

CHAPTER 8

Good Governance And Management Of Social Conflicts

8.1 Governance

In a generic sense ‘governance’ refers to the task of running a Government or any other entity. ‘Governance’ in the sense it has been widely used in the development literature of 1990s, is, however, a broader concept than Government. An important distinction between government and governance is the notion of the civil society. Governance transcends the state to include civil society organisations and the private sector.

8.1.2 At the apex of governance lies the role of the State as a sovereign functionary, all activities of the Government relating to the sovereign functions of the Government represent the heart of its domain. The role of the State in maintaining law and order, as a prime regulator and the supreme instrument of enforcement of law, has an omniscient impact on the life of the citizens. The State should be capable of enabling, enhancing and deploying the power from other societal actors for sustainable human development. The State should network and dialogue with non-State actors including the public, the media, voluntary organizations, self-help groups, the private for profit sector, community organisations etc. and create conditions for the latter to contribute in achieving developmental goals. The State according to Osborne and Gaebler^{1[1]} should do ‘steering’ and not ‘rowing’.

8.1.3 Governance defies a common definition. A number of common indicators have however emerged for assessing good governance. It is essentially a reform package to strengthen the institutions of government and civil society with the objective of making government more accountable, more open and transparent, and more democratic and participatory. Good governance is also about effective and equitable government that promotes rule of law.

Strands of Good Governance*

- ❑ *Participatory*
- ❑ *Sustainable*
- ❑ *Legitimate and acceptable to the people*
- ❑ *Transparent*

1[1] Osborne, D and Gaebler T (1992) Reinventing Government: how the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector

- ❑ *Promotes equity and equality*
- ❑ *Able to develop the resources and methods of governance*
- ❑ *Promotes gender balance*
- ❑ *Tolerates and accepts diverse perspectives*
- ❑ *Able to mobilise the resources for social purposes*
- ❑ *Strengthens indigenous mechanisms*
- ❑ *Operates by rule of law*
- ❑ *Efficient and effective in the use of resources*
- ❑ *Engenders and commands respect and trust*
- ❑ *Accountable*
- ❑ *Able to define and take ownership of national solutions*
- ❑ *Enabling and facilitative*
- ❑ *Regulatory rather than controlling*
- ❑ *Able to deal with temporal issues*
- ❑ *Service oriented*

***as identified in UNDP's 1996 workshop**

8.1.2 Why Governance and not Government

The principal phenomenon of the governance in the last fifty years in this country is the emergence of Government as the main font generating, moulding, directing nearly all the institutions of the society. The colonial legacy of the mindset of the Rulers found a robust expression in the new role of the State as the main dispenser of social and economic development with social justice. The State loomed large as an apparently benign patriarch extending its reach and hold extensively on the society. In its assumed role, the State appropriated a large chunk of social space. The inevitable consequence was near obliteration of social space so essential for growth of the society as an organic whole. The State embraced all spheres of human activity; as the supreme arbiter in social, economic, political development in arts and culture, media, research, education, health and as the main provider of services. The biological appropriation of the growth process sapped the energy and vigour of the society. The State came to dominate all social processes and then tragically failed to deliver. Increasingly, the dynamics of processes bypassed the institutions of the State rendering them irrelevant. So, we are witnesses to an ineffective exhausted state apparatus and weak, marginalised, impoverished social institutions devoid of all energy occupying little or no social space.

8.1.2.2 In a healthy growth model of a free democratic society, the Government is just one of the participants. The Government exists as one of the servitors in the service of the society. Indeed the awareness that government alone can neither solve all the problems of the society nor it is the only crucial actor in addressing major societal issues has dictated the need to look beyond Government. Interdependence and need to find solutions to societal problems call for greater collaboration between the government and civil society.

8.1.2.3 This raises issues of fundamental importance. Does the role of the State require a redefinition to realign it with the needs of a free and a self-governing people? Does the Government need to withdraw from areas that can be effectively managed by the civil society so that State could better focus on its core functions?* Should the Government review its role of driving the non-governmental initiatives leaving these free to sustain and grow on the strength of inner impulse?

*** Core functions include the responsibility of the State for the welfare and development of deprived and disadvantaged sections of the society.**

Rogi Kalyan Samitis Of Madhya Pradesh*

The Rogi Kalyan Samitis of Madhya Pradesh offer a fine example of people's participation in governance to totally revamp and greatly improve the Public Health delivery system. The project was started in a thousand bed medical college hospital in Indore in 1994-95. Decades of neglect and lack of proper upkeep had converted the hospital into a veritable hellhole. There were thousands of rats, hundreds of tons of garbage and the service was deplorable.

Around this time an epidemic of plague broke out in the neighbouring State of Gujarat and the city of Indore faced imminent danger of spread of plague. The District Magistrate, with the help of the city folk undertook a drive to totally evacuate this mammoth hospital, rid it of rats and carry out massive physical upgradation and refurbishment. All this was done with funds raised through donation – Rs.4800 lacs were collected in the first month. To impart permanency to the changes, the concept of a Rogi Kalyan Samiti was created and the management of the hospital was handed over to this body.

Rogi Kalyan Samiti consisting of donors, leading citizens, elected people's representatives social organisations like Rotary, Lions, Red Cross, officials of the District Administration and doctors have the mandate to manage the hospital. It can raise resources through user charges, donations, grants, loans, commercial exploitation of the hospital land and other assets, etc. The Samiti can use the funds to improve the working of the hospital to the best of its judgement.

The State Government has set up such samitis in all government hospitals across the State. In the last five years over Rs.40 crores have been raised by these samitis and spent on improvement of hospitals. Involvement of people has greatly improved the shape of the public health delivery system in hundreds of hospitals across Madhya Pradesh.

This noble experiment received international recognition with the Global Development Network Award, 2000 being conferred on the then District Magistrate of Indore. This Award, instituted by the World Bank, ADB and several other donors, is given for the most Innovative Development Project.

*Based On A Report From State Government Of Madhya Pradesh

8.2 Management Of Social Conflicts

No Government, in the developing world, has the human and economic resources to overcome the poverty and inequality that are their legacies. If democracy and conflict free society is to be lasting, it is of the utmost importance that India's civil society should remain a strong component of every day life. Governments need to build up partnerships with the private sector, NGOs, self-help groups, assistance agencies and the other organisations of civil society to define development needs and implement programmes

8.2.2 Social conflicts result from poverty, inequality and inability to accept pluralism. Democracies need to be inclusive; not merely majoritarian. Stability and peace do not stem from authority but a broad sense of justice perceived as equal by all sectors. The factors that lead to social unrest are indeed quite foreseeable. The Report of the Carnegie Commission on 'Preventing Deadly Conflict' says:-

"Early indicators include widespread human rights abuses, increasingly brutal political oppression, inflammatory use of the media, the accumulation of arms, and sometimes, a rash of organized killings. Such developments, especially when combined with chronic deprivation and increasing scarcity of basic necessities, can create an extremely volatile situation. Successful prevention of mass violence will therefore depend on retarding and reversing the development of such circumstances."

Learning To Live Together

During the twenty first century human survival may well depend on our ability to learn a new form of adaptation, one in which inter-group competition is largely replaced by mutual understanding and human cooperation. Curiously, a vital part of human experience – learning to live together – has been badly neglected.

-Global Public Goods

8.2.3 Indicators of danger of breakdown of the State-machinery, according to the aforesaid report are:-

- Demographic pressures: high infant mortality, rapid changes in population, including massive refugee movements, high population density, youth bulge, insufficient food or access to safe water, ethnic groups sharing land, territory (i.e., groups' attachments to land), environment (i.e., the relationship between ethnic groups and their physical settings).
- A lack of democratic practices: criminalization or delegitimization of the State, or human rights violations.
- Regimes of short duration.
- Ethnic composition of the ruling elite differing from the population at large.
- Deterioration or elimination of public services.
- Sharp and severe economic distress: uneven economic development along ethnic lines and a lack of trade openness.
- A legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance.
- Massive, chronic, or sustained human flight.

8.2.4 Nearly every country might have at least one (if not more) of these characteristics. A critical mass of these symptoms could 'very well serve as a credible warning signal of developing problems'

8.2.5 The Report further says, "Four essential elements provide a framework for maintaining a just regime for internal stability: a corpus of laws that is legitimately derived and widely promulgated and understood; a consistent, visible, fair, and active network of police authority to enforce the laws (especially important at the local level); an independent, equitable, and accessible grievance redress system, including above all an impartial judicial system; and a penal system that is fair and prudent in meting out punishment. These basic elements are vitally significant yet hard to achieve, and they require constant attention through democratic processes."

8.2.6 It is said that "In our world of unprecedented levels of destructive weaponry and increased geographic and social proximity, competition between groups has become extremely dangerous. In the twenty first century, human survival may well depend on our ability to learn a new form of adaptation,

SecretOf Post-war Reconstruction of Europe

Witness the steps after the Second World War to lay the groundwork for today's flourishing European Union. Leaders such as Jean Monnet and George Marshall looked beyond both the wartime devastation and the enmities that had caused it – and envisioned a Europe in which regional cooperation would transcend adversarial boundaries and traditional rivalries. Correctly, they foresaw that large-scale economic cooperation would facilitate not only the post-war recovery but also the long-term prosperity that has helped Europe achieve a degree of peace and security once thought unattainable. Post-war reconstruction is an excellent example of building structural prevention of creating conditions that favour social and economic development and peaceful interaction.

one in which inter-group competition is largely replaced by mutual understanding and human cooperation.¹ Curiously, a vital part of human experience – learning to live together – has been badly neglected throughout the world” and that “A strong emphasis must be placed on freedom of the press – or the media in the broadest sense – with fair access for all parties, particularly for minority groups, and full freedom of political and cultural expression. This freedom also includes the opportunity to investigate governmental activities and to criticize all parties, even though the harshness of such criticism is often unpleasant and sometimes quite unfair.” (Carnegie Commission Report)

8.2.7 In the current processes of social change, unprecedented in India before, there ought to be democratic space for dissent and for resolution of conflicts at the interface between forces of change and forces of status quo. The Constitutional document contemplated a seamless wealth of continuity and change.

8.2.8 What merits a new dimension to the process of social-economic change within India are the global competition of market shares. It will become increasingly difficult for Governments in developing countries to protect job, wages and working conditions. Advances in technology in one area of the world can unintentionally contribute to the emergence of conflicts elsewhere. The effects of these are summed up in a statement in the Final Report on “Preventing Deadly Conflict” (December 1997) of Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. It says:-

¹ Kaul Iqbal, Isabell Granberg and Marc. A. Stern, ‘Global Public Goods’ (1999) Oxford University Press, Oxford.

“The world of next century will be markedly more crowded, interdependent economically, closely linked technologically, increasingly vulnerable ecologically, and progressively more interconnected culturally. Trends in this direction have long been apparent, but what has only recently come into sharper focus is the importance of managing the pace of change and its widespread repercussions. Contributing to this focus is the highly destructive power and universal availability of modern weaponry.”

8.2.9 The importance of peaceful management of social conflicts is in the fact that in the degree of manifestations of such dissent and disaffection in violence wherever political space is denied for such dissent and disaffection. Disillusionment and frustration stem from disenchantment with the institutions of democracy. They shake the bond that unite people; and generate bitterness and alienation. Eruption of violence is the result if remedial steps are denied for long.

8.2.10 Chemical and biological weapons pose new dangers to poor and rich countries alike. Disaffected groups may seek inexpensive weapons of mass destruction, some of which can be produced from ingredients normally sold for commercial purposes.

8.2.11 An awesome dimension of this finds mention in the Carnegie Commission Report. It says,

“An ounce of type-A botulinal toxin, properly dispersed, could kill every man, woman and child in North America.....Just eight ounces of the substance could kill every living creature on the planet.” Many lethal gases are colourless and odourless and can lead to immediate or slow, agonizing death for thousands. These weapons can be delivered in missiles or dropped from planes , exploded in ground ordnance, set in time-delay devices, released *via* remote control, or put in water supplies. Large concentrations of unsuspecting civilians, especially in urban settings, are vulnerable.*

8.2.12 What is needed is a combined effort of civil society initiatives, non-government organizations, villages leaders and the government and the readiness to recognize the significance and importance of early warning symptoms.

* Ron Purver, “The Threat of Chemical and Biological Terrorism,” *The Monitor : Non-Proliferation, Demilitarization and Arms Control* 3, No. 2 (Spring 1997), p.5

2[1] Osborne, D and Gaebler T (1992) Reinventing Government: how the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector

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1 Kaul Iqbal, Isabell Granberg and Marc. A. Stern, 'Global Public Goods' (1999) Oxford University Press, Oxford.

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