

Good Governance in the Perspective of Attitude, Mindset, Administrative Ethics and Values

Tapan Kumar Biswas¹

Abstract

Good Governance has become an emerging issue as it plays a pivotal role in ensuring efficient and effective public service. This article has put up efforts to ascertain the definition and significance of Good Governance. It has identified some specific vital factors such as attitude, mindset, administrative ethics and values of the government functionaries, which are the driving factors for implementing Good Governance. The article has explained and analyzed how these factors of government body influence the issue of Good Governance and how these contribute to ensuring it. The article has illustrated the effect and impact of human behaviour that is his attitude, mindset, ethics, values etc. to execute his responsibilities efficiently, effectively and dedicatedly. The article has pointed out that attitude, mindset and values are the actual driving force of a human being to be committed and determined for anything. Therefore, these factors should be determined positively to ensure Good Governance. In this regard, the article has put emphasis on ensuring transparency, accountability, integrity, rule of law for the public servants to attain the very objectives of Good Governance that is the targeted goals of the Government.

Keywords: Transparency, Accountability, Integrity, Justice, Right to Information, Rule of Law

1.0 Introduction

Good governance, which is a highly discussed phenomenon in the existing world, is also an issue of utmost importance and essence in the context of Bangladesh. Actually, the concept of good governance has been flourishing since the post colonial era, when the ideologies of democracy started evolving gradually. The very concept of democracy consists in the ideology that government is of the people, by the people and for the people. Therefore, as per the concept and norms of democracy, people are the main pivotal, considering and driving force and factor of the government. Actually, the concept and objectives of democracy are subject to ensuring equitable society, equal and legal right and justice to the citizenry of the country (UNDP, 1997). Therefore, a democratic government is supposed to dedicate itself thoroughly to extend better and better service and welfare to its people. The government should put up its continuous sincere and innovative efforts to ensure good governance.

Corresponding Author's email: tapanbsws6442@gmail.com

1. Deputy Commissioner, Bagerhat

In fact, governance indicates the actions and manners of governing and it involves the process of decision making and the strategies through which these decisions are implemented by the government embodiment in respect of running or governing the country (UN ESCAP, 2003a). Governance exhibits the manners and procedures through which power is exercised for managing the country's economic and social resources to achieve development (World Bank, 1992). Good governance highlights and focuses on the justified, lawful, ethical, legal and benevolent strategies and policies of governing of the government functionaries. The concept of good governance has flourished in to a vital issue and dimension for the developing countries like Bangladesh since the early 1990. It happened so through the insistence and emphasis of two international funding organizations—World Bank and IMF to ensure good governance. Actually, good governance consists in the procedures and initiatives of exercising power by various levels of government functionaries, which are considered sincere, effective, honest, transparent and accountable (CIDA, 1997).

The phenomenon of good governance lies in diversified factors such as, participatory, equitable, transparent, accountable stature and norms, rule of laws, which ensure best utilization of resources. Without good governance that is without rule of law legitimate power, responsive regulation and predictable administration, no fund, no amount of charity would be capable of setting us on the path of prosperity and enrichment (Annan, 1997).

2.0 Focus of attitude on good governance

Attitude is one of the vital factors of a human being in case of his inspiration and dedication to any activity. In fact, it is the driving force and factor, which inspires and motivates him to engage in any work with commitment. Therefore, with a view to achieving any objective or target, a man first needs to set up his attitude strongly and effectively. Then he should dedicate himself and strive to achieve the goal and the objective. Attitude, both positive and negative can be infused and determined and there is no denying the fact that the success and outcome of the objectives are very much subject to the determination of this attitude. Actually, government functionaries are the core driving force to ensure good governance and naturally, the achievement of good governance is very much dependent on the determination of their attitude properly in this regard.

Good governance consists in predictable, open and enlightened policy making through transparent processes. It involves a bureaucracy enriched with a professional ethos, which is the executive arm of government accountable for its actions. It also encompasses a strong civil society participating in public affairs and all behaving under the rule of law (World Bank, 1994). The key factors of good governance have been identified as the technical and managerial competence of the

civil servants, capacity of government organizations, reliability, predictability, the rule of law, accountability, transparency and open information system. The ADB has highlighted and focused on four elements of good governance, these are accountability, participation, predictability and transparency (ADB, 1995).

Transparency is generally defined as the open flow of information (Holzner, 2006; Piotrowski, 2007), and the literature on transparency in the relationship between governments and citizens has strongly emphasized this concept of openness. Oliver (2004) argues that ‘transparency in an organization does not indicate only external communication, but also the right internal communication, this is concerned with the guts of its operations’, and it introduces the concept of ‘new transparency’ to describe the trend for organizations to face more active demands for disclosure of information. In the past, many governments passively provided information only on request, and could do so at their own discretion; now they are being required to engage in more active discourse and disclosure.

Piotrowski (2007) states that ‘governmental transparency equates to open government’. The oft-cited definition of transparency by the Asian Development Bank (1995) is ‘the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations and decisions’. Transparency has become an important agenda in nearly every organization, public and private, large or small. In this regard, Hood (2006) has opined that it has ‘attained quasi-religious significance in debate over governance and institutional design’.

Transparency and trust are seen to moderate or mediate the relationship between corruption and satisfaction (Driscoll, 1978; Heise, 1985; Jahansoozi, 2006; Pathak et al., 2008; Rawlins, 2008). Reducing corruption and improving citizen satisfaction are important aims of government. Many societies believe that transparency will reduce governmental malfeasance through its ‘sunshine’ effect (Heald, 2006), and demand for transparency has grown rapidly, with organizations in both private and public sectors being encouraged to be more transparent – Ball (2009) for a review of this development. Gaining citizens’ trust is similarly a high priority challenge for public organizations.

Actually, transparency in governance contributes to accountability of the government functionaries. This is ultimately concerned with predictability, reliability, competence and capacity and the rule of law of the government embodiment. So, in order to ensure good governance, these factors need to be attained and these factors are concerned with developing and nurturing positive attitude of the government body. Therefore, good governance ensures a developing focus on the attitude of the government functionaries.

3.0 Effect of mindset on good governance

Mindset is the most important and vital factor in respect of ensuring good governance. In fact, mindset is just like the helm of a boat, which ascertains and

fixes the way and destination. Without helm, a boat cannot move purposefully; similarly, without determining mindset resolutely, it is quite impossible for a human being to achieve his desired target and objectives. It has been identified that good governance is subject to a number of factors such as, transparency, accountability, predictability, commitment, reliability, justice, rule of law etc. Therefore, in order to ensure good governance, these factors need to be developed appropriately and carefully. There is no denying the fact that the core objective of ensuring good governance by a democratic government is to extend better and better service to its people and to ensure their justice, legal right and freedom of opinion and right to information. Therefore, it has become very much mandatory and emergent requirement for the government functionaries at all levels to be thoroughly committed themselves to extending those services to the citizenry of the state with a view to ensuring good governance.

However, the fulfilment of those services and factors absolutely depend on the determined mindset of the government functionaries. If the government functionaries are not efficaciously motivated to determine their mindset regarding their commitment to the service, no rules, regulations, policies, pressure, influence would be capable of contributing expected services and ensuring good governance. Therefore, government officials need to be inspired and motivated effectively to have a committed mindset towards extending their services. As per Shelley (1999), a sound public administration having a determined and committed mindset towards responsibilities is the propelling force of good governance. So, a sound and dynamic public service, which will ensure good governance, can be achieved through the determination of dedicated and committed mindset. Actually, good governance is the unambiguous identification and pursuance of the basic values of the society, which is subject to the resolute mindset of the social people (Chopra, 1997).

Government functionaries should be very much aware about their roles and responsibilities. They should never forget to remember that they have been appointed to serve the people and extend better and better service and they are paid by the people for this. Therefore, every public servant belonging to any profession should be committed to his responsibilities. However, the scenario of the public service in our country is not satisfactory at the optimum level and in some respects this is very much vulnerable. Therefore, in order to extend expected service that is to ensure good governance, public servants need to determine their mindset and become committed towards discharging their responsibilities and providing expected service to the people. Therefore, good governance has a very much vital and important impact and focus on mindset.

4.0 Impact of administrative ethics and values on good governance

Ethics, in general terms is concerned with people's moral duty and obligations (Levine, 1990). Actually, ethics indicates the moral standard, level of integrity,

attitude to follow the fairness, obligation to go through righteous way in respect of executing the responsibilities. In fact, ethics consists in a person's dedication and commitment to put up uncompromising emphasis and priority on morality. The ethical behavior of a person has a very much vital effect and impact on society. Actually, the public morality itself is a combination of individual ethics (Balogun, 2001).

The term value is related to the price, worth etc. Values indicate how much price is paid for something, how much importance is given to someone or something, how much regards are extended to someone, how much attention is highlighted and exhibited to fairness of activities. Actually, values deal with the outcomes of ethics and ethics is concerned with psychological and philosophical thoughts and values consist in fair or honest activities.

It is a natural process that humans are guided by some common ethics and values. As pursuant to this, every profession is supposed to have some mandatory and specific regulations, ethics and values and the personnel belonging to these professions must abide by these. These specific and unique ethics and values inspire the personnel to discharge their responsibilities properly. The effective running of the administration depends on the proper observance of these ethics and values.

Actually, administrative ethics comprises the standard of morals while taking decisions or implementing policies or programs. It is concerned with the level of honesty, integrity, transparency, accountability, legality, rule of law etc. of the functionaries during the governance or management. Administrative ethics deals with the fair, justified and legal strategies and procedures of governing the state or managing an organization. Public servants are the main factors and driving forces to ensure good governance. Therefore, it is very much expected that they would be effectively enriched and motivated with proper ethics and values and committed to abiding by them properly. The civil service deals with the decision making process of the government in diversified aspects. So, ethics in civil service is of highest importance to achieve the desired objectives.

Administrative values indicate the appropriate importance or priority focused on the administrative decisions or policies. The proper, justified and right things can only be performed through the commitment of ethics and moral standard of the personnel concerned with the responsibilities. In this regard, the proper, justified, legal and right activities can be treated as values. Therefore, ethics involves the justified, rational, legal, transparent, accountable ways of thinking and promising and values indicate the proper, effective and righteous actions. So, administrative ethics and values play a very much vital and effective role on good governance.

5.0 Conclusion

Good governance depends on various factors such as transparency, accountability, predictability, reliability, rule of law, efficiency, capacity of the organization etc.

Therefore, ensuring good governance is very much subject to the committed practice of these factors. Government functionaries are the prime forces of ensuring good governance. The attainment of the objectives of the SDG, Vision 2021, Seventh Five Years' Plan, Perspective Plan and so on is subject to the dedication and commitment of the functionaries of the state to these factors. In this regard, government functionaries need to determine their attitude, mindset, administrative ethics and values with a view to enriching them with those factors.

Ethically motivated civil servants, who have determined attitude and mindset, can perceive what they should and should not do. There is no denying the fact that ethically motivated civil servants would be capable of providing better and better services to the people, which is the prime requirement of ensuring good governance. It is true that public confidence on civil servants is not always at the expected level in respect of honesty, integrity, accountability and transparency. As pursuant to this, government is reforming from closed bureaucracy to a relatively transparent body. Therefore, proper ethics, values, attitude and mindset in civil service has become a heightened awareness, concern and intent of existing time to ensure good governance.

References

- Annan, K (1997). 'Inaugural Address to the International Conference on Governance for sustainable Growth and Equity', New York: United Nations.
- ADB (1995). 'Governance: Sound Development Management', Strategy and Policy Paper, WP1-95. Manila: Asian Development Bank.
- Balogun, M.J. (2001). 'Tracking Ethical Compliance and Violations in Government: Contemporary Approaches and A Research Proposal,' Asian Review of Public Administration, Vol. X111, No. 2, July-December, pp. 18-37.
- Ball, C. (2009). 'What is transparency?' Public Integrity 11(4): 293–308.
- CIDA (1997). Redefining the Concept of Governance. Quebec: Canadian International Development Agency.
- Chopra, Vivek (1997) in Subash, C.Kashyap eds. Crime, Corruption and Good Governance, New Delhi, Uppal, p. 113.
- Driscoll, J.W. (1978). 'Trust and participation in organizational decision making as predictors of satisfaction,' Academy of Management Journal, 21(1): 44–56.
- Heald, D. (2006). 'Varieties of transparency. In: Hood C and Heald D (eds) Transparency: The Key to Better Governance?' New York: Oxford University Press, 25–43. 272.
- Heise, J. A. (1985). 'Toward closing the confidence gap: An alternative approach to communication between public and government.' Public Affairs Quarterly 9(2): 196–217.
- Holzner, B. and Holzner, L. (2006). 'Transparency in Global Change: The Vanguard of the Open Society.' Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Hood, C. (2006). 'Transparency in historical perspective. In: Hood C and Heald D (eds).

- Transparency: The Key to Better Governance?' New York: Oxford University Press, 3–23.
- Jahansoozi, J. (2006). 'Organization–stakeholder relationships: Exploring trust and transparency,' *Journal of Management Development* 25(10): 942–955.
- Levine, Charles, H. (1990). *Public Administration: Challenges, Choices, Consequences*, Glenview, Illinois, Brown Higher Education, pp. 192.
- Oliver, R.W. (2004). 'What is Transparency?' New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Pathak, R.D., Singh, G., Belwal, R., Naz, R. and Smith, R.F.I. (2008). 'E-governance, corruption and public service delivery: A comparative study of Fiji and Ethiopia,' *Journal of Administration and Governance*, 3(1): 65–79.
- Piotrowski, S.J. (2007). *Governmental Transparency in the Path of Administrative Reform*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Rawlins, B.L. (2008). 'Measuring the relationship between organizational transparency and employee trust,' *Public Relations Journal*, 2(2): 1–21. New York :Cambridge University Press.
- Shelley, Mizanur. Rahman. (1999). 'Governance and Public Administration: Meeting the Challenge of the New Millennium,' *Journal of Administration and Management*, Bangladesh Civil Service(Administration) Academy, Dhaka, Vol. 6, Special Issue, July 1997-June 1999.
- UNDP (1997). *Governance for Sustainable Human Development. A UNDP Policy Document*, Washington D.C.: United Nations Development Programme.
- UNESCAP (2003a). *Local Government in Asia and the Pacific: A comparative Study*, Country Paper: Bangladesh, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Available at:
[http:// www.unescap.org/huset/gstudy/country/bangladesh/bangladesh.html](http://www.unescap.org/huset/gstudy/country/bangladesh/bangladesh.html) (accessed on 15.02.2016).
- World Bank (1992). *Governance and Development*, Washington D.C. The World Bank.
- World Bank (1994). *Governance: The World Bank's Experience*, Washington D.C. The World Bank.