; history, ethnicities, conflict, civil-military relations, external donor support, level of economic development, media, and global governance architecture”⁹. When the functionaries of a state will work under their ascribed duty and all the changes and developments are made in the historical and cultural setting, it will undoubtedly give a boost to the democratic system of the country.

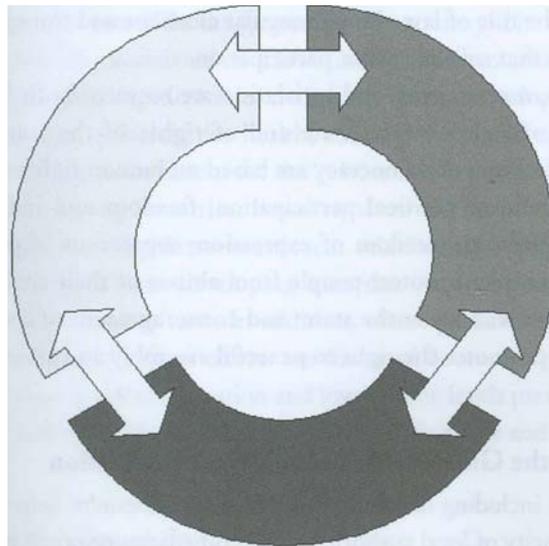
⁷ Cheema.(2005) Building Democratic Institutions

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid

Institutions and Processes of
Democratic Governance Electoral body
and system, parliament, judiciary,
ombudsman local

Quality of the Institutions and
Processes Degree of access,
participation, accountability,
transparency, rule of law,
equity, subsidiary,
effectiveness responsiveness,
efficiency, sustainability



Contextual Factors that Impact on Content and Quality of
Governance National culture, history, ethnicities, conflict, civil-
military relations, external donor support, level of economic

Cheema's Democratic Government Model (Figure -1)

The United Nations model for the urban actors for the development is also very vital to understand the functioning of the government in the third world countries; the government functionary is the essential attribute of governance. Other actors also have their influence but it varies from place to place. In rural areas, for example, other actors may include influential land lords, associations of peasant farmers, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions political parties, the military etc. The situation in urban areas is much more complex, (Figure 2) provides the interconnections between actors involved in urban governance. At the national level, in addition to the above actors, media, lobbyists, international donors, multi-national corporations, etc. may play a role in decision-making or in influencing the decision-making process.

The three pillars of society; Executive, legislature and judiciary and in the developing countries, the role of military are of paramount importance. The other actors are paired as "civil society." In some countries in addition to the civil society, organized crime syndicates also influence decision-making, particularly in urban areas and at the national level.³

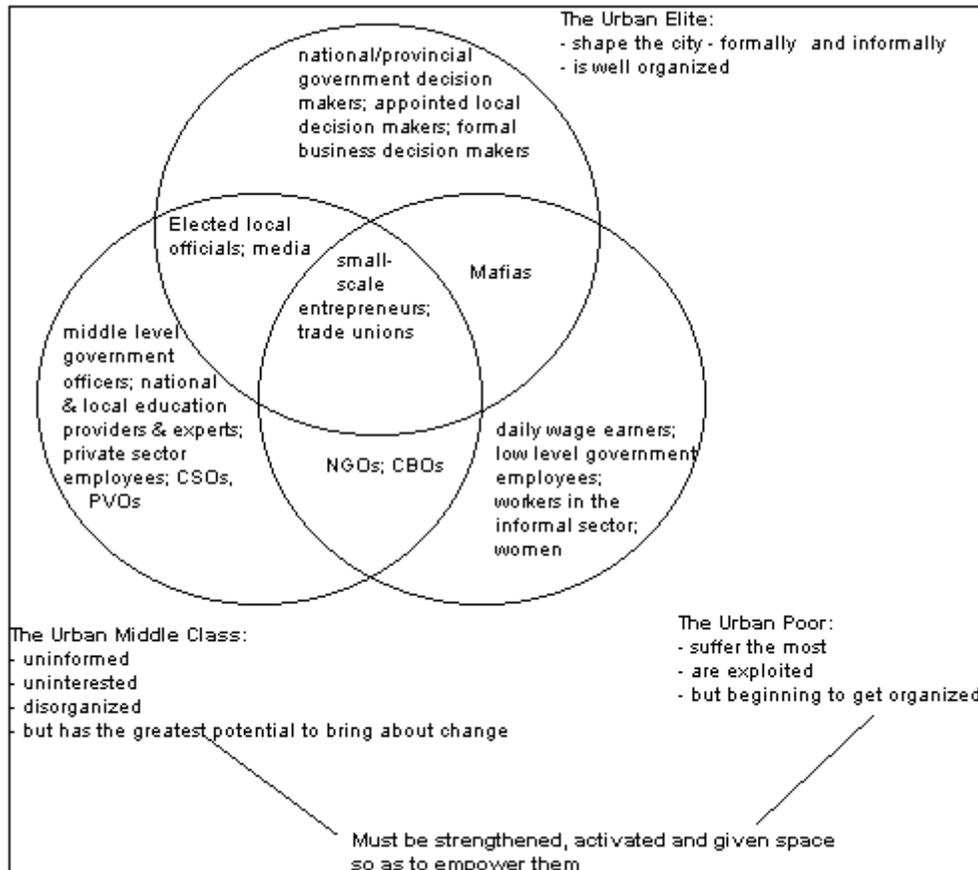
Similarly formal government structures are one means by which decisions are arrived at and implemented. At the national level, informal decision-making structures, such as "kitchen cabinets" or informal advisors also exist. In urban areas, organized crime syndicates such as the "Land Mafia" may influence decision-making. In some rural areas

locally powerful families may make or influence decision-making. Such, informal decision-making is often the result of corrupt practices or leads to corrupt practices ¹⁰.

The figure describes how, Urban Elites, Urban Middle and the urban Poor work to bridge trust among people and how their rule influences one another.

¹⁰ <http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp> retrieved, April 25,2007.

Urban Actors (Figure 2)



THE CONCEPT OF TRUST

Prof.Sajjad Naseer

The concept of 'trust' has emerged as an important ingredient in the governance paradigm. The recent literature suggests its significance and treats it as an important link between the people and the government. Lack of trust reflects the malfunctioning of government in its functions, creating hosts of problems in the management area. Poor functioning of government raises the issue of legitimacy which is now linked to performance. Bad management by government ultimately leads to break-down of law and order and becomes source of many other conflicts. Legitimacy of governments and breakdown of law and order situations are the recurring patterns in most of the developing countries. The notion of 'trust', therefore, needs to be addressed more seriously.

Writing some forty years ago, Harlod Lasswell wrote about the pre-requisites of democracy. He listed five conditions required to ensure successful democratic order. Two of these conditions were identified as 'trust' and 'ego'. Laswell insists on creating a congenial atmosphere where democratic functioning can take place. 'Trust' and 'Confidence' were termed as essential for creating that environment. 'Trust' in this case is relational and is a function of relationship between the governmental institutions and the people. The relationships are representational; management of government in the context of services like education, health, infrastructure, dispensation of justice and providing security to its people. Malfunctioning of activities in these areas would entail serious consequences in vitiating the environment and reducing the level of 'trust'. Good

performance on the part of government allows it space to undertake institutional reforms and be innovative in its governance approach. Hence 'trust' stands out as an important element of ensuring and facilitating good governance. The performances of government in various fields engender the degree of trust that exists between the people and the government.

The notion of 'ego' was deemed to be an important element. The governments generally tend to be 'egoistic' in its approach and the socio-economic programmes that they wish to introduce. Laswell cautioned the managers not to have 'absolute ego'. Instead, he recommended an 'inclusive ego', which takes others into confidence and would be responsible in enhancing the level of 'trust'. The 'inclusive' approach has the additional advantage of promoting dialogue on national issues thereby encouraging consensual politics.

In order to accumulate capital for good governance, it is important that government must demonstrate its performance in different fields. At the perception level, government must be viewed as moral and must operate within an ethical framework. The economic management with efficiency would generate positive feelings towards the government.

The political trust can be secured through 'legitimacy'. The social trust can be obtained by harmonizing the horizontal divisions of the polity. The rapid changes through technologies need to be channelised properly to avoid segregation within the polity. Good performances in these areas are sure to earn 'trust' for the government.

With the inauguration of globalization paradigm, the exhausted states in the developing world are negotiating with the globalization forces. States are abdicating their traditional role and are unburdening their role by privatizing even in the area of basic needs like

health, education, water and sanitation etc. it seems problematic whether the private sector has the capacity to take on the new responsibilities. This transition is underway for some years and citizens need to reorient their attitude towards the government. When this transition process completes and when the state is able to redefine its new role seems to be challenges of contemporary times? How this transition settles the issue of public/private sectors and then the notion of 'trust' will be re-negotiated.

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

Prof.Sajjad Naseer

Atul Koli states “The concept of ‘govern ability’ directs attention to a state’s capacity to govern.” According to Koli, the issue of growing crises of governability refers to three types of problems;

1. The absence of enduring coalitions
2. policies ineffectiveness
3. An incapacity to accommodate political conflict without violence

A government whose power rests on fluctuating coalitions and whose leaders repeatedly fail to fulfill their stated goals and to control politically directed violence will be deemed to be a government with a low capacity to govern¹¹.

The crises of Governance in a developing democratic country can be analyzed either from a modernization or Marxist perspective or from a stand point that emphasizes the role of the state and politics in these societies. The latter obviously is favoured in this paper.

¹¹ KohliA.(1992).Democracy and Discontent: India’s growing crisis of Governability,Cambridge,Canada.

KEY GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

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In the mid-1990s, several Asian Development Bank member countries were hit by serious fiscal crises. At the root of the crises were key governance challenges that called for a need to reform government management and financial operations.

To save and prevent these crises from future shortfalls ADB encouraged programs that focus on ¹²:

- Anticorruption
- Corporate Regulatory Frameworks
- Legal and Justice Reform
- Participation of the Civil Society in Public decision-making
- Pro-Poor Service Delivery
- Public Administration
- Public Financial Management
- Sub-National/Local Governance

¹² http://www.adb.org/Governance/gov_challenges.asp retrieved on May ,2007.

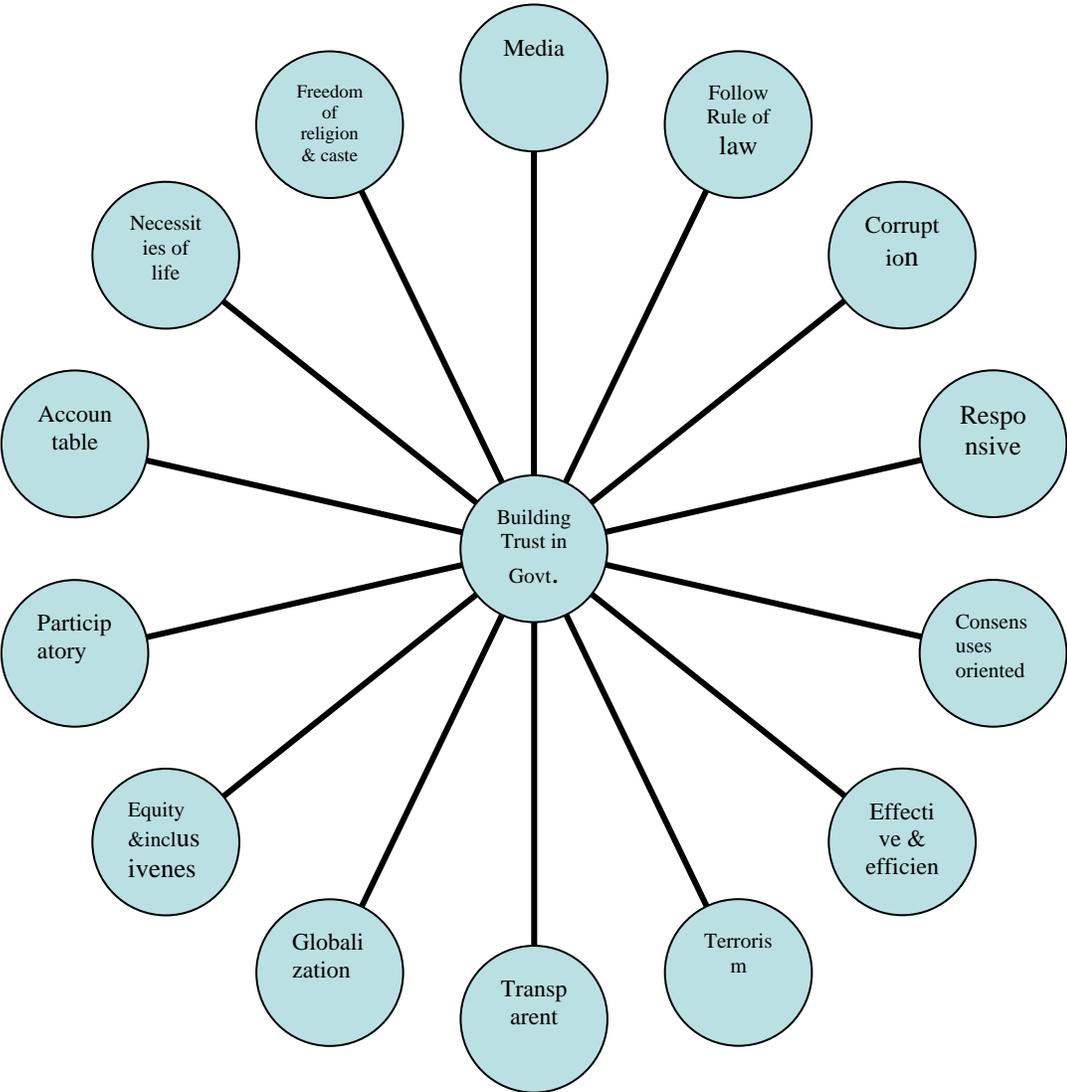
MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Prof.Sajjad Naseer

United Nations report pointed out 8 major characteristics of good governance: they are participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follow 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. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society¹³. These issues are incorporated with more points that include Corruption, Terrorism, Media, Globalization, Basic necessities of life and Freedom of religion and caste. All these factors are paramount to establish trust in the government. And if these factors are not looked up according to the changing times can also create mistrust in the working of the government. With modernization, and its impact on society, changes need to be fine tuned keeping in view the traditional lifestyles of people.

¹³ <http://pdg.org.pk/international/Governance.asp> retrieved on April ,2007.

Model for the Characteristics of good governance (Figure -3)



Participation

Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance.

Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. It is important to point out that representative democracy does not necessarily mean that the concerns of the most vulnerable in society would be taken into consideration in decision making. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.

The way government operates and upholds the constitution plays a pivotal role in the governance issues. Pakistan has seen more than 30 years of Dictatorial rule that was against the basic Constitution of Pakistan. This practice is one of the major disrupting factors for working of the governments. Dr. Muzaffar Iqbal writes, “In the Western world, the military might has not acquired political clout of the kind that has been the fate of the rest of the developing world. The control of the west passed from kings to politicians without the immediacy of military. Political establishments were established by lawyers in partnership with wealthy families, and this marriage of convenience has been institutionalised through formal and informal relations between the state and those who control the greatest economic share of these countries”. In the prevailing set up he also adds, “People are squeezed between politicians and Generals who have lost their

hope of ever asserting any rights”¹⁴. All this can be seen in the aforementioned problems as the state machinery in any way has failed to deliver the basic necessities of life.

Government of Pakistan to regain trust entrusted the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) the task “of undertaking the exercise with multiple aims of restructuring of political and service structures through devolution of power including empowerment of citizens, decentralization of administrative authority, decentralization of professional functions, and distribution of financial resources to the provincial and local governments with checks and balances against misuse of power and authority through the diffusion of power-authority nexus”¹⁵

All these powers were evaluated by International Crisis Group that compared the plan of Ayub Khan’s Basic Democracy scheme and Zia-ul Haq’s Local Bodies scheme. It admits that General Pervez Musharraf’s programme promised substantial autonomy for elected local officials and placed an elected official at the head of the district administration, management and development, thereby reversing a century-old system that subordinated elected politicians to bureaucrats. But it has identified too many faults in its implementation¹⁶.

¹⁴ Dr.Iqbal.M.(April 13, 2007).The News: Pakistan.

¹⁵ (2006)National Reconstruction of Bureau document. Islamabad: Pakistan

¹⁶ (2007)Annual report on International Crisis Group

The report issued by the government fails to take into account the socio-economic and political milieu of Pakistan in which several experiments have collapsed. It does not provide any cogent reasons to support its claims about the current devolution plan's failures. The report's South Asia Project Director admits that, "Musharraf's scheme was ostensibly aimed at establishing the foundations of genuine local democracy." However, genuine attempts by the Musharraf government to restore democracy are denied with claims that, "the main rationale for devolution was and remains regime legitimacy and survival". This ignores the fact that the Supreme Court of Pakistan provided the stamp of legitimacy to the Musharraf regime in 1999. In fact, it can be argued that Musharraf never sought legitimacy through local government bodies, most of which still owe their allegiance to respective political parties ¹⁷. In the Himalayan kingdom, Bhutan has staged mock polls in a bid to transform from absolute monarchy to democracy. While real elections are due in 2008, the culmination of a plan by former king Jigme Singye Wangchuck who decided to hand over crown to his Oxford graduate son Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck in December, to relinquish absolute rule ¹⁸. This practice shows that countries as underdeveloped as Bhutan are changing its years old practice of ruling.

¹⁷ Hali.S.M. (Wednesday, April 07, 2004). Devolution in Pakistan – fact or fiction? Daily Times, Lahore

¹⁸ Dawn (April 20th, 2006)

These practices hopefully develop trust in the government as people get a sense of participation.

In India, “Under the regime of customary Panachayt villages were ruled through informal processes of consultation and decision making by village factions of landed peasants. Initially the program did not do well but panchayti raj was of tiered institutions, at whose village base councillors and chair would be chosen by adult suffrage and representative of ordinary villagers. This system was meant not only to stimulate rural development but also to introduce social and economic democracy into the country side. Green Revolution in India was an agricultural success that was meant to deliver substantial increase in the agriculture productivity of poor in an ‘overpopulated’ country. This kind of in-depth participation of people breeds trust in the government¹⁹.

In Nepal there are critical governance issue at the level of participation that needs to be addressed. For instance most of the programmes are designed and implemented at the central level with very little local participation²⁰.

¹⁹ Stern.R. W. (2001) Democracy in India, Democracy and Dictatorship in South Asia: Dominant classes and political outcomes in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, India Research Press, New Delhi

²⁰ Ibid.,as no .3

Rule of law

Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also demands full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force²¹. Building of trust in Governance has much to do with the operation of the Judiciary in a state, the way Judiciary implements the rule of law builds trust among people.

On three occasions since independence, military coups have damaged the evolution of democratic rule in Pakistan. The judiciary not only failed to check extra-constitutional regime change, but also endorsed and abetted the consolidation of illegally gained power. The Musharraf government has deepened the judiciary's subservient position among national institutions. Substantial changes in the legislative framework for appointments, promotions and removals of judges, as well as the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts, are needed to restore confidence in the judiciary. But judicial independence from political influence and financial corruption cannot be restored by mere technical, legislative corrections. Reform depends upon a credible commitment by the government to respect the rule of law as much as upon legislated change. There has been lot of unrest among the people on the issue of 'missing persons' in the country. People at every level are perplexed about the disappearance of their near and dear ones. The Human Right Commission of Pakistan filed a constitutional petition in February with the Supreme Court on the issue and prayed for constituting of a commission to investigate the picking

²¹ Ibid., as no .1

up of people by the intelligence agencies²².The Supreme Court gave government time to produce those people but the government keeps skirting around the issue. This briefly explains the issue of rule of law in Pakistan.

Freedom of Religion and Caste

Pakistan is an Islamic country and therefore its government is responsible for enforcing and implementing the fundamental principles of state religion .No one is entitled to make laws on his own authority for this purpose. The Present regime is facing multifarious problems on the religion practicing policies. The present government slogan of “Moderate Islam and enlightened moderation” has created lot of unrest in the country. Presently problem relates to the issue of the siege of Hafsa Mosque and Lal masjid. Two cleric brothers have built in a state owned land a mosque. This created a virtual state of siege in a part of the capital city Islamabad and gradually things got out of hand. The good government would always keep in mind the aspirations of people. The government could involve civil society to help them resolve issues by creating awareness about the true spirit and meaning of the basic rights and practices of religion. Ghayoor Ahmed,a columnist further adds, “The role of civil society can be a big contributor to the extradition of religious extremism”²³. It is pertinent to mention that a genuine democracy in the country offers the best hope of dealing with the religious extremisms as well as other political and economic problems. Democracy expands participation in the political

²² (April 8th 2007).Dawn. Lahore: Pakistan

²³ Ahmed .G. (April 20th, 2007).Growing religious extremism. Dawn. Lahore: Pakistan

system of the country and leads to the close cooperation between civil society and the state. Needless to say, democracy automatically results in good governance and is a precondition for civilized living.²⁴ As compared to Pakistan, India's secular face seems confusing. Where people have diverse problems relating to practicing of religion, for example, it is a stigma to be born in a lower caste. India, the second most populous state in the world, is a country of contradictions. It ranks among the fastest growing countries in the context of the rate of growth of its Gross National Production (GNP), and yet it has not bridged the wide gap between the haves and the have-nots. Billed as the world's largest democracy, it is plagued with the rigid caste system. The profile of India regarding caste-based discrimination is disturbing. The colonial rulers introduced the representative system in the sub-continent, who wanted to offer, what they thought, was a level playing ground to the underprivileged class. Prof Chalam maintains that the caste that one is born into is like the inheritance of property. Those born into the divija casts inherit certain advantages, while the daltis have to put up with the disadvantages. And even among the divija-the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas-the Brahmins can be termed as first among equals. They, for instance, dominate the banking sector. He also discusses the Mandal Commission Report of '90s, which raised a great deal of furor among the upper class. He claimed that the so-called lower castes or 52 percent of the population advocated that 27 percent seats be given to them. Quite predictably the upper castes opposed it and so did the scholars and intellectuals, who insisted that this kind of reservation would undermine the importance of the country's constitution which stresses

²⁴Ibid

that all the citizens of the country enjoyed equal rights²⁵. Other illustrations can further illuminate such perplexing socio-political, religious and economic issues.

Transparency

Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also implies that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement. It also means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms. The present government in Pakistan claims that all the policies of government are transparent and people have all the right to check the transparency but all these claims are not fulfilled in these structures. The universally accepted standards of transparency are in deficit in South Asia generally.

Media

In today's world the mass media, that includes, Television, radio, newspaper, books and magazines have become ears and eyes of the society and serve as a model of social responsibility. Media also tend to exert a powerful influence on government by identifying and highlighting the impact on policies.

Three major factors influence the media's selection of material: editorial policy, investigative reporting and now also the community problems. Media can act as catalyst between government and society by acting as a watch dog. Chomsky's propaganda model is widely applied in the developing countries. As Chomsky puts it "A propaganda model

²⁵ Chalam.K.S (2006). Caste-based Reservations and Human Development in India. Saga Publications:India

focuses on this inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news, fit to print, marginalized dissent. And allow the government and dominant prominent interests to get their messages across to the public”²⁶.

Indian government has given lot of freedom to its mass media and that has really established its niche in the region. As of its strong hold the propaganda carried out by the Indian media catches lot of attention. In Pakistan media has got minor liberty under the regime of President Musharraf. The role media played in the recent days to highlight the highhandedness of the government in the Chief Justice’s case is commendable. But simultaneously the guised laws of the government on media’s freedom will establish the future independence of media in Pakistan.

Terrorism

With the world scene changed after 9/11, most of the Pakistani government energy is being used for combating of terrorism. The present government taking the side of America, grabbed ample opportunities to eradicate the rising terrorist factors in the Northern areas. But unfortunately the scourge of terrorism is spreading. The form of terrorism during this government has assumed various forms. Political analyst, Andleeb Abbas argues that “The regular sight of bombing in last few months have been eclipsed by the vicious attack in Tank, fighting in Waziristan and Balochistan creates a scenario

²⁶ Chomsky, N & Herman, S. E. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent*. Pantheon: New York.

all too familiar with the specific intention to create the image of Pakistan as an uncontrollable one, which only the men in uniform can control”²⁷. She further states that “Waziristan has become the hub of terrorism and extremism” The death toll in these areas has reached figures matching those in Iraq. The bloody events and developments in this region have made lives uneasy for the locals. All educational institutions, businesses and commercial activities in the areas remain close most of the time, while government claims to be pursuing successful policies. The government philosophy of disturb, divide, and destroy continues to play with people’s lives²⁸. All these factors have lowered people’s trust in the ruling government and it’s policies to sweep out these terrorist factors in the state. In India the riots in Gujrat have claimed many innocent lives and the democratic country has not done much to eradicate the menace in the country. India along with Bangladesh are experiencing terrorism at regular intervals causing dismay among public and questions are raised about the capacity of their respective governments. Srilanka presents a different case of civil war and violence has become a routine activity.

Basic necessities of Life

One of the other basic needs of good governance is to provide people with proper health care, education, protection against unforeseen disaster situations, and to maintain law and order in the country. People pay taxes and people expect government to provide them with basic necessities of life. As mentioned earlier, according to 2006 report on

²⁷ Abbas,A. (April 8th, 2007). On the horns of Dilemma;Dawn. Lahore: Pakistan.

²⁸ Ibid

human development in South Asia, “There are over 867 million people without access to basic sanitation, more than 400 million adults are unable to read or write, and 300 million are undernourished”.²⁹ These deplorable statistics reveal the performance of government. Public services like health, education, childcare, natal and post natal services, water, sanitation etc and basic infrastructure like roads, transport, credit, power, irrigation, employment etc should be expanded and should be provided free. HD report of south Asia has pointed out t, that Pakistan’s GDP growth rate since 1990 have stayed in the range of 4 per cent; the country is lagging behind in terms of human development. In Bangladesh government has introduced various programmes for improving the lives of people. Bangladesh ranks third after China and India in terms of the absolute number of the poor people.

The central thrust of the Bangladesh government is to improve the quality of life of its people. The situation of Nepal is precarious.

Responsiveness

Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe. The governments have lately failed to deliver people with their basic requirements and governments in developing countries have started to privatize the government assets. Guasch(2004) states the objective of Privatization is to

²⁹ Ibid.,as no.3

“achieve secure private sector managerial and operational expertise and investments”³⁰.

The government of Pakistan has made series of failed attempts to privatize different profit generated sector to the private entrepreneur. The case of Pakistan Tele Communication Limited in which Sindh court has asked the government, not to give away the shares of most sensitive sector to a foreign company and it also held that the process of privatization was not justified. On the issue of Pakistan Steel Mill privatization, another profitable organization, government lost its battle as Supreme Court nullified government’s argument for privatization. The government to gain back the trust should seek help from experts and opt for policies which enjoy public confidence.

In the area of privatization, concession grants a private firm the right to operate a defined infrastructure service and to receive revenues deriving from it, usually based on a competitive bidding process. Concessions are typically granted for a specified period to the firms that offer to provide the service on the best terms while meeting certain criteria, generally involving quality and nature of investment.

Concessions differ from Privatization on three grounds; firstly concessions do not involve the sale or transfer of ownership of physical assets, only the right to the assets and to operate the enterprise. Second, the contracts are for limited period depending on the context and sector –usually 15-30 years. Finally, the government, as an owner of the

³⁰ Guasch. J. L.(2004)Granting and renegotiating infra structure Concessions Doing it RightPrivatisation.World Bank Institute; Washington

assets, retains much closer involvement and oversight in concessions”. The benefits and drawbacks can be studied intricately to save through any kind of pitfalls³¹.

The Human development report of South Asia 2006 indicates that the trends of privatization process in South Asia have also “contributed to the inequality and poverty. As Satiare is the largest employer in the South Asia, privatization has mostly resulted in massive layoffs, a heightened level of job insecurity and loss of pension benefits. The increased global economic integration and trade openness has exposed the small/medium farmers to external shocks. The monetary policy that has failed to maintain the price of essential food and non-food items at an affordable level”³². India on the other hand respects most principles accompanying the privatization process. Yet the consequences of privatization for the whole region appear to be less than desirable.

Consensus oriented

There are different school of thoughts, different actors and multifarious views in a society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also demands a broad and long-term perspective on what is needed for sustainable human development and how to achieve the goals of such development. Long term outcome can be deduced by understanding the historical, cultural and social contexts of a particular society or community.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.,as no.3

Consensus and Participation by members of the public in decision making over policies and programmes is a central aspect of public life. As Considine argues in 2005 about different view points, asserts “The democratic stand point, the more participation and consensus oriented is endangered, the better. If all other costs were held constant, the ideal decision would be one in which every citizens had their say. Ethically people who would be affected by a decision would get a first chance to vote. The pluralist theory also argues that institutions respond rather well to the pressure put on them by organized interests such as unions, social movements and employer groups. Politicians and bureaucrats play close attention to what these groups are saying at any one time and will seek to accommodate as much of their agenda as possible in order to win elections and maintain power. For pluralists the system of participation and consensus orientation therefore depend upon just how well these interests reflect the concerns and priorities of ordinary citizens”³³.

He further argues “as long as there are a great number of such groups, and provided that their strength within the policy system is roughly proportionate to their popular appeal, the system can be said to work well. Keeping the theories in mind, the level of participation can be divided into three levels: Systemic participation, institutional participation, local participation”³⁴. India squares reasonably with these three levels with

³³ Mark Considine. M.(2005)Making Public policy ,USA, Polity Press

³⁴ Ibid

its share of problems. Pakistan, Bangladesh and others are struggling to move in that direction.

Equity and inclusiveness

A society's well being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being. Poverty issues are rising in south Asia. The World Bank Development Report 200/2001 named "attacking poverty" and the Asian development Bank's poverty statistics titled 'country knowledge indicates that that south Asia has the largest number of poor living on less than US\$ 1 a day ³⁵. Pakistan rating in South Asia stands at 74th among 175 countries. Maldives in South Asia ranks higher at 53. High economy rate in the country is not the only tool to eliminate poverty.

Government needs stringent steps to eradicate poverty earnestly and effectively. The other imperative is to generate jobs so people can fulfill their basic needs. Employment opportunities should be increased manifold and inflation combated resolutely and progress in both the areas should be monitored diligently and stepped up constantly. Government should encourage Micro credits; this facility should be extensively provided. Government to rehabilitate credibility needs to promote small and medium enterprises more assiduously. Industrial and commercial cooperatives should be promoted within the

³⁵ Wignaraja.P & Sirivardana.S (2004) Pro-poor growth and Governance in south Asia.

farm belt and agro based industries developed quickly. Unfortunately in Pakistan cooperatives have a tragic history that is because of the dominance of feudal lords in the rural areas³⁶.The performance profile in India and Bangladesh has produced mixed results.

Corruption

Fundamental causes of corruption are economic structures, institution incapacity to design and implement reform strategies, and the lack of political will. Corruption is a problem of good governance. It has a symptom of something that has gone wrong in the management of the state (UNDP1997: NY).It also indicates that institutions designed to govern relationships between citizens and the state are used instead for personal enrichment of public officials and the provisions of benefits to the corrupt. The basic cause of corruption is monopoly and discretion without adequate accountability. This implies that the expanding role of government in development has placed the bureaucracy in a monopolistic position and enhanced the opportunities for administrative discretion. Corruption results from excessive regulation, increased bureaucratic discretion and the lack of adequate accountability and transparency system. The state intervenes in the economy to provide a framework for the economic and social activities³⁷.

³⁶ Ahmed.S .(March 29th,2007),A merry leap into the future:Dawn

³⁷ Ibid.,as no.7

As Noman puts it, Corruption in Pakistan is pervasive and entrenched³⁸. Cross country surveys commonly rank Pakistan as worse than average in terms of its level of corruption and red tape (Mauro 1995). The Government during Nawaz was trying to reduce corruption, by nabbing the illegal and filing cases against corrupts but no positive results were achieved. So is the case with the present regime of Musharraf who established an independent National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to wipe away corruption but his measures has not yet borne any fruits. In the 2005 study of Human Right commission report of Pakistan, it was observed that Corruption has become widespread. And according to (Sec 1.d) of the National Accountability Ordinance, prohibits those convicted of corruption by NAB or holding political office for 10 years. But NAB disproportionately target opposition politicians for prosecution and did not prosecute members of the military³⁹. These laws created unrest and breach of trust about the government policy for handling the matter impartially. The present government's treatment on the issue was perceived as "presidents false promise when he took over the office, have been exposed by extending ministerial favors to corrupt individuals"⁴⁰. So it is said that the government should adopt strict rules and laws to prove its worth and credibility. Pakistan takes the 'cake of corruption' unorthodoxically. The present regime

³⁸ Noman. O. (1988). *The Political Economy of Pakistan 1947-1985*. London KDI

³⁹ (2005). HRCP report.

⁴⁰ Abbas. A. (April 8, 2007). *On the horns of Dilemma*. Dawn. Lahore: Pakistan

through a ‘reconciliation Ordinance’ washed the sins of corrupt enabling in particular the politicians to make a new beginning in politics. The body of literature on this issue has no example like this. India ranks little higher than Pakistan. Despite its democratic institutions; it has failed to curb corruption. Bangladesh and other countries are no better.

Effectiveness and efficiency

Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources. The concept of “efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment”⁴¹. Government of Pakistan to regain trust entrusted the National Reconstruction Bureau the task “of undertaking the exercise with multiple aims.”⁴². The results are far from satisfactory. India’s performance may be slightly better on this count while other countries of the region also perform poorly.

Accountability

Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders. Who is accountable to whom varies depending on whether decisions or actions taken are internal or external to an organization or institution. In general an organization or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law. Accountability as a process has failed to take

⁴¹ Ibid.,as no.1

⁴² Ibid., as no .15

roots in Pakistan. India's institutional capability has not been successful in curbing corruption or raising the levels of efficiency. Bangladesh and others cannot boast of institutionalizing the process.

Globalization

Globalization is a dominant force in the 21st century. It is shaping a new era of interaction-and interdependence-among nations, economies and people. Integration is taking place not only in the economy but also in technology and governance. New technologies are developing rapidly.

Knowledge based industries and skills are growing in importance. The world economy is being increasingly integrated through an accelerated pace of trade and investment. Though globalization is not a new phenomenon, the present era is generating profound and far reaching changes in the new market, new tools (such as internet links and media networks), new actors(such as the World Trade Organization and the network of global NGOs) and new rules(including multilateral agreements on trade and intellectual property) has shrunk the world ⁴³.The countries of South Asia are learning to negotiate with the globalization forces. They are, still in their infancy stage. Most certainly, these countries have reoriented their policies accordingly with mixed results. The biggest challenge is to fight poverty as the same is growing and widening the gap between the rich and the poor raising the issue of social justice. If this imbalance is not corrected, it can have dire consequences challenging the governance paradigm.

PERFORMANCE PROFILE IN SOUTH ASIA

Prof.Sajjad Naseer

⁴³ Ibid.,as no .7

It will be pertinent to briefly evaluate the performance of South Asian Countries since they gained independence. Before an attempt is made to examine their performance against the widely accepted indicators of governance, it will be desirable to place such activities in a proper context.

As successor states to an extended British Colonial rule, the primacy of the colonial structures stayed on and this demonstrated the tendencies towards centralization. As South Asian Societies were pluralist horizontally and vertically, penchant for strong center almost became a priority. The quest for integration and unity gave fillip to trends towards centralisation. To boost the nascent spirit of nationalism further encouraged those initiatives. The building of strong center alarmed the provinces and uneasy relations emerged between the two. In the case of Pakistan, this led to the successful secessionist movement resulting in the birth of Bangladesh. India, which takes immense pride being the largest functioning democracy of the world, had to experience an 'emergency rule' (1975) during Indra Gandhi's regime and the imposition of 'Governor Raj' about eighty five times, the uprising in Kashmir and the 'Naxilite insurgency' in twenty nine states seems quite discomfoting to say the least. Bangladesh had its share of military rule which operated under a strong centre. Sri- Lanka, though going through routines of parliamentary rituals faced insurgency, which continues unabatingly. Nepal, ruled by a monarchial system faced violence by the anti-monarchial Moaists, who demand immediate end to the institution of Monarchy; the dialectics between strong centre and demand for autonomy continue to be a running theme all these years in South Asian Countries.

Attempts at state building functions and neglecting the nation- building process was further augmented by the kind of economic policies pursued in these countries. The socialist ideas of Nehru, reflecting in the central command economy, enlarged and expanded the role of public sector. The agenda of development was overwhelming and challenging and tested the capacity of the governmental machinery to the full. Obviously the capacity did not match the stipulated agenda or development goals. Consequently, the movement towards economic progress was slow and the lot of poor did not ameliorate. Pakistan's center also sponsored development programme, without having the infrastructural capacity to implement. The Pakistani alignment with the west during the 50s and 60s brought economic assistance in the country to sustain steady growth rate. Twice, being the front line state in the 80s and after 9/11 enabled her to receive economic aid to sustain 6% plus growth rate. These appear to be temporary economic upsurge which could not be sustained without the special relations with the west. Bangladesh, being a basket case has survived with a favorable disposition of the West.

The security issue has bedeviled relations between India and Pakistan. The arch enemies fought wars and entered into an arms race resulting in both being 'nuclear states'. Despite the confidence building measures, both are competing in developing and perfecting their missile technologies. The arms race inevitably makes these countries spend enormous sums in building their military capabilities. These huge spending on military and other security related issues have taken a heavy toll on the social and economic development dimensions. The consequences of these policies have raised more serious social, political and economic issues in these countries. The number of poor began to rise and after the

globalizing forces began to sweep, the number of absolute poor surged and pose a great threat.

Looking at the poverty index and general performance of these countries reveal a discouraging situation. If we examine Bangladesh, then according to the World Bank report (see annexure), people living below national poverty line are 50% which is half the population of the country. India, which is viewed and recognised as a fast growing economy for a decade has 29% of the population living below national poverty line. The World Bank report does not report on the Pakistani situation as statistics are disputed and contested. Even if 40% figure is not accepted and governments figure are recognized, even then, 32% of the population live under national poverty line and it is claimed that the same has dropped to 26%.⁴⁴

The above figures reveal a dismal picture and if we add people living under \$3 or 4 a day, then the numbers are likely to rise and will present a very disappointing situation. This is certainly pessimistic and raised serious questions about the policies pursued in the context of governance and in particular about the pro-poor service delivery.

Besides the depressing issue of poverty, let us scrutinize the area of decentralization and local governance and legal and justice reform as two indicators of good governance in India and Pakistan.

Pakistan is the only country in the region that decided to depart from the inherited British tradition of local government in 1955. It reintroduced the system during Ayub Khan's

⁴⁴ 2007, World Bank Report

martial law in 1959, where 50% of the elected members worked with 50% of nominated members in a four tiered councils, the upper three were chaired by government functionaries. These elected basic democrats also served as an electoral college for the election of the President. This system worked under government patronage and regulations to serve the interests of the regime. This system was discarded in 1969 and Pakistan remained without a local system till 1979. It was again, General Zia-ul-Haq, the military ruler of Pakistan who revived local bodies to have grass-root democracy, while the country was in the grip of Martial law. Indeed, it is the compulsion of a military ruler to gain some sort of legitimacy for domestic and foreign consumption. The civilian rule of 90s saw an absence of local bodies. Again, General Musharraf, the military ruler of Pakistan held elections to the local bodies through a devolution plan to build democracy from the grass-roots but the brand of governance at the national level remained military. A third tier of District government has been created but no powers have been devolved to the provinces from the centre. It is ironical that local bodies are a Provincial subject but the same is managed and regulated from the centre. During Zia and Musharraf period, elections to the local bodies were held on a party -less basis and the system is planted and managed 'officially'. Obviously, the political parties criticize and oppose the devolution plan and in the current scenario of Pakistan, local bodies are viewed as an instrument for generating 'positive results' in the forthcoming national elections. Infact, their potency to rig the elections enhance manifold as 70% of the Pakistani population live in rural areas as the monitoring arrangement cannot adequately spread all over to ensure free, fair and transparent elections. The absence of an independent Election Commission, the presence of a biased interim government, curbs on media and favors the 'Kings Party' can shower

vitiating the political atmosphere for a fair exercise in electoral politics. When local bodies were primarily used by military rulers to gain some semblance of legitimacy, they could not become the part of the political process to produce a culture of local government politics. Local government comes into being at the pleasure and compulsion of military rulers and ceases to exist when they depart. This system of governance still awaits institutionalisation in Pakistan.

India on the other hand, continued with the inherited British local government system without interruption. It successfully framed the constitution in two years and held national elections in 1950. Since then, India held its elections at the national and provincial levels regularly. In this political culture of routine elections, the local government continued without interruption. Having implemented land reforms in early 50s, the local government was not under the influence of landed aristocracy. Having eliminated the feudal Lords, the local government system had a better chance to succeed. The continuity in national and provincial political process also ensured the functioning of local government at the grass root level. This seems like an amazing success story. The above aspects notwithstanding, the local government system in operational terms started facing difficulties. The Mehta Commission Report of 1979 highlighted those problems and recommended remedial measures. The reservation of 33% in 1991 for women was a major step forward towards empowerment of women in the rural India. Unlike Pakistan, these bodies are the babies of provincial governments and escaped the intervention and manipulation of the centre.

With all these positives, the plight of the poor did not register any significant improvement. Poverty remained the dominant feature of rural India. Ayesha Jala

identified this as a structural problem. Operationally, according to her, the structures of governance remained unchanged and consequently the authoritarian style played its part. The District Executive Officer (government functionary) wielded enormous financial influence reducing the importance of elected bodies. Under the veneer of democracy, the authoritarian style of governance prevailed in India all these years. Without necessarily agreeing or disagreeing with Ayesha, one stark fact appears too obvious that India has to address its poverty more seriously.

Another variable that impacts the lives of everyone is its judicial system. Pakistan presents a case, where superior Judiciary could not evolve as an institution. Interrupted and dismantled each time that the army assumed in Pakistan, the Supreme Court of Pakistan endorsed and legitimized the military rule. Working in complete subordination to the military, the Supreme Court surpassed its powers by allowing the military ruler in 1999 to even amend the constitution. The latest blow was struck by General Musharraf on November 3rd, 2007 as he imposed another Martial Law by calling it an 'Emergency' and as the Chief of Army Staff, ordered that the Supreme Court and the four High Courts be dismantled and the same were reconstituted with hand picked judges. The Superior Judiciary has yet to evolve in Pakistan as an institution. The District and Session Courts continue to suffer from neglect and litigation is the name of the game and is the breeding ground for corruption and malpractices. The dispensation of justice is in a precarious condition in Pakistan.

India's experience in the context of Superior judiciary is entirely different. It has the essential elements of an institution and its life has never been cut short or interrupted.

Unlike Pakistan, the Indian Judicial activism functioned within the democratic framework without eroding the legitimacy of an elected government. At the highest level, people have an expectation that justice would be dispensed. However, the lower levels have problems of litigation, malpractices and corruption. The higher judiciary in India is playing a positive role enabling the three organs of the government to function smoothly providing necessary stability to the political system. Its absence keeps alive the issue of legitimacy of government in Pakistan and stability of political order remains a burning issue in its body- politics. The governance problems, therefore, become acute causing a deficit of trust in government. The trust level in India is higher but the graph of corruption and criminalizing of politics keep fluctuating. Other countries of the region have nothing spectacular to differentiate them from Pakistan in particular.

Conclusion

An attempt was made to navigate through the various contours of the governance paradigm, which is also described as holistic approach to good governance. The 'United Nations model', 'Cheemas's model' and a 'synthesis model' incorporating the elements of two models were examined.

These theoretical constructs were then applied to the countries of South Asia region. The above survey of South Asian Countries suggests that these countries had serious engagement with issues surrounding participation, development and security. Excluding India, which resolved the issue of participation through electoral politics, the remaining countries are caught in the struggle to manage these issues haltingly and that rather unsuccessfully. As the participation issue remains unsettled, the political systems struggle for stability. Recurring patterns of instability aggravate the key areas of governance; causing a decline in the trust of government and in some cases lead to alienation of groups and parties, who challenge the writ of government.

On the issue of development, the performance of this region is clearly poor and discouraging. Having embraced a huge agenda of development to bring unity and integration, these countries failed to address the issue of social justice and could not distribute the economic benefits across the board. After six decades, poverty level has

increased and more so in recent times. This is a disturbing situation, as these countries are also confronting violence and terrorism for some years, creating distortions about the image of the government. Even India, which enjoyed political stability, is up against the problem of poverty. The shining India slogan of the BJP did not meet the approval of the poor in rural India. The trust level in India may be higher compared with other countries, yet trust generally remains in short supply in this region.

The security issue has complicated the situation, particularly between India and Pakistan. Both have spent huge sums to bolster their defense systems and ended up as nuclear state. India probably feels strong and confident but Pakistan is suspect in the eyes of western media regarding its nuclear assets. Pakistan, having established strategic stability vis-a-vis India faces serious internal threats bringing the government into disrepute. As a nuclear state, it faces a grim situation internally raising serious doubts about the capacity of the government to maintain law and order. The issue of trust in government in Pakistan is at its lowest ebb.

While the capacity of the government in these countries to perform within the governance paradigm does not seem adequate, the state is abdicating its role as it is negotiating with the globalising forces. The private sector does not seem to have the capacity to manage the areas vacated by the state. Indeed, this is a period of transition and how these issues are accommodated and are settled in different domains are to be seen in the coming years. The trust in the government will be settled as the domains between the private and the public are identified and their respective performance would determine the level of trust in the government.

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Annexure

United Nation Development Programme good governance priorities

(http://magnet.undp.org/policy/_chapter2.htm Published: 17 June 2001)

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) policy documents of 2001 identifies their priorities to support good governance, including:

- governing institutions: legislature, judiciary and electoral bodies
- public and private sector management (leadership, policy development and managing change, civil service reform, economic and financial management, urban management)
- decentralization and support to local governance
- civil society organizations
- Governance for countries in crisis.

