

Issues of Good Governance in South Asia

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Abstract

In the contemporary era, the significance of governance has elevated as far as the developmental discourse is concerned. Good Governance is regarded as pre-requisite for a peaceful open world. The political regime, systems and procedures for exercising authority; and capacity of governments are the key dimensions of governance. Thus it is also considered as a crucial element in formulating any development strategy. The article will carry an in-depth study of what the term 'Good Governance' really means and its key dimensions viz-a-viz the developmental course. This article is a study on the governance issues which South Asian region faces. It seeks out to classify the key problems that are widespread to the region and concludes with a common agenda for good governance (without going into the detail of each country separately but the governance indicators of each South Asian Countries are provided at the end). The constraints and problems of poor governance will be studied in detail. On the basis of various strands of issues, the article winds up that the spirit of governance lies in delivering to the citizens of South Asia, the civil liberties, the rights, the provisions, preserved in the constitution of each of these countries as regards to the political, economic and social life and identifies major problems in the accomplishment of those aspirations.

Key Words: Governance, South Asia, Trans-national, Weak States, Rule-Structure, Gross Domestic Product, Purchasing Power Parity, Floor-Crossing, Politicization of Justice

Introduction

Etymologically, "governance can be traced back to the Greek verb *kubernan* (to pilot or steer) and was used by Plato with regard to the designing of a system of rule" (Kjaer, 2004: 3). In simple word, Governance is the preservation of prescribed and unofficial political set of laws of the game. It refers to those actions that engross setting the rules for the implementation of power and resolving differences over such rules (Hyden, 1999: 185). But the new use of governance does not highlight state actors and institutions as the single applicable institutions

and actors in the authoritative share of ideals (Easten, 1965). “Every part of them, to some level, emphasize on the role of networks in the quest of universal aspirations; these networks could be inter-governmental or inter-organizational (Rhodes, 1997a: 15)¹; they could be trans-national (Rosenau, 1995: 13)² or they may perhaps be networks of conviction and reciprocity crossing the state-society divide” (Hyden, 1999: 185)³.

Governance theory is largely accompanied by institutional transformation and it occupies human group. This presumption therefore establishes a component of change which is often missing in institutionalism. Ideally, governance merges rule-structures with agency. From an institutional standpoint, governance is about touching ‘the frameworks within which citizens and officials proceeds and politics transpire, and which contour the distinctiveness and institutions of civil society (March & Olsen, 1995: 6). A wide-ranging institutional classification would hence denote governance as “the setting of rules, the appliance of rules and the enforcement of rules” (Feeny, 1993: 172). Dwivedi (2007: 170) states that “Good” is a value-laden expression which entails a contrast between two things or methods by using some standard of measure. A government or a system of governance is thought to be good if it reveals certain basic characteristics recommended by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which puts forward the most comprehensive definition and an idealistic model of good governance and i-e; Good governance is, among other things, participatory, transparent and accountable.

Good governance was launched on the agenda by the World Bank (1989) since it necessitated to explicate why a number of countries remained unsuccessful to build up, regardless of the reality that they had adopted the Neo-Liberal Adjustment policies imposed on them by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. The response was ‘bad governance’, implicit as self-serving public officials and corruption in the public service (Moore, 1993: 60). Thus the recipe for the developing countries was to increase transparency and accountability in the public sector. The overall model to be ‘transferred’ was one of expenditure, reduction, privatization and public sector reform, i-e; not only less, but also better government (Kjaer, 2004: 139). Still, governance is an uncomplicated notion fundamentally, ‘good governance is good government’. The idea is related to the

¹He refers to governance as a vogue word for reforming the public sector. Yet governance is also used in other contexts

²Talking about governance, he mostly does not refer to public sector reform but rather to the emergence of global political problem, requiring global solutions

³He relates governance to the theories of development and democratization in Third World

eminence of liaison between government and the citizens whom it subsists to dole out and defend” (Governance in Asia...1999).

Governance in weak states⁴ is often considered as an uphill task. Economic governance in these states is about managing institutions that have often developed in such a way that they constitute obstacles to development and they may be difficult to change for states is very different from that of the developed economies (Kjaer, 2004: 140). About 50 years back, the political economists started to presage countries in the developing world, that were initiating the practice of ‘premeditated development’, that soaring rates of growth can, indeed, frequently carry out and generate societal apprehensions which cannot be immersed by feeble political systems (Burki, 2011).

As an analytical concept, the governance was introduced as an extension of the institutionalist approach to democratization. The governance concept is relevant to a wider range of regime types than that of democracy because it shifts the attention away from a pre-defined set of ideal institutions towards examining the ways in which legitimacy for the public realm is affected (Hyden, 1992). The governance in democratization theory is accordingly, in a sense, meta-policy-making; it talks about the setting of rules that steer rule-making (Hyden, 1999: 2002).

Characteristics of Good Governance

Good governance is composed of the following components;

- (a) Public involvement
- (b) Conformity to law
- (c) Transparency
- (d) Receptiveness
- (e) Harmony among diverse and conflicting interests
- (f) Impartiality guaranteed to all individuals
- (g) Effectual, well-organized, conscientious and responsible public institutions and the statecraft
- (h) Strategic revelation of the leaders towards wide range long-standing perceptions on sustainable human growth;
- (i) The office of governance where governing elites offer their lives for service to the public and where amoralism does not control supreme. Good governance and sustainable human growth, particularly for rising nations, also necessitates meticulous efforts for eradicating poverty, supporting livelihoods, gratifying

⁴ The concept of weak states refers to the states in parts of Africa and South Asia that lack the ability to provide political goods to their populations. For details see Jackson, Robert H. & Rosberg, Carl G. (1982). *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*. Berkely, CA: University of California Press

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indispensable requirements, and presenting an administrative system, which is hygienic and open. It is imperative that these characteristics are not only preserved in a constitutional manuscript, however, also are practiced (Dwivedi, 2007).

Modes of Good Governance

Based on above, “Dwivedi (2007) proposes following four models of Good Governance;

- (1) The Public Service Model of Good Government
- (2) Judicial Model
- (3) The New Public Management Model of Good Governance
- (4) The Deontological or Spiritual Model of Good Government.

These models, alone, do not embody an inclusive and a precise narrative of carrying better governance; rather they present constructive means to deem different options for further study. The first three models do accentuate on the final outcomes. Nonetheless, as ends and means both are the two sides of the same coin, and a concrete inter-connection between the two guarantees the conservation of good administration, while the fourth, a morality-driven model reinforces those large ideologies that must govern the governmental conduct, since they smudge the course towards which those who govern must conduit their acts if they are to serve humanity. Spirituality, drawing from such fundamentals, accordingly, offers an imperative pedestal to the governing procedure. The assurance and conviction in liberal-democracy can be protected only when the governing process reveals a higher moral character, originating from the extent of ethical and spiritual compassion”.

Measures to Evaluate Governance Situation

There are following six major measures to evaluate the situation of governance

1. Degree of denial
2. Representative character of institutions
3. Stage of decentralization of governing bodies
4. Recognition of primary and fundamental rights
5. Security of life and liberty
6. Uneven development and access to services and increasing income disparities

what poor governance denotes for general public, is the schools devoid of teachers, courts lacking justice and local bureaucrats demanding bribes at every turn.

Good Governance- A South Asian Perspective

South Asian countries⁵ share a common history of colonial dominance under the British Raj (Brass, 2010: 1), though Nepal and Bhutan have not been proper colonies and Afghanistan too is an exception. Apart from that, these nations differ in terms of geography, territorial and population size, religion, culture and language (Haque, 2003: 943). The political governance has also been entirely different in all these countries.

The Human Development South Asia Report (1999) states that, “South Asia presents a fascinating combination of many contradictions. It has governments that are high on governing and low on serving; It has parliaments that are elected by the poor but aid the rich; and society that asserts the rights of some but perpetuates exclusion for others. Despite a marked improvement in the lives of a few, there are many in South Asia who had been forgotten by formal institutions of governance. These are the poor, the downtrodden and the most vulnerable of the society, suffering from acute deprivation on account of their income, caste, creed, gender or religion. Their fortunes have not moved with those of the privileged few and this in itself is a deprivation of a depressing nature”.

South Asia has a literally fine track evidence of democratic institutions, however history divulges that the democracy cherished by people in their particular countries has not added a great deal to change and is not at all encouraging to the wellbeing of the people. It is even more pathetic to know that hundreds of billions of dollars given by international donors as aid to the poor, has been unsuccessful to attain the target population except in trickle and had produced instead, an erroneous group of beneficiaries. South Asia is in front of a calamity in governance that, if left unrestricted, can close down the region’s democratic growth and the economic social comfort of its heaving millions. Approximately all South Asian countries face prevalent corruption, social segregation and ineffective/non pro-people bureaucracies, which hamper all programs of progress together with efforts for a vigorous and advantageous open planet. For instance, Bangladesh’s state-owned telephone company for a decade is putting off the laying of optical fiber network to form a global Internet doorway for the country fearing loss of income. This in turn deterred Bangladesh to turn out to be a main software exporting country (Masud and Shamsul , 1999). South Asia is home to not only “one of the oldest civilizations of the world but having large population, growing poverty, weak governance structures and feeble democratic institutions, increasing militarization and sectarianism”. Most of the countries in the region have experienced colonization before independence and becoming sovereign states. The governments in South Asia have followed national security through caustic military apparatus, rather than hunted security for citizens by

⁵Since Afghanistan has joined SAARC, therefore, is considered as South Asian Nation

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actualizing their creative potential. The region currently spends around USD 15 billion annually on the military, reducing the budget available, for example, for poverty reduction. “Transversely the regional democracy has been undermined, and the corruption has augmented. The economic liberalization and globalization have added to an additional increase in income disparities, whereby the more advantaged groups have enjoyed the fruits of development by controlling the partial resources. The rule of law in South Asia is extensively overlooked and diluted with regard to the economic rights and egalitarianism for all, regardless of the fact that SAARC member states are signatories of international mechanism. Lawlessness plays a prevailing role in endorsing bad governance in most South Asian countries. Accordingly, common masses have been rundown of civil liberties, security and socio-economic rights. Its political system has proved a ruinous in so far as major changes in its governance are concerned and the reasons being are, disbelieves of political parties and their leaders is pervasive crosswise South Asia” (Nepali, 2009).

Rehman (2000: a) writes that “South Asia has the cohesion of a general strand of ‘mis-governance’. It is stuffed with models of poor governance, which grind down the power of communities and individuals, particularly the poor and destituted to congregate their fundamental human needs (An inefficient deployment of resources and crippling debt burdens and in some cases defense expenditures). Social divisions drawn on ethnic, sectarian and regional lines, as reflected in many intra-state conflicts. arbitrary law enforcement resulting from weakness of institutions in some cases failed political leadership”.

Three-Stage Process of South Asian Governance

South Asian mis-governance could be defined in a three-stage process,;

- (1) Corrupt governments exploit the majority through deceptive measures like distorted electoral process, misinformation, manipulation and blackmail.
- (2) Majority is deprived of political power and fundamental rights through denial of adequate access to resources.
- (3) Disillusionment of the majority after falling into a state of helplessness (Masud, 1999).

Historical and Current Economic Situation

In order to understand the system of governance in South Asia, one needs to understand how it developed historically and what were the normative sources for its present state of affairs. What is most characteristic of South Asian governance is extreme centralization of the authority, personalized leadership, and patriarchy that have great implications for the system of governance from policy making to interpersonal relationships. Rationality as it is understood in the West, based on principles of neutrality, universalization, impartiality, and formalism has not taken deep root in the South Asian context. Instead, strong loyalties towards family,

caste and kinship, or towards people from the same region or political party are observed. (Jamil, et; al). Bloom & Rosenberg (2011) write that “Along with the large scale poverty in the region, the gross domestic product (GDP)/capita in the region is low. At \$2,484 in 2008 (in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms and constant 2005 international dollars), the region lies at almost exactly half the income per person of the World Bank’s low- and middle-income countries. The economically best-off countries in the region are Maldives (\$5,169), Bhutan (\$4,395), and Sri Lanka (\$4,215). In the second tier lie India (\$2,721) and Pakistan (\$2,344). Bangladesh (\$1,233), Nepal (\$1,020), and Afghanistan (\$1,019) are by far the poorest. Beyond this diversity of incomes, there are also wide ranges of economic well-being within the various countries. The Per capita income growth rates have mottled radically across countries and in due course. The region as a whole has been growing faster economically since the 1980s, a fact that is heavily affected by India’s high share (74% in 2010) of South Asia’s population, coupled with India’s economic growth trajectory. South Asia’s GDP per capita growth was low in the 1970s, higher in the 1980s and 1990s, and higher still in the 2000s”.

The transformation might well function as a considerable aspect in spiraling the region’s economies, however, there is a dire need that the policies are at right position in order to guarantee the pervasive prolific employment and in this regard, the factors absolutely distant from demographics might play an influential role. The Economic forecasts can not be made easily, since they bank on a much wider range of factors. Nevertheless, the impending demographic shifts present most of South Asia an opening to gain from a demographic dividend. Policies that effectively endorse prolific employment are indispensable if this surplus is to be recognized. Other factors are prone to play even bigger roles in shaping the region’s economic future, nevertheless, making an effort to take benefit of the demographically obsessed prospect is a prudent shift, particularly for the reason that increasing work chances and enhancing the population’s health and education are favorable in their own right and would be good policy choices even in the absence of a demographic spur.

A Human Development Commission (HDC) Report states that “South Asia is one of the most poorly administrated regions across the globe, with the omission of an unvoiced majority, unbalanced political regimes and deprived financial administration. The system of governance has become impassive and immaterial to the needs and apprehensions of the masses” (Masud, 1999). Therefore, “there is substantial demographic and interrelated economic heterogeneity both across countries and within them in South Asia. That heterogeneity has been and will prolong to be a dominant driver of economic disparity. In addition, one might project that the lack of common conditions advocates that South Asian leaders will persist to voice broadly contrasting interests. This creates a challenge to South Asia’s coherence as an economic and political power” (Bloom & Rosenberg, 2011).

In modern years, there is an promising agreement among progress and development economists that good governance and sound institutions are a

precondition for persistent expansion in living standards. Nevertheless evaluating governance creates numerous troubles. This is a very large subject and there is no consensus on either of the indicators or modes of gauging governance. There has also been disparity over who is best positioned to offer insights on the worth of governance in a particular country and how to compare it with other countries? The problems associated with governance measurement are well summarized by Court et al (2002) as “Measuring issues of governance poses challenges that are not encountered in the economic and social development fields. It is very difficult to find and agree upon the indicators of a political macro phenomenon like governance. There exists no regular, systematic and cohesive data on the concept of governance. There is very little objective data for many countries and even less that is comparative in a meaningful way”.

Historically, the practice and concept of governance and public administration have strong basis in South Asia. From the time of Kautilya to the reign of Mughal emperors and to the British Raj, public administration and governance have had different connotations leading to different organizations forms and functions, administrative structure, nature of authority, and political systems. The period before the advent of the British rule was the rule of kings. The colonization of most of South Asia by the British ushered a new dimension of governance. Prior to the British rule, the concept of public service based on depersonalization of the sovereign had no roots in India (Jamil 2007, p. 14).

Constraints to Good Governance In South Asia

Pakistan and Bangladesh, both have experienced military as well as civilian rule while in India, there have been democratic governments throughout its history. Maldives had first multi-part presidential elections in the year 2008 while Nepal has now abolished monarchism and opted for federal democracy, although framing of the constitution for ‘New’ Nepal has been challenging. Sri Lanka, on the other hand demonstrated a stable political development and a peaceful transition to its independence from the British Raj, politics in recent years has been turbulent after the defeat of the Tamil separatist groups. New groups (e.g., the university teachers) with new demands are putting the elected government under constant pressure. Afghanistan has entered in a new phase in post-2014 after NATO withdrawal and elections with new elected government. Bhutan, despite ethnic unrests, has been the only South Asian country with a record of political stability but is also the only country in the region with a monarchical rule (Jamil, Askvik & Dhakal, 2013). What has been the common trend in these South Asian countries is a quest for better and sound governance and this has been on the policy agenda of different governments. Different reforms, institutional changes and creation of new acts, policies, and new organizations have been trying to streamline public administration and governance mechanisms both at the central and local levels. In spite of many experiments and innovative efforts, governance has remained weak, unresponsive to citizen needs, centralized, rigid, non-transparent, and

unaccountable. These have made wicked problems such as corruption, poor service quality and delivery, energy crisis, sustainable development, unemployment, degrading food and human security, and safety nets more precarious.

1. Growing Regional Disproportion

It is one of the major constraint with regard to the notion of 'Good Governance' in South Asia. South Asian region (including Afghanistan as a member of SAARC), consists of roughly 1.5 billion people which is almost "1/4th of the world. It is more than 3 times than the total population of EU (25 States) which lives in half of China's land area. Here is the largest concentration of world's poor numbering 500 million or South Asia's 1/3rd. There are divergent estimates of income also. South Asia's 5% benefit from high middle class living which, as per purchasing power parity, compete with the EU average. Nevertheless, income difference is not the core problem of South Asia. It is only one indicator of the greatest disease of acute poverty that this region has been suffering from since the late 1940s when the British Colonial Rule was formally over" (Masud & Shamsul, 2004).

Regardless of the current development and poverty decline, "South Asia still has almost 400 million poor people (out of a population of 1.37 billion). The Sub-Continent has less elites of very rich people and a big and emergent middle class. South Asia has almost one half of the world's poor although it has only 20% of the world's population. Poverty is a dilemma in South Asia owing to the population twist on limited land and other resources, and fragile economic growth caused by flawed government policies and corruption.

Poverty is not merely prevalent however ever more rigorous in particular, lagging regions. Not only these regions poorer nevertheless their growth rates are considerably slower than the better-off regions. Regional discrepancies in income and poverty outcomes are not weird to a large country like India. Sri Lanka, a much smaller economy, illustrates a distressing regional gap in income and poverty. The Western Province, led by Colombo, has 30% of the country's population although it accounts for 47% of national GDP and poverty in the Western province, at 11%, is less than half the national poverty rate of 23%. Moreover, most of Sri Lanka's growth in the past decade was concentrated in this one province: the Western Province's share of GDP rose from 40 to 47% in 10 years.

Even within sub-regions, there is considerable variation. In Pakistan's Punjab province, Central and Northern districts are much better off than the Southern districts. With higher educational standards and better infrastructure, the better off districts draw more investment and hence grow more rapidly than the Southern districts. Asia's high and rising disparity might itself proceed as a brake on future growth and poverty diminution.

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First, the higher the inequality in a country, the harder it is for growth to reduce poverty. This is why Sri Lanka, which has the highest Gini coefficient in South Asia (World Bank 2005), had such feeble poverty reduction despite nearly 5% average annual growth.

Second, the inequity might replicate deformation in the economy in addition to the asymmetrical power relations, both of which diminish development. The disproportion is often the manifestation of incarceration of the political system by certain ethnic factions or castes, who then effect the system by providing private benefits to their own group, rather than public goods which engender economic development. Many of India's lagging states, such as Bihar, fit this narrative.

Third, the expanding discrimination following the market-oriented pro-growth policies might extract a repercussion against these strategies, occasionally leading to the destructive policies that decline growth.

Fourth, if disparity between regions gets higher above a certain threshold, it can trigger a brutal clash which, sequentially, can cause decades of abridged growth.

The gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Poverty is highly visible alongside affluence which indicates that the system of governance is slow to respond to this disparity.

2013 ranking of countries from richest to the poorest, according to the Gross Domestic product (GDP) based on Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) per capita

| No. | Country | 2013 | Estimates Start After 2013 |
|-----|-------------|----------|----------------------------|
| 92 | Maldives | 9,579.23 | 2006 |
| 107 | Bhutan | 7,187.72 | 0 |
| 111 | Sri Lanka | 6,550.22 | 2011 |
| 130 | India | 4,060.22 | 2010 |
| 138 | Pakistan | 2,969.68 | 2011 |
| 151 | Bangladesh | 2,174.32 | 2010 |
| 166 | Nepal | 1,347.62 | 2011 |
| 175 | Afghanistan | 1,072.19 | 2007 |

Source:-

Aridas, Tina & Pasquali, Valentina. (2013, June 14). *The World's Richest and Poorest countries*. Global Finance

<https://www.gfmag.com/global-data/economic-data/worlds-richest-and-poorest-countries>

2. Population Strain

The growing population of the entire region has built up a lot of pressure on the existing land and other resources viz-a-viz good governance. Bangladesh's situation seems the most frantic. Bangladesh is the second most densely populated country in the world (Singapore, being first). For instance, Bangladesh has an average of 950 persons per square kilometer. More than 60% of its people are peasants. The most important industries are textiles and the processing of agricultural products

(<http://www.cotf.edu/earthinfo/sasia/SAeco.html>). South Asia has always presented exceedingly divergent economic metaphors ranging from tremendous wealth to intense poverty.

3. Paternalism

Paternalism in South Asia is founded on age-old values, deeply rooted and governs interpersonal relationships. It has a rural base and evolved for centuries to shape the social, economic, and political lives in the region. Governance in such a system is informal and hierarchic and based on family, caste, and kinship lineage. Unconditional loyalty, obedience, and trust are important qualities to become included and loyal persons are usually rewarded and bestowed with favors sometimes undue. This hierarchic relationship is often characterized as patron-client relationship (Jamil 2007: 8). Stability or maintaining the status quo is preferred because change would disrupt the existing power structure and authority pattern, and thereby change interpersonal relationships. This would bring dire consequences to the existing system of governance at the end of the day.

Paternalism refers to an authority pattern where obedience and loyalty is person or family based rather than linked to an impersonal office or position. This is what Weber called a Traditional Authority System. It protects and extends social privileges to certain persons belonging to certain family, caste, and group. Leadership is personalized and the authority pattern is hierarchic and top-down. In the family, it is the relationship between father and son, in the school, it is the relationship between the Guru and disciple and in an informal group organization it is the relationship (Jamil, et; al. 2013) between a leader and follower. This relationship is based on unreserved loyalty. This is what characterizes a high power distance society (Hofstede 1991). When it comes to good governance in South Asia, in politics, family plays an important role in the selection of leaders, and families with high political standings exercise considerable power and authority in society. Such type of leadership trend often leads to dynastic rule as is evident in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and even in Nepal.

In the case of South Asia, political parties may said to be champions of paternalism. All the leading political parties that have been in power have a strong base in family leadership. For example, the Nehru-Gandhi family in India⁶, Mujib and Zia families in Bangladesh, Bhutto family in Pakistan, Bandaranaike family in Sri Lanka, and the Koirala family in Nepal. Family members are groomed to become future leaders. In the case of nomination to run for national elections, family connections are important and family members within the kinship and

⁶ After gaining independence in 1947, the Congress party has dominated Indian national politics except for the brief Janata interlude from 1977 to 1980 (Kochanek 1987: 1278) and the period between at the end of the 1990s to 2004

friendship are offered nominations. Party leadership seldom changes, especially at the top. Most political parties have leaders for life and it is only in the case of death of a leader that a party leadership changes but then again another family member assumes the party leadership. Family dominance in politics is found in other countries too such as in the most democratic country the USA where for instance, members of the Kennedy family held a strong position for several decades, and more recently, there were the two Bush presidents. Yet, arguably the case of South Asia is different because political parties always had leaders from the same family and exceptions to this trend have hardly been observed.

It is usually claimed that family dominance of political parties is an efficient way to maintain **integrity** and loyalty to the party, if not then large parties would have split into smaller factions leading to more intense inter-party conflicts and hence state destabilization. Paternalism has serious consequences for governance.

Implications

- a) Accountability to be functional requires respect for formal rules. Since loyalty is based on personal obedience, accountability then also becomes person based rather than following an impersonal accountability mechanism. In a democracy, elected representatives are accountable to citizens but in paternalism, accountability is to the party leadership. In Bangladesh, for example, members of the parliament cannot go against the party they represent. If this happens then a member must relinquish his position. This is called ‘Floor Crossing’ and no parliamentarian dares to cross the floor for fear of losing parliamentary seat. Therefore, unconditional loyalty to party leadership is also constitutionalized.
- b) The distinction between private and official rules is often blurred in paternalism. Breaking and bypassing rules by leaders are quite frequent. Those who adjudicate rules use their positions for personal gains. Wood (2000: 222) refers to this as ‘‘the blurred moral boundaries between public and private behavior’’. This results in lobbying even when a person is entitled to a statutory right. Corruption is often associated with lobbying. One consequence of paternalism is informal relations. According to Schick (1998: 128) ‘‘informality is patchy. On the one hand, it pushes complications, impassive bureaucracies, and appalling strategies; on the other hand, it unlocks the flap to (and occasionally institutionalizes) corruption and limitation’’.
Citing Bangladesh as an example of patron-clientelism and informalities, Kochanek (2000. 547) argues that behind the façade of formal institutional trappings of a modern state such as the cabinet and the parliament are nothing but ‘‘Hollow Shells’’ imbued with informal relations mainly serving the interests of certain families.
- c) Merit is often sacrificed in order to favor someone, thus giving rise to the problem of institutional legitimacy. Patron-clientelism flourishes leading

to rent-seeking, nepotism, cronyism, arbitrariness, and secrecy (Wood 2000, 222).

- d) Political interferences in administration are common and since merit is not the major criteria for career enhancement, public officials resort to lobbying and showing political allegiance to further their professional career.

4. Alliances and Networking

In recent years, alliances and networking in South Asian politics are common in order to gain access to the power house while brushing aside the notion of good governance. The policy arena is now a forum for many actors to strike a bargain with state machineries in times of policy making. With informalism still a major ingredient of governance mechanism in the South Asian region, we observe a number of alliances between and among political parties, between political parties and business concerns, and even between politics and civil society is observed. The major reason of such alliances is to lend support and gain favor so it is a win-win situation for all parties. Of this, the alliances among political parties and politics-business nexus are crucial to win election and gain access to business favors (Jamil, et.al).

5. Alliances Between Political Parties

The new political governance scenario in South Asia suggests that power is no more concentrated in a single party but shared between various alliance members, of course the major power held by the party spearheading the alliance. Political governance has now become competitive; elections are based on adult franchise with high voter turnout and power sharing alternating between different political formations (Brass 2010: 3).

This new form of governance is a complicated equation in power sharing where negotiation and bargaining are regular features in alliance formation. This means alliances are fluid, ad hoc in nature, and often informal where leaders strike a deal with a major party for the sake of power sharing. If that fails to work, break up is quite common.

The wave of democracy in South Asia has made politics complex and allowed citizens to express their preferences along religion, ethnic, regional, and policy-based issues. In other words, inclusion in governance is the demand from different groups. This demand also draws different groups of people to different political parties catering to different needs of citizens. As such no single party has obtained absolute majority in recent elections in South Asia. Coalition governments based on alliances between political parties have become the norm and are a major instrument to win elections and form governments. This is a significant departure from earlier political scenario when a single party obtained the majority in elections. Therefore, alliances have now become important political compositions in the South Asian region to win elections. According to Burki (2010: 84–85)

political alliances in Pakistan paved the way for the civilian rule amidst frequent takeover of state power by the army. However, given the number of tricky problems unresolved, it seems that democracy in South Asia mainly revolves around winning elections because such a win legitimizes the winning alliance and gives a license to do whatever it may feel like doing and whatever policies it may deem necessary. Since winning elections are the major ends of political parties, alliances are then a major strategy of political parties especially the larger ones, the governance issue remains a far cry.

The restoration of peace in Nepal after decades of Maoist insurgency opened a window of opportunity for democratic governance and inclusion of different ethnic and religious castes hitherto excluded in a high caste dominated polity. As a result, election to the Constituent Assembly (CA) was held in 2008 with no single party obtaining an absolute majority to form the government. The main task of the CA was to reframe a new constitution for the ‘‘new’’ Nepal after the abolition of monarchism, establishment of a secular state (Nepal was the only Hindu state from 1962 to 2006), and the establishment of federalism (Brass 2010: 2).

Although the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) got the maximum number of seats, two other political parties, the Nepalese Congress and Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) came in the second and third place in the number of seats won. The CA is dissolved now because it failed to write a new constitution even after extending its term by 2 years. The tug of war and horse trading between the major parties in terms of power sharing and distribution of executive posts did not produce functional alliances to form a government that could frame a new constitution. This has led the country reel under political uncertainty and the nature of governance in a new political scenario⁷.

The Sri Lankan case is somewhat similar to the Nepalese one. The country has now resolved its decades’ long civil war and is striving to restore peace and democracy. In this respect, the sixth presidential election was held in 2010 in which the alliance United People’s Freedom Alliance formed in 2004 won the majority and formed the government. Its main opposition was the New Democratic Front (Sri Lanka) which is an offshoot of Democratic United National Front in alliance with United National Front.

In Pakistan, politics has also witnessed political alignments. Four alliances namely Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI), People’s Democratic Alliance (PDA), National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) have dominated the political scene from 1990 to 1999. Political parties revolve around some individuals and do not have any well-defined ideology and programs. As a result, numerous parties both big and small are active in the political scenario

⁷ In March 2013, the chief justice in Nepal was sworn in as head of an interim government to hold new election after months of bickering among major political parties.

and since winning electoral majority by a single party has become difficult lately, this has led to alliance formations (Hussain 2008).

The alternative scenario is deep hatred between these alliances resembling vendetta leading to violent clashes. The take over of army in periods of violent clashes between alliances has taken place in both Bangladesh and Pakistan. As has been noted by Burki (2010, p. 85) in the case of Pakistan, “the civilian leadership when exercising power failed to institutionalize the base of their support. Had they done, the military would have found it more difficult to intervene”. In Bangladesh, severe violence between the major political alliances in 2007 almost led the country on the verge of civil war and encouraged an army backed caretaker government to step in and declare a state of emergency (Jamil et al. 2013, p. xvii). Since post-election activities of the party in power and the opposition parties are mainly geared towards blame game denigrating the others, consolidations of democratic practices and establishing bonds with citizens is ignored. This has led to inter-party conflicts and paved the way for the army to step in on some occasions to takeover state power. This army takeover usually receives strong support of the citizens, since citizens find army rule more secured and disciplined compared to anarchy in inter-party conflicts.

6. Politics-Business Nexus

Along political alliances, the alliance between business community and political parties is largely observed. For instance, in the case of Bangladesh, business interests are increasingly becoming a part of politics. All the large business houses have close links to both the party in power and to the opposition since regime changes alternate between the two major alliances. One of the data collected by Jahan and Amundsen (2012: 33) reveals that the political scenario in Bangladesh and the professional affiliations of parliament members have changed dramatically over the years. The biggest change is observed in the significant rise of businessmen in the parliament from 24 % in 1973 to 56 % in the last election held in 2008. There has also been an increase of retired high-level civil and military bureaucrats in joining the two main parties and contesting elections. What is also observed here is that the role of traditional political leaders coming from rural background and middle class families such as lawyers and teachers are now decreasing. The leadership of the two major parties, the BNP and the AL, and their alliances who have ruled Bangladesh alternately since 1991 was different in nature. While the AL leadership was “composed largely of lower middle class, village-born landowners, most of whom also held law degrees, most BNP members were drawn from the upper strata of the Bangladeshi middle class and rich farmers in the rural area” (Kochanek 2000: 532–533).

However, this scenario has changed significantly; in the 2001 election which the BNP and its four party alliances won, 58 % of the parliamentary members had business as their main profession. The situation is almost similar in the election held in 2008. Moreover as Kochanek (2000: 234) notes about politics-business

nexus that “Individual business families and firms have developed an elaborate system of personal connections at all levels of government based on process of cajoling and personal lobbying”. In some of the South Asian nations such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan and to some extent in Nepal too, money and muscle play a central role during elections. Since elections are expensive affairs in South Asian politics, candidates raise fund either through intimidation or get voluntarily from business houses as part of getting favors in return if their favorite candidates win the election.

In India, during the rule of Indira Gandhi the ruling congress extracted huge financial contributions from business community through “permit-license-quota-Raj” (PLQR) and in return were allowed to amass huge wealth by these houses. During the reign of Rajiv Gandhi, the PLQR was replaced by commissions from awarding large contracts to business houses. With the Swedish Bofors scandal that tarnished his image as “Mr. Clean” also contributed to his election debacle in 1989. This ended the dynastic rule and one-party dominance and paved the way for alliance formation in Indian politics. However, politics-business nexus and underhand dealings continued even during coalition governments and reached to such a magnitude that a cabinet secretary commented that there is nothing they can do about it (Kochanek 2010, pp. 368–370).

Dominant political parties are the champions in forming alliances with other parties sometimes diverse in terms of interests, ideologies, and the nature of citizen’s support they draw. The business community is also a champion of alliance building because forging alliance with politics gives them access to policy arenas and hence exerting influence in policies. The question is what are the implications of alliances of political parties and politics-business nexuses, have over the idea of good governance.

Implications

i. Survival and Winning Elections

Alliances and coalitions are usually ad hoc in nature, may last until an election. However, some stability in alliance is also observed in the case of BNP led four party alliances in Bangladesh formed in 1999 prior to the 2001 election and still persisting. Stability depends on the age of the alliance. The older the alliance, the greater is its permanence. Alliance is a win-win situation for both the leading party for winning elections and reducing opposition in policy matters. At the same time, it is also a strategy for smaller parties to survive in competitive politics and gain some access to power. Since the electoral process is based on “Winner Takes All” system that marginalizes the opposition, alliances are, therefore, important strategy in capturing state power and then denying the opposition of exercising any right even in the parliament as often is the case in Bangladesh (Hechler et al. 2011: 73).

ii. Patrimonialism and Corruption

Given the patrimonial nature of politics in South Asia where leadership is personalized and authoritarian, power is exercised by a small group of people very close to the top leadership. While making major decisions, formal institutions are often neglected or bypassed and decisions are made on the advice of a handful of family members and personal advisors, and are devoid of openness. As a result, the style of governance suffers from transparency, accountability, and effectiveness (Kochanek 2000, p. 536).

This informal style of governance has increased politics-business nexus and business firms find it convenient to strike a deal with political leaders or be a part of politics to influence decisions in their favors. Some of the recent scams in Bangladesh concerning the collapse of the share market, excessive loan withdrawal from nationalized banks, and allegations by the World Bank of corruption by ruling party stalwarts in the biggest infrastructure project in the country, the so called bridge over the River Padma (Bangladesh) are examples of the politics-business nexus where public money has been usurped through a collusion of business interests and political leaders. Even the names of perpetrators involved in scams are highlighted in news media they are never apprehended by the government which testifies a close nexus between politics and some business interests.

This politics-business nexus has facilitated the wheel of the economic progress wheel rolling for a steady economic growth. Still from a democratic governance point of view, this is a disaster for social and formal institutional development as the gap between rich and poor is widening, welfare services are becoming ineffective, poverty is persisting, and formal institutions and rule of law are getting weaker. What has become institutionalized is corruption in which every transaction is up for grab these days.

iii. Criminalization of Politics

On 6th November 2012, the chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in Bangladesh mentioned that corruption takes place at two levels—at the upper level between political leaders and businessmen, at the lower level between political leaders and goon and hoodlums (*The Daily Star* 2012). The politics-business nexus is vital in day-to-day politics to prevail over policy decisions and especially during electoral competition where money and muscle power are considered to be important ingredients.

Although muscle power and incidence of violence were contained in elections under the neutral caretaker government in Bangladesh, the growing use of money persisted. This has resulted in growing involvement of the business community and the underworld in politics. Also the growths of factionalism, confrontational politics, and electoral competition have contributed to the increase of these incidents. These incidents have been reinforced with the decline of ideology-based

politics in South Asia. Criminalization of politics has also opened the avenues for local hoodlums and thugs to contest in elections. In a report, it was revealed that in the 2004 election in India, almost 25 % of the members of parliament (Lok Sabha) had criminal cases against them (Kochanek 2000, p. 376).

iv. Reinventing State

In the context of new liberalism, market orientation, and globalizations, South Asian countries are also adapting, though slowly, to these new modes of governance resulting in less government and more governance, i.e., less rowing and more steering as argued by Rhodes (1997). The aim has been to develop an effective, efficient, citizen friendly, and development-oriented governance system to improve welfare and quality of life of citizens (Jain 2001: 1300).

It is inspired by the New Public Management (NPM) (and is increasingly embraced by the South Asian nations under the guidance and influence of international development agencies (Haque 2003: 942). The critical issue is how suitable are these modernization efforts to fine tune governance in line with Western trends in the context of South Asia. Schick (1998) is skeptical in introducing market principles and private managerialism in a system with weak rule of law and an absence of a robust market. This would invite more problem than solution and is likely to encourage misappropriation of public money and financial mismanagement.

This NPM trend may be said to get momentum in South Asia with the establishment of democracy in the region especially in the 1990s. It was also a time that developmental aid shifted its strategy of disbursement from allies to now assisting those countries who would opt for “good governance” measures (Turner & Hulme 1997). Good governance becomes a condition for aid disbursement. This led to a number of public administration reforms, privatization of state owned enterprises, deregulation to make public services easily and quickly available, decentralization to transfer both functions and power to local government bodies, holding of elections on a regular basis, involvement of non-governmental sectors in policy formulation and implementation, toning out and farming out of public services, etc.

The objectives were to streamline governments in line with global trends, which according to Haque (2003) feature elements of reinventing state with the following three major trends.

- (a) Less public sector but more private sector
- (b) Improving public sector management
- (c) Involvement of non-governmental sectors and civil society in governance.

Four Faces of Governance in South Asia

As argued, South Asian governance reflects four types of governance mechanisms. These traditions have serious implications for how the state is organized in terms

of institutional structure and behavior, interpersonal relations, policy making and implementation, and relationships between the state, private sector, civil society, and citizens. To understand the pathology as well as development potential of South Asian states, it is indispensable to understand these traditions of governance more deeply and how these are incorporated in the nation building process and the structuring of the state. There are tensions among these competing patterns of governance.

- a) While paternalism and administrative state emphasize centralization of authority and hierarchy, the alliance, and reinventing state governance mechanisms emphasize networks and polycentric power centers. On the other hand, while the administrative and reinventing state governance mechanisms are focused on establishing formal rules of governance. The paternal and alliance traditions are more concerned with informal networks and relations limited within family and nexus between politics and business.
- b) Which mechanism is dominant and influences the system of governance in South Asia? Paternalism has a long tradition and is deeply rooted. This is complimented by the hierarchic nature of administrative state established during the colonial rule. Since both emphasize top-down centralized control system, this matches well with the South Asian cultural tradition. While paternalism is emphasized by political parties and their leaders that give them control over governance mechanism, the administrative state is preferred by the appointed officials, especially the generalists because these give them much leeway over policy-making process and shield them from political interference.
- c) On the other hand, alliances and reinventing state are new patterns of governance. Alliances became important when winning elections became the most important instrument to gain access to complete hegemony over policy decisions and blocking the opposite alliances from this. While alliances are necessary and help to consolidate power and win elections, this is a popular strategy to be used by the major political parties. This strategy ensures win-win situation for all those involved in the alliance.
- d) Reinventing state is also becoming a popular strategy of governance because of globalization of economy and neo-liberal market trends. Economic growth and sustained economic development can only take place when the national economy, administration, and policies are geared to the global economy. This is a preferred instrument of the donor and international agencies because foreign assistance cannot be utilized better without reengineering the existing state. This is also preferred by civil society, especially non-governmental organizations because that would give them access to policy-making arenas and be part of the public-private partnership process.

These four types of governance mechanisms have different demands for the type of institutional and authority pattern, accountability and loyalty, and interfaces between politics and bureaucracy, and between politics and citizens. There are different champions of these four types governance. Paternalism is favored by traditional big political parties. Administrative state is favored by generalist bureaucrats. Alliances are preferred by political parties, sometimes in alliance with economic interests. And finally, reinventing state is guided by international organizations and advocated by NGOs and civil society organizations.

However, paternalism as a deeply rooted social order is cross-cutting affecting and influencing all forms of governance. One reason is that rule-based governance has remained weak and is marginally institutionalized despite many legislations and acts. This is because this has been handed over to people by elites in collaboration with international actors without required solicitation, respect, support, and legitimacy from below (Myrdal 1968: 1118)

7. Conflict Ridden Region Ethnic Conflicts

O'Neal & Russett (1999) state that "South Asia has the world's largest conflict-affected population and had turned out to be the most vicious region in the world, together with hostilities, insurgency, terrorism, and other forms of organized aggression. Afghanistan is in the middle of conflict. Pakistan is in face of grave localized insurgency. Nepal and Sri Lanka are in face of the challenges of reintegration which are natural repercussions of conflicts and uprisings. Insurgencies are embedded in hoary regional and cross-border strains and enmities, generating politicization of regional issues. The development corridors of most of the countries will be determined by their capability to changeover out of conflict to tranquility and security. Most South Asian countries are massive outliers on conflict, i-e; they have much higher conflict rates given their income levels.

The South Asian region is in the midst of a crisis that threatens not only some of the existing state structures but the very fabric of society. In this regard, following 3 inter-related dimensions can be studied;

- I. The growing polarization of society along ethnic, linguistic or religious lines. Connected with this, the undermining of social values through which dissimilar communities had lived together in a pluralistic society
- II. The perceived failure of highly centralized structures of political power to give valuable political representation to the entire echelon of society and the rising militarization, linked with the use of coercive state power to suppress resurgent sub-nationalism.
- III. The collapse of the approach to the progress assumed in the post-colonial period in South Asia. The development course, associated with this approach had engendered widespread poverty, mounting inter-personal and inter-regional gaps, wearing down of the ecological surroundings and lastly budding reliance on foreign aid in the case of a number of

countries in South Asia (Raja & Hussain, 1987: 17).

The queries like what are the expenses of conflict for the region and how it can be eradicated?

Implications

The “peace dividend,” or bounce-back potential, is outsized, and current faster regional development could gather speed. For instance, countries in past or existing heightened conflict (Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) have been inclined to illustrate slower growth with a discrepancy of 2 to 3 percentage points of annual GDP growth⁸.

The countries would incorporate more rapidly and trade more.

Therefore, conflict has a dominant negative effect on trade but the increased trade between partners diminishes the likelihood of conflict. But the worst is when partners do not trade. Chang et;al, (2004) state that contiguity boosts conflict when contiguous states carry out modest trade.

Mismanaged Issues of Health

According to Michel Rutkowski, the World Bank’s South Asia Director for Human Development, “South Asia is at a junction with increasing disparity; poor people trying to obtain access to quality health, education, and infrastructure service; a rising share of the population ageing unhealthily; and with health systems that are failing to fiddle with the needs of people” (*The Hindu*, 2011). South Asia, a region of strategic significance, faces public health challenges on a demographic and geographic scale unsurpassed in the globe. “Even more striking, yet, these countries are home to two-thirds of the world’s population living on less than \$1 a day. South Asia’s low life expectancy and high rates of malnutrition, infant mortality, and incidence of TB and HIV/AIDS are second only to those of sub-Saharan Africa. The region faces not only these and related health problems, poor sanitation, poor maternal health, poor access to healthcare services, and widespread malaria but also an emerging chronic disease epidemic. Regardless of the extent of these interconnected challenges, these countries on average spend less than 3.2% of their GDP on health, compared to a global average of 8.2%. They constitute the world’s only region to observe its health expenditures fall from 2000 to 2006” (Hate & Gannon, 2010).

India in particular and South Asian countries in general, are facing a “health crisis” with growing rates of heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other non communicable diseases (NCDs).

⁸Insecurity and conflict affect all countries in the region to varying degrees, and the exact classification is debatable; nevertheless, these growth differentials emerge within countries as well as in the lagging states in India

6. Corruption

Corruption can be defined in a variety of ways, however, it is characteristically understood to represent a breach of law by public officials for private gain. At a broad level, all corruption is detrimental. All sorts of corruption together with bribery and political corruption is broadly observed in South Asian societies. The level of corruption in South Asia has led to wider concern vis-à-vis poor governance which sequentially is accountable for poor economic performance, unrelenting poverty, the treason of democracy and the incapability to draw enough foreign investment. Nevertheless, while reviewing corruption in South Asia, it is enviable to bear in mind that corruption is endemic in all developing countries, apart from of their economic growth rates; indeed the level of corruption is strongly attached to the country's point of growth.

The South Asian corruption has four characteristics:

1. upstream while making fundamental policy decisions; 2. South Asian corruption has wings i.e. smuggled out to safe heavens abroad;
2. Weak process of accountability of senior politicians and officials the big fish unlike the US
3. Corruption in South Asia leads to mass deprivation in view of scarcity of resources unlike in the Western countries. Actions needed: accountability mechanisms, declaration of assets; transparent procurement procedures; right to information act; national anti-corruption commissions; public education

Khan (2006) writes that “Ever since the early 1980s, the crisis of corruption and subjects of governance are leading all South Asian countries. Internal public apprehension over corruption and pressure from international agencies, such as World Bank and the IMF and from bilateral agencies startled by the mishandling of aid has been growing. Corruption is far and wide alleged to be not just a problem in itself however also an gauge of other failures of governance”.

South Asia Corruption Index

| | |
|--------|---|
| 30/100 | The average score of South Asian countries in 2013 was slighter than any other sub-region in the world. |
| 66% | of South Asians believe corruption has increased in the past two years |
| 80% | of people in the region now experience that their government's measures in the fight against corruption are futile |
| 60% | of South Asians consider that their country's government is run by a only some large individuals performing in their own best interests |

Source: The Global corruption Barometer 2013.

Retrieved from <http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013>

6. Political and Party Systems

Political and party systems in South Asia have not pursued any homogeneous model of progress or maturity as far as good governance is concerned. In spite of the fact that excluding Nepal, other countries in South Asia viz. India, Sri Lanka,

Pakistan and Bangladesh have shared long common historical traditions and colonial legacies, each of the country in the region has taken up its own political system without any general political or party features mostly present in most Western polities. The political parties and their characters, function and dogmas also vary amongst the nations of South Asia. All of the South Asian governments have, nevertheless, not been able to assure the great number of communities of their rights. The South Asian societies face similar problems of high-handedness by governments, predominantly, belonging to ethnic and religious minorities in conjunction with the excluded and poor populations. Political and administrative corruption is another leading disposition of all the South Asian governments which prevent these nations to utilize their maximum talent to develop (Jabeen, 2007).

The political parties in South Asia have never assumed any standardized model of evolution or development on the basis of dogmas, values, strategies and programmes. Instead there is a culture of personal allegiance and opportunism. Nearly half of the parliamentarians in India and Pakistan are landlords. Once in power, they drop contact with people. A number of of them even do not utilize the special budget allocations for the socio-economic growth of their constituencies. The culture of power politics in South Asia has destabilized the authenticity of governments which is considered to be a basic part of good governance.

However democracy is being reinforced in the South Asian region nevertheless the state of political rights and civil liberties remains miserable. Apart from Maldives, Bhutan and India, the ranking of South Asian countries has declined over the years. Though there is widespread support for the promotion of democracy yet no matching commitment towards touching the gross root levels is observed (Sardar, 2011).

The South Asian context in terms of its political and societal culture poses serious challenges to governance in terms of inclusion of citizens and responding appropriately to them. The main challenge is how to include different hitherto neglected groups in decision making. India is struggling with religion and caste tensions, both Nepal and Sri Lanka are post-conflict states and struggling to make a balance in including different ethnic and caste groups in their governance system. Pakistan is torn between extremists, on the one hand, and both the government and the military supported by the West are struggling to contain the rise of r fundamentalism and Balochistan separatist movement in the west, on the other. Bangladesh is the only country in South Asia with less ethnic and religious tension but the country is divided along political lines, especially between the two major alliances. These challenges are not well addressed in the system of governance. It is still characterized by short sightedness, with weak vision for long-term planning and redistribution of its resources.

Given the present governance scenario in South Asia, a quick fix is not likely to come readily. The region if it intends to embark on a “developmental state” tracks needs strong political commitment to rise above narrow family and partisan

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interests. At the same time, rule of law or the revival of Weberianism such as introducing merit, performance-based management, and clear distinction between family and official life is essential to check patron-clientelism, and undue bestowing of favor. Democratic practices become futile if rules of the game at the state, societal, and individual levels are not properly spelled out, practiced, and obeyed. Democracy should combine both autonomy and independence of actions but within the boundary of what is acceptable, appropriate, and legitimate. Some South Asian countries have introduced right to information act to ensure transparency and accountability of governments' acts and decisions. However, without a functional democracy, right to information may remain a mere rhetoric reflecting symbolic politics.

Better or sound governance is desirable in the South Asian region but the question is on whose premise and on which ideas? Does the present system of governance mostly benefit those who have more from before? Do existing policies respond adequately to what citizens expect and desire? Do citizens trust those who are at the helm of public affairs? As a concept, better or sound governance is appealing but does it have normative connotations serving better the corporate, political, and administrative elites, and promote specific donor preferences? The four types of governance have both strengths and weaknesses. However, if properly managed these may prove to be powerful and useful tools to address political and socio-economic challenges in South Asia; for example, paternalism may turn out to be strong tool to make decisions quickly and mobilize people in the shortest possible time

Almost all countries in South Asia have democratically elected governments. yet, governance remains a key development challenge in the region. Political unsteadiness and corruption are referred to most often in investment climate surveys as key or rigorous limitations to business. Weak property rights and corruption pervade the business environment in South Asia. Indeed, the region's growth has been affected by weak governance. The rule of law (particularly property rights enforcement and law and order) and judicial systems are fragile, and a few components of public administration emerge to be worsening owing to politicization, hazy incentives, and partial accountability. The costs of poor governance, whether unenforceable property rights and contracts, fading law and order, or pervasive teacher and doctor absence, are mainly borne by the poor.

To start with good governance counts on the efficient democratic institutions. Such institutions need autonomous and sovereign execution of legislature, judiciary and executive. These three pillars of governance should work in synchronization to guarantee that the entire system is running on the principles of accountability and precision whereas the democratic process in the region has been ill-treated.

A Way Forward

Good governance is an imprecise expression used in development literature to illustrate how public institutions carry out public affairs and manage public resources so as to guarantee the recognition of human rights. It portrays the course of decision-making and the procedure by which decisions are executed or not put into action. Good governance is a permanent process that decides the destiny of nation. It is a basic aspect that is unavoidable in taking the nation to the pinnacle of fame in the world community. Democracy and good governance are interconnected to each other. "In case there is no democracy, there can be no good governance.

South Asian maturity is in a phase of predicament. Economically, most of the South Asian countries are progressively more reliant on the global market. Global politico-economic process, corrupt political leadership, ineffective state-institutions and rising militarization, all have an effect on the regional progress. The crisis of democracy is apparent by insidious nepotism and corruption, embezzlement of state funds, an absence of transparency and accountability in public administration, lack of deference for the rule of law and ethical behavior in public life and disinclination to entrust administrative or financial powers to grassroots organizations. There is an emergent consciousness of discrimination and bigotry among the rural poor who have been pitilessly exploited in the past by feudal elements (Nepali, 2009).

In this regard, the government must generate an investment-friendly environment so as to improve the economy and industrial activity as elevating the standard of living is the vital element of good governance. Law and order situation should be made favorable and heartening for the foreign investors so the FDI may be enhanced for the eventual profit of the nation and the country at large. Most significantly, the government must also endeavor to conduit the breach between the demand and supply of energy. New dams and barrages must be constructed without placing national and political solidity at risk. Government must have power over the hoarding mafia, mainly those concerned in the hoarding of edible supplies. Having firm check on the inflation would add to the standard of living of the general masses at bigger level. Additionally, passing on education and consciousness to the ordinary people is indispensable to have good governance as the masses have to be the fraction of this process. With the substantial heterogeneity of political structures in South Asia, the flux and vicious types of conflict are prevalent. The methods for the peaceful harmonizing of interest are still undersized or are underused owing to the political intentions of individual actors. The people's demands for a share of power, resources and development prospects have been compensated too small consideration by the elites" (Statehood and Governance...2008)

Media's role in the dawn of true democracy and good governance is not frazzled enough. Media is known as the fourth pillar of the state. Media can prove to a pulsating factor in inspiring public contribution in national decision-making

processes and can also generate the responsiveness of rights and duties among the general public. Media can also fetch government authorities under accountability for their violations of power and bad governance. To put in a nut shell, it may be affirmed that good governance is an unavoidable phenomenon for the smooth functioning of any state machinery. Consequently, political steadiness, rule of law, constitutional preeminence and public partaking in policy making and execution must be guaranteed. The whole nation must feel and proceed as one nation and cooperatively contribute for the affluence of the country. Time is now ripened to appear out of the forged and unjustified notions of provincialism, sectarianism and nepotism. With all the leadership void and political flux, the nation can still tread forward to generate an environment, where good governance is not just a daydream (Malik, 2012).

The sustainable regional cooperation must be based on a restructuring of ideological political and economic systems in each South Asian country. At the level of ideology, the deep-rooted civilizational consciousness of tolerance, humanism and freedom of belief must be tapped. At the level of politics, what is needed is a decentralization of power and the emergence of local institutions through which the individual, whatever his social status can participate in the decisions that affect his immediate economic, cultural and ecological environment. At the level of economics, a developmental policy which merges autonomy, impartiality and an equilibrium between man, nature and development is necessitated. It is when a more coherent and humane social system appears in South Asian States can the guarantee and potential of regional cooperation to be fulfilled. So long as the internal crisis of the state continues in these countries, the regional cooperation for the governments can only be a moral assertion and for the people of South Asia, a far-flung delusion (Raja & Hussain, 1987: 24).

The ruling regimes, unable to find a fundamental solution to the problem of poverty and inequality, unable to provide a political frame and intellectual vision within which the diversity of culture, language and religion can enrich, rather than undermine society, tend to show a knee-jerk reaction to the crisis. The knee-jerk reaction consists of seeking an external bogey and on the basis of this fears seek to mobilize and unite their own people. This is a major inhibiting factor to the search for regional cooperation in South Asia.

The essentials of globalization in the 21st Century have added additional momentum for restructuring of governance. The successful countries can produce an expansion in the comfort of their population through markets, trade, investment and exchange. However the state has to play a likewise imperative role in fostering and generating markets that promote competition and give information about prospects to all contestants, acting against complicity and monopolistic practices, building potentials and expertise of people to engage in dynamic activities, setting the rules of the game in a translucent approach and arbitrating and determining the difference of opinion in a reasonable and impartial mode. To carry out these functions the capability, competencies and receptiveness of the

institutions of state have to be raised together with the rules, enforcement mechanisms, organizational structures and incentives (Hussain, 2008).

Issues and problems of development and governance have a human dimension and imply human choice. As Idealist thinker T. H. Green would expound, human consciousness postulates development that entails a system of rights and liberties (Sharma, et.al, 2003: 37). According to Acemoglu and Johnson, (2003), “good institutions guarantee two enviable outcomes that there is a somewhat equal access to economic prospect (a level playing field) and that those who offer labor or capital are suitably rewarded and their property rights are sheltered”. The above analysis and the future necessitates to evidently reveal that institutions play a decisive role in economic performance and distributional consequences. In the development course, Governance carries great importance because it is regarded as a fundamental constituent in devising any development approach and the fact remains that some partners’ priorities are determined by the goals of democratic transformation and good governance (Statehood and Governance...2008).

In a nutshell, nonetheless, it must be kept in mind that in order to conquer the level of good governance, the mere plannings and ideas would not work rather the power to implement those policies is required. Simultaneously, the political leadership has to reveal its well-built grit to carry out changes, primarily by clearing out itself from corrupt and criminal influences, and setting ethical standards of quality governance both at the political and administrative levels. The change cannot be brought unless mindset of those in power may change (Mathur, 2005: 343).

Conclusion

The governance structure of any country is composed of judiciary, executive and legislature. If the entrée to the institutions of governance for its general public is hard, protracted and pricey, then the remunerations from development are disseminated haphazardly as only those who enjoy privileged access to these institutions get the real benefit (Hussain, n.d). Governance is not an easy concept to measure. Singapore is considered to be one of the best governed or administered countries in the world, even better than many European countries. The reason being is its judicial system that comes top of the list. Another example is Dubai which is well managed, well-functioning and administered, having great deal of good governance while on the other hand it is an authoritarian state with no democracy. Third example could be India, poorly governed, managed , administered but is democratic by the same set of criteria (Zaidi, 2009). Good governance in the context of South Asia must go beyond ‘good’ politics or even the development of a ‘decent’ society. It should facilitate the government, civil society as well as the private sectors to improve their social developments an economical growth to make them the means of greater human progression and improved levels of human well being (Mughal, 2014). To be more optimistic, one must learn that with the inclusive growth, South Asia has the potential to change

global poverty (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/overview#1>). The approaching decades will be of financial growth of South Asia (Rais, 2008). Nevertheless, rickety democracies are preferred to autocracies in South Asia however the threats of diluted democracy have simply blocked legislation and unsuccessful government. There are certain enclaves in south Asia, such as Karachi in Pakistan, Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh in India, the Chitagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, the Tarai Districts of Nepal, the Jaffina Peninsula in Sri Lanka and Kabul in Afghanistan, where the writ of Central authority is uncertain. This applies not only to the areas of insurgency but also to the areas where administrative system has ceased to exist (Nepali, 2009). Almost all countries of South Asia, the exception being Maldives, are having great difficulty in gaining the monopoly of power in their territory (Statehood and Governance...2008). It is the call of the hour that the budding revenues and human poverty challenges faced by the region must be dealt with through incorporated course of action at the national, regional and international levels. Since poverty is multi-dimensional problem, the states will have to take on multidimensional approaches to tackle root causes for the current condition. One approach could be adopted by focusing on the capabilities of the people of the region and reallocation of obtainable budgets (Gohar, 2000).

In modern years, it is being thought that unless a country enjoys good governance and sound institutions, the unrelenting improvement in living standards cannot be achieved. Nonetheless, the question of determining and evaluating governance carries many problems. Since it is a very extensive subject and there is no consensus on either of the indicators or procedures of calculating governance. There has also been discrepancy over who is best positioned to offer insights on the worth of governance in a particular country and how to weigh it against other countries. The troubles coupled with dimension of governance are well reviewed by Court et al (2002). He says that “the challenges faced while calculating the subject of governance is full of challenges that do not stumble upon the economic and social development fields. It is very complex to discover and agree upon indicators of a political macro phenomenon like governance. There exist no customary, organized and unified statistics on the conception of governance. There is very little objective data for many countries and even less that is comparative in an evocative approach”. North (1990: 107) even argued that “we cannot witness, sense, tap, or even gauge institutions”.

Rivera-Batiz (2002) has examined the impact of democracy on the excellence of governance which sequentially is calculated by the level of corruption and observes how that consecutively influences the development.

The quality of governance is partially acknowledged by the efficiency of government in executing the sound strategies, proficient deliverance of public goods and services and enforcement of rules homogeneously. The government's role broadens to the establishment of property rights, police protection units, judiciary, national defense, regulation of market activity and so on which are

hypothetically classified as public goods. The accessibility and quality of public goods is observed as instrumental for progress in developing countries. (Reinikka & Svensson 2002).

The perception of governance can be conceptualized through the ingredients of governance or instead can be the measure of the access people have to the determinants of governance. For instance indicators of health, wellbeing, liberty of choice etc fall under the first category while the accessibility of protected drinking water, educational services; health care are illustrations of later (Governance Indicators attached in Annexure).

Good governance should be considered as a priority and essential pre-requisite for inclusion of South Asia in a peaceful open world. A world embracing communications infrastructure, global market, universal models, global science, global jurisdiction processes, the consolidation of international regimes and transnational actor groups are all contributing to the process of building global structures. Without governance at home that is at par with internationally accepted standards, global structures would not be able to find any firm ground on which to stand and flourish. It is in this sense that poor governance is not compatible with the unfolding process of making a peaceful open world.

Larry and Rosenberg (2011) write that “the existing demographic developments denote that the future decades will be poles apart than what it is in the present day. Mortality and fertility rates will be lesser, and life expectancy will be elevated. Population growth will reduce considerably. Of utmost note, the region’s ratio of working-age to non-working-age population will go up.

The growing income and human poverty challenges faced by the region needs to be addressed through integrated policies at the national, regional and international levels. Just as the case of poverty is multi-dimensional, the states will need to adopt multi-dimensional approaches to addressing root causes for the present situation (Gohar, 2000).

Country-wise Indicators

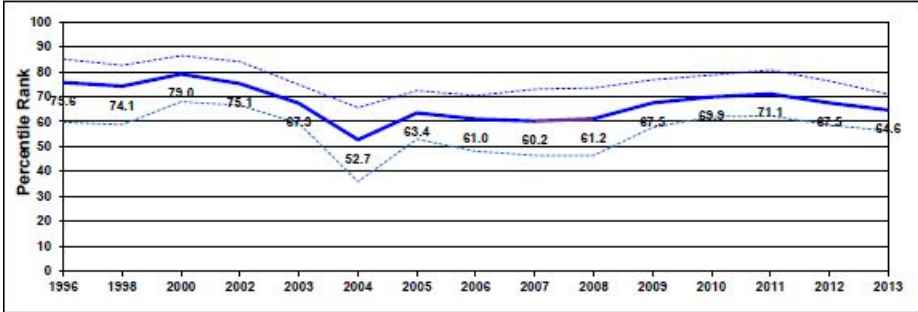
| Country | GNI Per Capita | GDP Growth (Annual%) | Population | Poverty Headcount of Ratio (PPP)% of Population |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------|------------|---|
| Afghanistan | 690\$ | 1.9% | 30.6 | - |
| Bnagladesh | 1,010\$ | 6% | 156.6 | 43.3% (2010) |
| Bhutan | 23,30\$ | 2% | 0.8 | 2.4 (2012) |
| Nepal | 730\$ | 3.8% | 27.8 | 23.7 (2010) |
| Maldives | 5600\$ | 3.7% | 0.3 | 1.5 (2004) |
| Srilanka | 3170\$ | 7.3% | 20.5 | 4.1 (2009) |
| India | 1570\$ | 6.9% | 1252.1 | 23.6 (2011) |
| Pakistan | 1360\$ | 4.4% | 18201 | 12.7 (2010) |

Source: Povertydata.worldbank.org/povert/region/SAS

Worldwide Governance Indicators

Bhutan, 1996-2013

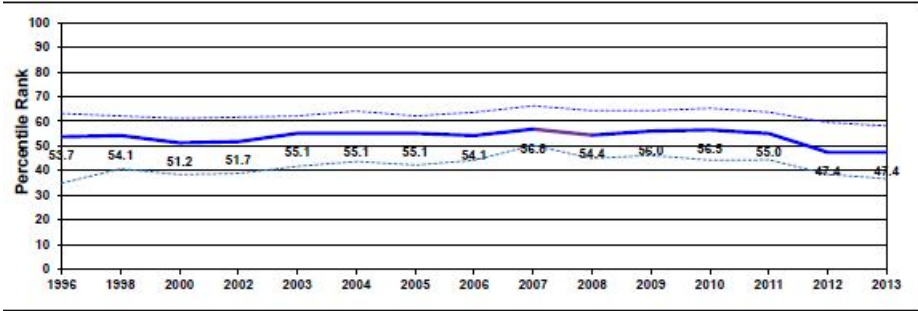
Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



Worldwide Governance Indicators

India, 1996-2013

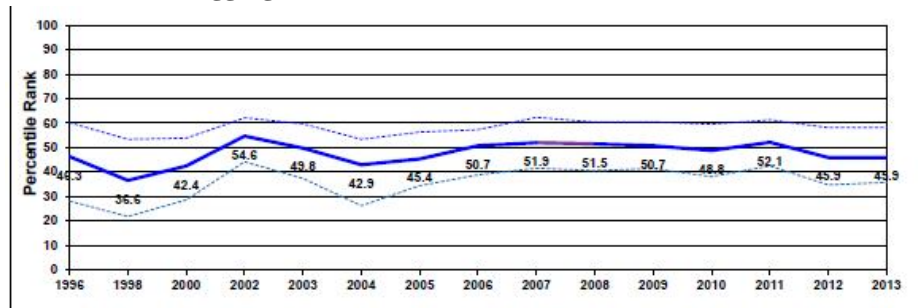
Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



Worldwide Governance Indicators

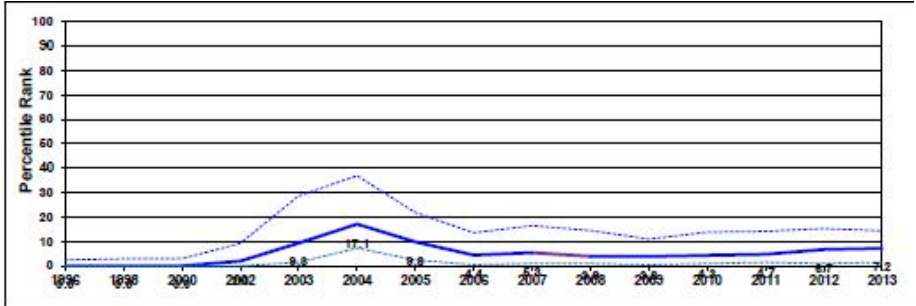
Sri Lanka, 1996-2013

Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



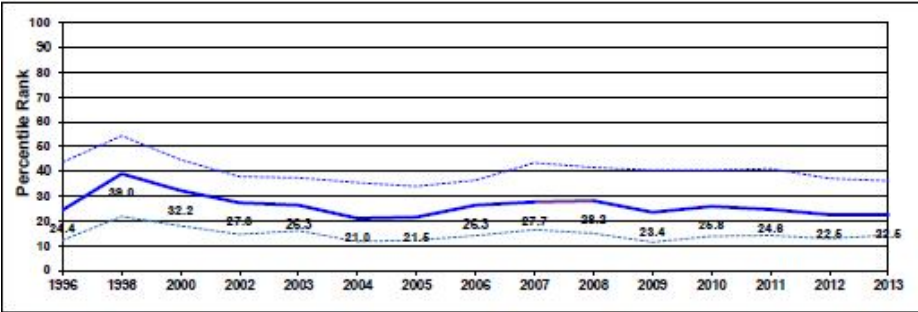
Worldwide Governance Indicators

Afghanistan, 1996-2013
Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



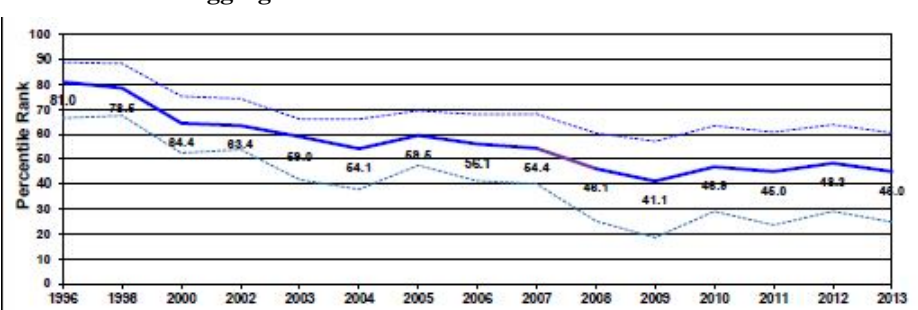
Worldwide Governance Indicators

Bangladesh, 1996-2013
Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



Worldwide Governance Indicators

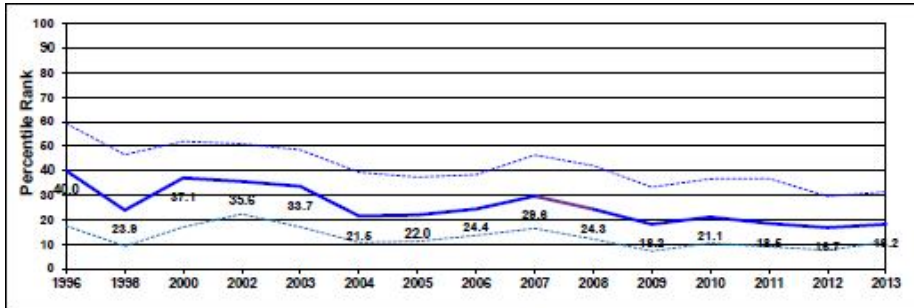
Maldives, 1996-2013
Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



Worldwide Governance Indicators

Nepal, 1996-2013

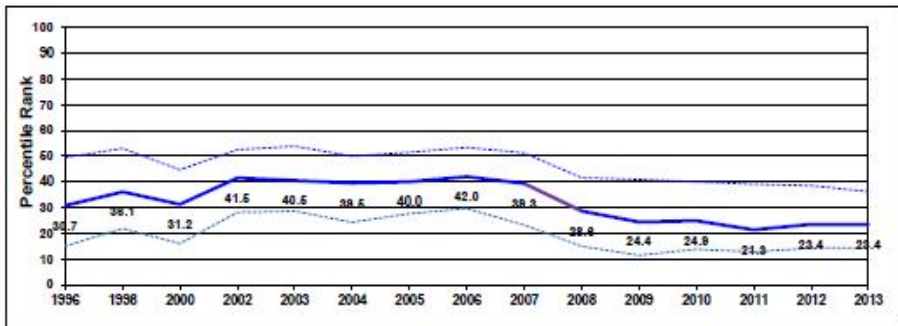
Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



Worldwide Governance Indicators

Pakistan, 1996-2013

Aggregate Indicator: Government Effectiveness



Indicators of Governance at State Level

| Public Goods | | Quasis Public Goods | | | | Govt. Monoposited Goods |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Law & Order | Roads | Educational | Irrigation | Post | Public Health | |
| 1. Police Personnel per thousand persons | Surfaced Road length in Km per thousands sq kms of area | No of schools per thousand s persons | Net irrigated area by government canals per net sown area | No of post offices per thousand person | Life expectancy at birth (years) | Per capital electricity consumption |
| 2. Crime reported per thousands person | Unsurfaced roads length in Km per thousands sq kms | Teacher pupil ratio | | Postal articles handled | Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births) | No of Hospitals and Dispensaries per thousand |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| | <i>of area</i> | | | | | <i>persons</i> |
| 3. | <i>Ration of property recovered to stolen cases</i> | <i>No of Enrolment per thousand person</i> | | <i>No of inland money order issued</i> | | <i>Railway Route length per thousand sqkms of Area</i> |
| 4. | | <i>Literacy rates (%)</i> | | | | <i>Telephone lines per thousand of persons</i> |

Indicators of Governance at Country Level

| | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1. | Total Road Length in Km per thousand sqkms of Area | 7. | No of Schools per thousands persons |
| 2. | Railway Route Length per thousand of persons | 8 | Life expectancy at birth (year) |
| 3. | Telephone line per thousand of persons | 9 | Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1000 live births) |
| 4. | Per Capital Electricity Consumption | 10 | Literacy Rate (%) |
| 5. | No of Post Officers per thousand persons | 11 | Teach Pupil Ration |
| 6. | No of Hospitals and Dispensaries per thousand persons | 12 | No of Enrolments per thousands persons |

Source: - Virmani, Arvind; Sahu, Sanghamitra & Tanwar, Schitra (2006, September). *Governance in the Provision of Public Goods in South Asia*. Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations.

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