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GOOD GOVERNANCE

Every one of us expects and aspires that our government should be good and effective. In fact, we also know that it was for the purpose of securing conditions for safe and happy life that the state came into existence and its continuity is justified in terms of promoting and preserving the quality of life. Kautilya considered it as the bounden duty of the government to act in a manner that realizes the material, mental, moral and cultural well being of the people. It is in this context that the study of good governance has become very important in the study of political science. The lesson explains the meaning of good governance, governance and measures to overcome these hindrances as well as the role of citizens to ensure good governance.



Objectives

After studying this lesson, you will be able to

- explain the concept of good governance ;
- describe the major components or characteristics of good governance like Accountability, Openness, etc. ;
- discuss major hindrances to good governance like corruption, population growth and culture of violence ;
- appreciate the role of citizens in the process of good governance ;
- describe the ways to promote good governance like use of computers, the right to information and citizens' charter.

24.1 Meaning of Good Governance

In order to understand the concept of good governance we shall first have to know the meaning of governance. What is governance? It has been defined as the use of power and authority by those in government to provide goods and services to the people to uphold the common good and fulfill the aspirations and needs of the common man. Governance, therefore, is concerned with power, strategies, policies, plans and projects that aim at improving the substance or quality of life. The people expect their government to proceed

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with its tasks in a way that maximum results follow with minimum cost or investment. Governance becomes good when the decisions and actions of the government are based on peoples' consent, legitimacy and accountability. Thus good governance is concerned with high quality in governance. All sections of the society today judge their government by their governance. Earlier, coercive state was considered to be most effective instrument of good governance. In ancient and medieval India a king, though authoritarian, was supposed to be conscientious and responsive to the needs of the subjects.

In modern times, good governance implies enlightened citizenship as well as accountable and constitutional government. Good governance is also a key developmental concept today. The debate only relates to the question of how to bring about development. It is a concept that is inclusive and positive in nature. It is inclusive in so far as it aims at involvement of people in the process of development. Thus development is not merely people-oriented but people-centered. It is positive to the extent of building up new levels of skills, knowledge and support for development. Let us now discuss some of the features or characteristics of good governance.

24.2 Features of Good Governance

The next important question in the discussion on good governance is: what are the basic features or elements of good governance? A number of reports and studies have sought to identify a number of features. In the scheme of Kautilya, for instance, the following features formed part of good governance:

- Law and order
- People caring administration
- Justice and rationality as the basis of decision
- Corruption free governance

The World Bank in its reports of 1989 and 1992, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Commission on Global Governance (1995), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 1997 have all dealt with the attributes of good governance extensively.

These concerns of good governance have been very clearly voiced in Asian Development Basic report in the shape of the following questions :

- Do people fully participate in governance?
- Are people fully informed?
- Do people make decisions or can they at least hold the decision makers accountable?
- Are the women equal partners with men in Governance?
- Are the needs of the poor and disadvantaged met?
- Are peoples' human rights guaranteed?
- Are the needs of the future generation taken into account in current policies?
- Do people own their structures of governance?



24.2.1 Accountability

It has been emphasized almost unanimously that governance has to be based on the principle of accountability of those who are responsible for it. Accountability, in fact, implies that the bureaucracy should be answerable for what they do or don't do? This is sought to be administered in a parliamentary system through questions, debates, discussions, budgetary approvals, committees and such other methods by parliament. The executive is to be responsive to the people through their representatives. It is, however, also true that this mechanism has increasingly proved to be ineffective for reasons of decline in the quality and character of debates and the representatives, transformation of parliamentary system into a cabinet system of government, criminalization of politics and fragmentation of society and politics. Secondly, accountability is also ensured through judicial review of the governmental decisions or laws. The citizens are also seeking judicial intervention through Public Interest Litigation (PIL) for prompt action on certain issues affecting the common life. Such practices are in vogue, directly or indirectly in several countries like New Zealand, Canada, Australia and India. Recently, a more effective mode of public accountability is the system of citizens' charter. The idea is to change the bureaucratic culture to include people friendly attitudes instead of patriarchal, indifferent, casual and callous behavior to citizens. The old feudal value must give place to modern democratic values in bureaucracy.

An accountable system of governance, thus, presupposes the following functional and behavioral traits of the civil servants:

- Achievement oriented behaviour,
- Judicious use of authority,
- Pursuit of happiness of the people,
- Use of reason and experience as the basis of decision,
- Shirking of work to be identified and punished,
- Time bound implementation of Policies and Plans,
- Strength of character, intelligence, perseverance and extensivity of civil servants,
- Uprightness, friendliness and firmness of devotion in dealing with others,
- Capacity for doing a work which should be supplemented by the skill-in-action and question for perfection.

In every country a number of institutional and legal arrangements have been made to secure the prevalence of the characteristics of an accountable administration. For example, in India setting up of institutions like Central Vigilance Commission and national commissions for Women, Schedules Tribes, Schedules Castes, Minorities and Backward Classes, National Labour Commission, National Commissions for Human Rights and Minorities, and Comptroller and Auditor General of India are some such efforts or steps to administer social, legal constitutional and systemic commitments in bureaucracy. It seeks to remove the tendencies of administrative bias, corruption, alienation and secrecy. The aim is to make administration poor-sensitive, gender-sensitive, and more sensitive to the demands and grievances of the public. The purpose is to prevent undesirable acts or behavior and to promote efficiency and integrity of public servants. The Governments have also initiated a number of other measures to see the actual operations of accountability in administration.

MODULE - 5

Major Contemporary Issues



Notes

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A reference can be made to the following :

- Management by Objective (MBO)
- Machinery for the redress of public grievances
- Recognition of the Right to Information
- E Governance and Information Technology use
- Democratization and Decentralisation of power
- Empowerment of the marginalized groups, especially women
- Fair Competition between public and private sectors
- Review of a number of laws, rules and regulations

In order to establish accountability at the level of local Government and empowerment of the marginalized groups, Indian Parliament passed 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts in 1992 providing for among other things 33.3% reservation for women and for scheduled castes/tribes in proportion to their population, decentralized development planning, enhancing financial abilities through increased financial powers and support to the local bodies. Decentralization and democratization thus are made benchmarks of development administration. Moreover, 79 ministries and departments of the central government are operating the structure of citizens' charter. This charter is an account of :

- Time limits and standards for services
- Avenues of grievance redressal and
- Putting in place monitoring system and independent scrutiny of implementation of the charter.

A number of States and Union Government have created special agencies and units to deal with the grievances of the public emanating mainly from non-reachability of the officials, absence of a time frame for disposal of the cases and unsympathetic attitude of public officials. Accountability is related to the system of openness and transparency. If the decisions are not taken in a transparent and open manner, one can question the impartiality of such a decision. There shall be much less place for favouritism, nepotism and prejudice in the treatment of the citizens. Indian Parliament has enacted the Right to Information Act to facilitate openness in government. Central ministries and departments have set up facilitation counters with wide publicity for the purpose of information and making complaints.



Intext Questions 24.1

Fill in blanks :

1. Governance is concerned with formulation of _____ to improve _____ of life of the people.
(strategy/ Revenue Collection Scheme; Quality/ Family Relations)
2. Kautilya's scheme of good governance is based on _____ administration.
(People caring/ Authoritarian and arbitrary).



3. The concept of good governance became popular in administrative discussion with the publication of _____ (World Bank Report 1989 & 1992/ Mechiavali's the Prince).
4. Governance is good if it based on _____ (People's consent/Guardian Like behaviour of the civil servants).

24.3 Hindrances to Good Governance

Countries at the international and national levels have shown much seriousness about good governance. But how is it that they have not been finding it so easy to provide to all their citizens a just, equal and free social order. What are the factors that are blocking the road to good governance? There are a number of factors responsible for the failure to achieve the desired ends, but the following are the major threats to good governance :

- (A) Corruption
- (B) Population Growth
- (C) Culture of Violence

24.3.1 Corruption

Corruption is an illegal use of authority for personal gains. Corruption is a universal disease causing harm to the people and government almost everywhere in the world. However, in the countries like India it has assumed the shape of a cancer. Since the days of Kautilya the issue of ethics and integrity in government has been a major concern. At times the political leaders have expressed their helplessness to contain corruption by arguing that corruption is a worldwide phenomenon. But the question of probity and corruption is getting a little more attention than earlier. The exposure of the scams and the demand for action against the corruption is now increasing. But no step to fight corruption will be effective unless all forms of corruption – political, economic, moral and administrative are fought with a sense of commitment and will. In order to meet the threat of corruption to good governance, the following steps are necessary:

1. Breaking the nexus between politicians, bureaucrats and criminals.
2. Ensuring a cost-effective administration of justice.
3. Setting up of Public interest litigation courts at the national, state and local levels.
4. Making right to information more effective.
5. Strengthening law enforcement agencies in terms of autonomy, skills, attitudinal change and awareness of the social problems.
6. Forfeiture of the properties of the corrupt immediately after the charges are framed. Such a property can be released only after the person is proved innocent.
7. Improving bureaucratic functioning by way of simplification of rules, regulations and procedures of work.
8. Mobilizing the society to support the system of rule of law.
9. Putting an end to the system of patronage and nepotism from government organizations.

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24.3.2 Population Growth

Good governance is concerned not merely with effective laws, procedures and practices, but also concerned with mobilization and utilization of country's social and economic resources in a manner that benefits all the members of the society. However, one finds that development efforts have failed to eliminate poverty, unemployment and illiteracy and to secure to all 'citizens equitable access to even primary education and health, food, water and a house. From a population of about 35 crores at the time of India's Independence to more than 100 crores now is a cause for concern. Though some states in India such as Kerala, TamilNadu, Goa and Manipur have already achieved population stabilisation, there are still some states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar which will take a long time to stabilize their population. The phenomenal growth in numbers requires resources to sustain them. There is an increasing demand on land, air and water resources. Providing adequate educational and health facilities, food, shelter and employment to the growing numbers is a difficult task before any government in India. Look at our large cities where concentration of a very large population poses many problems of health and sanitation, water supply, roads, and electricity. In fact, in many respects cities like Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi are increasingly becoming ungovernable. The rapidly increasing population is, in fact, a means to a breakdown of good governance. Population can be stabilized through spread of education, awareness, health education, people's involvement and development etc.

24.3.3 Culture of Violence

Resort to illegal force is considered to be a law and order problem. But when one looks at it from the point of view of the principles of good governance, it becomes clear that peace and order is the first step to development. Strikes, riots, terror attacks onerant of this harmful culture of violence. The government can focus on economic, social and political development if it is free from the concerns of threat to public safety and security in terms of life and property. Moreover, terrorism is also the greatest threat to the rule of law because terror replaces the law or seeks to subvert the law. Terrorism is a hindrance to progress. No industrialist would be willing to invest in an area, which is affected by violence and terrorist activities. This produces an adverse impact on employment, health, education and the provision of other services to the people in the long run. The social life also comes to a halt and people become almost in house prisoners or suffer from mental agonies of different types if they live under the shadow of violence and terrorism. The issue of human rights also comes to the fore. Terrorists seldom respect the human rights of the common man. But when the government uses brutal force to contain terrorism, at times human rights of common citizens are violated by the state police. It requires a clear vision, courage and understanding to deal with this menace through dialogue with the violators of law, redressal of their genuine grievances, involvement of the neighbours and wider international governments in the fight against terrorism.



Intext Questions 24.2

Fill in the blanks :

1. Corruption is an _____ use of authority for personal benefits (legal/ illegal).
2. Corruption is concerned with _____ in public life (secrecy/ probity)



3. Corruption can be reduced by _____ (simplification/ reviving of Rules and Regulations)
4. Population has been stabilized in _____ (Uttar Pradesh/ Kerala)
5. Violence is the greatest threat to _____ (Rule of Law/ Police).

24.4 Measures to Establish Good Governance

One can draw a long list of the measures to realize the goals of good governance. Let us discuss two measures viz. ensure people's participation and the use of computers and information technology, for an efficient, effective, honest, transparent and law abiding system of governance.

24.4.1 Peoples Participation for Good Governance

People's participation is given increasing priority in the scheme of governance. It is recognized that people's involvement in decision-making and decision implementation would act as :

- a check on indifferent and inefficient bureaucracy. In other words people could act as pressure on administration to act and act in time.
- Instruments for a responsive and accountable administration.
- a medium of development administration and self-government.
- a mobiliser and user of local resources for local development.

The people can perform this role either by becoming a member of any social organization or interest and pressure groups or welfare organization or a political party or by becoming a part of bureaucracy and government at national, regional or local levels. The governments are seeking to involve people by the democratic decentralization-the panchayats and municipalities or by association in advisory or consultative committees and institutions. People also organize themselves to demand a policy to meet the expectations of the citizens. They organize as groups to support a people friendly decision of the government as they also oppose anti people measures taken by it. One can mention the name of organizations like: Narmada Bachao Andolan, Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Peoples' Initiative, Help Age India, Common Cause Shiksha Bachao Andolan etc. in this context. People, thus, can play a significant role as opinion makers both in favour and against the government and administration. At times, individuals tend to work for the resolution of conflicts within the society or between the society and the state. Individuals can also act as a link between the people and the bureaucracy by supplying the information about the action / reaction of the people and their roles. By such feedback the civil servants can remedy the situation. Since the levels of education, information, knowledge of the government, political and the economic status condition people's participation, a large number of local people remain outside the system of governance. Therefore, our country has made deliberate attempt to include the poorer sections in the process of decision-making and development. Reservation of 33.3% seats for women in the panchayati raj and the urban local government is one such step. There is a provision for reservation of seats for SCs/STs in the proportion to their population in the areas of local government. For instance, if there are 20% Scheduled Castes in a district then 20% seats shall be reserved for them in the Zila parishad. Similarly, if the

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number of Scheduled tribes in 1% in a village than 1% seats shall be reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in the Gram Panchayat. Reservation for the backward classes has been left to the state government. It may not be wrong, however, to state that there is still a gap between what is provided and what is implemented in the area of the people's participation in governance, especially in the local governments. It is only a handful of people who appear to be empowered.

24.5 Role of Computer and Information Technology (IT) as means of good governance

From the discussion held so far you must have noted that the essence of good governance is being people-friendly and power-sharing system on the one hand and being responsive, accessible, moral, transparent and corruption free system on the other. The use of computers and information technology is visualized as a very effective tool of good governance. It seeks to improve.

- Delivery of services to the people at low cost.
- Empowerment of people through dissemination of information.
- Openness and transparency in the working of government.
- Innovations and introduction of new ideas and concepts in the performance by the government and the people.
- Effective linkages between citizens and the administration
- Comprehensive monitoring and assessment of the performance of the government.

Computers, thus, can increase people's reach to the information relating to rules, regulations or procedures or about the welfare and development scheme of the government or about the welfare and development scheme of the government or information about weather and climate that can be used by farmers and citizens. It is said corruption is the product of face-to-face meeting between the giver and receiver of a decision. Computers can reduce their personal contacts to curb corruption. For example, a farmer can get his land record copy on the computer, a citizen can pay any bill or tax without actually going to the cash counter and suffering the agony of long queue or losing the earnings of the day. The Gyandoot programme being implemented in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh in India provides the number of services like online registration, copies of land record, agriculture produce auction center to the people at a nominal price. The list may further include facilities like eligibility rules and application for loans; prices of seeds, fertilizers and tools, the power cut schedule, availability of diesel etc. Such a system would cut the administrative delays, which is another source of corruption. It would reduce time and financial cost of the facility as the citizens would get them through computer at their doorsteps. The government of Karnataka is using computers for transparency in educational admission and recruitment, transfers and payment of salaries of teachers. Computers are also used to know the implementation of the instructions or orders of the chief minister. It is also being used for the management of the constituency and prepare summarized data on major projects in health, housing and other social welfare schemes.

In Kerala a computerized project known as FRIENDS (Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for disbursement of services) is working to provide a range of public services



through computers to the people. The central government in India has also introduced computerized system of administration in various departments and ministries like Railways, Human Resource Development, Rural Development, Planning Commission and UGC.



Intext Questions 24.3

Fill in the blanks :

1. Good governance can be secured through _____ (people's involvement/ Civil Service alone).
2. Use of the computer makes the delivery of the services _____ (costly / cheap).
3. Madhya Pradesh in India provides a number of services to the people through _____ (Gyandoot Programme/ Gyan Darshan)



What You Have Learnt

You have studied in the lesson the meaning and the concepts of good governance, the features or attributes of good governance, the extent or level of their existence at the national and other lower levels. You have also reflected on the problems in implementing the ideals or goals of good governance, mainly posed by the population explosion, violence, terrorism and corruption. The ways adopted by different governments to overcome their hindrances has also been a part of your study. The special focus again is on the people's participation, prevention of corruption and computer use as means of promoting good governance.



Terminal Exercises

1. Discuss the meaning and the concept of good governance.
2. Identify three features of good governance. Explain the importance of accountability in good governance.
3. Discuss the main hindrances to good governance.
4. Describe measures for good governance, the government of India has taken.



Answers to Intext Questions

24.1

1. (A) strategy (B) Quality
2. People caring
3. World Bank Report 1989 & 1992
4. People's consent

Major Contemporary Issues

24.2

1. Illegal
2. Probity
3. Simplification
4. Review
5. Rule of Law

24.3

1. People's involvement
2. Cheap
3. Gyandoot Programme

Hints for Terminal Exercises

1. Refer to Section 24.1
2. Refer to Section 24.2
3. Refer to Section 24.3
4. Refer to Section 24.4

Let us ponder over adolescence issues

What are HIV and AIDS?

HIV IS:
**Human
Immunodeficiency
Virus**

AIDS IS:
**Acquired
Immunodeficiency
Syndrome**

HIV weakens the body's defence or immune system. AIDS is the late stage of HIV infection, when the immune system of the infected person has been completely destroyed, and when the person contracts a variety of diseases and infections. AIDS is thus not one particular isolated disease but a syndrome, which means that it shows a variety of symptoms related to different disorders and diseases. AIDS may develop as early as 6 months after HIV infection in a severe case, or as late as 8–10 years after infection.