

“Good Governance & Administrative Reforms - An Analysis of Indian System in Contemporary Times”

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Abstract

This paper highlights the shift of Indian administrative system from mere governance to discourse of ‘good governance’. It explains the concept of ‘good governance’ in detail. The paper explores in depth the administrative reform journey of Indian administration. It elaborately discusses the Second Administrative Reform Commission, its reports and its recommendations in detail. It also brings out the challenges and bottlenecks in implementing the reforms in Indian context. The paper positively concludes if the reform strategies implemented in right manner than hopefully the goals of good governance may be realised.

Key Words: Administrative Reforms, Good Governance, Second ARC, RTI, Challenges of Indian system.

“1. Introduction”

The dawn of 21st century is marked by ‘good governance’ both as strategy & philosophy of bringing reforms in democracies. Today, Good Governance is the most significant theme in development discourse. Good governance also aims at providing public services effectively, efficiently and equitably to the citizens. The role of public administration in support of governance institutions is essential to steer society on its chosen development path¹. It is one of the main organizational pillars for delivering an ever widening range of public services and goods to an ever multiplying and diverse citizenry in a changing complex environment with new demands ahead. The institution of an efficient, effective and responsive administrative system is crucial to the delivery of democratic mandate in any political system. Having adopted a Parliamentary form of government, India opted for continuity with the civil service system that existed during the British rule. The federal framework implied that States would have their own administrative arrangements. The all-India

¹Haque MS, Ko K. 2013. The conference on “Knowledge-building in Asia Public Administration”. Public Administration and Development 33(4): 239–242.

services were expected to provide an administrative basis for the unity of the country that had a complex socio-cultural terrain and multiple forms of diversity. The civil service system was to be characterized by constitutional protection, political neutrality, permanence, anonymity and merit based recruitment. Despite all care, the administrative system, however, came to reflect the attributes of the colonial system, meant to cater to law and order needs, rather than the democratic aspirations of public to shape and share the destiny of the nation and attain the goals of development for all. Traditionally, the relationship between the government and the citizens was looked upon as a command and control system. Government was seen as performing the role of collecting taxes and maintaining law and order. Both functions implied government agencies telling citizens what to do and what not to do. However, current trends are changing this relationship of one-way traffic, where the government tells citizens what to do or not do. In democratic societies, there is citizen pressure on the government to be more effective and efficient. Today citizens are not only demanding excellence in service delivery by government, but also shaping the policy-making function. Recent developments related to the citizen movement in the country against corruption have brought this issue to the forefront. Clearly, the feudalist mindset where government is 'raja' (king) and citizens are 'praja' (subjects) is on the way out. With such a paradigm shift, there are far-reaching changes needed in the way administration functions. Systems and processes built for an era of command and control must give way to consultative policy-making and better value for the tax money citizens are paying. The changes needed to be made for implementing the new paradigm can be seen as coming together under the umbrella of Administrative Reforms. The new idea of Good Governance and its basic facets must be incorporated in administrative system of contemporary times & to incorporate these changes reforms are required and these reforms must reflect in the functioning of the administrative system.

“2.Good Governance – Concept”

The concept of good governance is not new. Kautilya in his treatise Arthashastra elaborated the traits of the king of a well governed State thus: *“in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself, he does not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he considers as good”*. Mahatma Gandhi had propounded the concept of 'Su-raj'. Good governance aims at providing an environment in which all citizens irrespective of class, caste and gender can develop to their full potential. In addition, good governance also aims at providing public services effectively, efficiently and equitably to the citizens.

In 1992, World Bank published the report “Governance & Development”² where Good Governance was described as a central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development, and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies. In the report the term is defined as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”. The report stated that the World Bank’s interest in governance derives from its concern for the sustainability of the projects it helps finance. It concluded that sustainable development can only take place if a predictable and transparent framework of rules and institutions exists for the conduct of private and public business. The essence of good governance was described as predictable, open and enlightened policy, together with a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos and an executive arm of government accountable for its actions. Three distinctive aspects are identified in conceptualizing Good Governance –

- i. Form of Political Regime
- ii. The process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country’s economic & social resources,

² <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/1992/04/440582/governance-development>

- iii. The capacity of government to design, to formulate, to adapt, to change & implement government policies.

In October 1995 policy paper called “Governance: Sound Development Management”, the AsDB (Asian Development Bank) outlined its policy on Good Governance. The ADB has identified four basic elements of good governance- a) *Accountability*: Public officials should be answerable for government behaviour and responsive to the entity from which they derive authority. The accountability of public sector institutions is facilitated by evaluation of their economic performance. The suggested specific areas of action would be in the building of government capacity through, for example, public-sector management, public-enterprise management and reform, public financial management and civil-service reform. b) *Participation*: Government structures should be flexible enough to offer beneficiaries and others affected the opportunity to improve the design and implementation of public programmes and projects. The specific areas of action would be in the development of participatory development processes through, for example, participation of beneficiaries, a public/private-sector interface, decentralization/empowerment of local government and cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) c) *Predictability*: Laws and policies should exist that regulate society and that are applied fairly and consistently. Predictability requires the state and its subsidiary agencies to be bound by and answerable to the legal system in the same way as private enterprises and individuals. The specific area of action could be the development of predictable legal frameworks for private-sector development. d) *Transparency*. Information should be made available to the general public and there should be clarity as to rules and regulations. Access to timely information on the economy can be vital to economic decision-making by the private sector and can also serve to inhibit corruption.

This reflects the essentiality of adaptation to change or reforms in the governance system to adopt the environment which is congenial for good governance. Good governance has the following eight attributes which link it to its citizens including i) Accountable, ii) Transparent, iii) Responsive, iv) Equitable & Inclusive, v) Effective & Efficient, vi) Follow the Rule, vii) Participatory, viii) Consensus Oriented. These attributes reflect the true essence of Good Governance paradigm.

Good governance must be founded on moral virtues ensuring stability and harmony. Confucius described righteousness as the foundation of good governance and peace. The art of good governance simply lies in making things right and putting them in their right place. Confucius’s prescription for good governance is ideally suited for a country like India where many of our present day players in governance do not adhere to any principle and ensure only their own interests. Citizens are thus at the core of good governance and citizen centric administration are inextricably linked with it.

In the words of *Kofi Annan*: “*Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development*”

“3. Administrative Reforms in India”

India’s public administration system is the largest bureaucracy in the world with about 18 million employees. However, a changing environment, greater awareness among people about administration, and a rising demand for accountability and improved efficiency have made administrative reforms in the country necessary. Since independence, the Government of India has set up about 50 commissions and committees to study the nation’s public administration system and make recommendations for its improvement.

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances is the nodal agency of the Government of India for administrative reforms as well as redressal of public grievances relating to the states in general and those pertaining to Central Government agencies in particular. The

Department endeavours to document and disseminate successful good governance practices by way of audio-visual media and publications.

The Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) is the committee appointed by the Government of India to give recommendations for reforming the Indian public administration system. India has had two ARCs so far, the first ARC was constituted in 1966 and the second in 2005. The First Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)³ was chaired initially by Moraraji Desai and later by K.Hunmanthaiya. The Commission submitted 20 reports on varied subjects such as Problems of Redress of Citizens Grievances, Machinery for Planning Economic Administration, The Machinery of GOI and its procedures of work, Life Insurance Administration, Central Direct Taxes Administration, Administration of UTs, Personnel Administration before winding up in mid-1970s. These reports contained 537 major recommendations.

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) was constituted on 31.08.2005, under the Chairmanship of Shri Veerappa Moily. It was required to prepare a blueprint for revamping the public administrative system and suggest measures to achieve a proactive, responsive, accountable, sustainable and efficient administration for the country at all levels of the Government. The Commission submitted 15 Reports over a period of 9 years. The suggestive measures are directed to achieve a proactive, responsive, accountable, sustainable and efficient administration for the country at all levels of the Governance system. The recommendations in these reports are substantive for incorporating such changes to the administrative system which can adapt the principle of good governance in letter and spirit.

3.1 Second ARC: Reports & Major Recommendations

The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)⁴ was set up with a wide mandate to prepare a blue print for revamping the public administration system and to suggest measures to achieve a pro-active, responsive, accountable, sustainable and efficient administration for the country at all levels of government. The Second ARC comprises of 15 Reports which covered diverse areas of governance and took a multifaceted approach and included report on 'Right to Information (first report), Human Capital (2nd Report), 'Crisis Management' (3rd Report), 'Ethics in Governance' (4th Report), 'Public Order' (5th Report), 'Local Governance' (6th Report), 'Conflict Resolution' (7th Report), 'Combating Terrorism' (8th Report), 'Social Capital' (9th Report), 'Personnel Administration' (10th Report), 'e-Governance' (11th Report), 'Citizen Centric Administration' (12th Report), 'Organisational Structure of Government of India' (13th Report), 'Financial Management' (14th Report) and 'State and District Administration' (15th Report) and these reports, through recommended reforms, provided the road map which can reform Indian Governance System in such a way that the goals of Good Governance can be achieved in a sustainable manner.

These Reports stress the need to ensure improved work culture and work environment in Government offices suggesting various course of actions. This includes amongst others (a) effective and timely resolution of public grievances; (b) Identifications and repeal of rules or processes and archaic Acts; and (c) to encourage use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in submission of information.

The 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) had also made certain recommendations regarding redefining the Collectors' role, as many schemes/programmes are being executed through the Collectors. It also includes conducting training and capacity building exercises for civil servants. Further, in order to sensitize officers of All India Services about the

³ http://darpg.gov.in/darpgwebsite_cms/document/file/resolution.pdf

⁴ <http://arc.gov.in/>

recommendations⁵ of 2nd ARC on the issues like 'Citizen Centricity', 'Equity', 'Ethics', 'Primacy of Law' and 'Accountability', the Central Training Institutes have been asked to conduct training programmes at the induction and mid service level. It also suggests for setting up of office of Lokayuktas in States, Developing citizens' charters; Provide e-governance roadmap to the government, particularly in the area of online citizen-centric services. In the context of structure of Government, the commission suggests regarding Reorganizing the Ministries and Departments and providing Ethical Framework for Ministers. At State level, it suggests that District Council should be constituted in all districts for purpose of decentralized planning. The recommendations aim at establishing the synergy and convergence of advances in the technological and knowledge era with our rich socio-cultural practices and indigenous coping mechanisms.

“4. Government Initiatives: Strengthening Good Governance”

4.1 Citizen's Charter⁶

It has been recognised the world over that good governance is essential for sustainable development, both economic and social. The three essential aspects emphasised in good governance are transparency, accountability and responsiveness of the administration. The “Citizen's Charters initiative” is a response to the quest for solving the problems which a citizen encounters, day in and day out, while dealing with organisations providing public services.

The concept of Citizen's Charter enshrines the trust between the service provider and its users. The concept was first articulated and implemented in the United Kingdom by the Conservative Government of John Major in 1991 as a national programme with a simple aim: to continuously improve the quality of public services for the people of the country so that these services respond to the needs and wishes of the users. The programme was re-launched in 1998 by the Labour Government of Tony Blair which rechristened it “Services First”.

Over the years, in India, significant progress has been made in the field of economic development. This, along with a substantial increase in the literacy rate, (from 51.63% to 65.38% in the last decade) has made Indian citizens increasingly aware of their rights. Citizens have become more articulate and expect the administration not merely to respond to their demands but also to anticipate them. It was in this climate that a consensus began to evolve, since 1996, in the Government on effective and responsive administration. These Charters were to include first, standards of service as well as the time limits that the public can reasonably expect for service delivery, avenues of grievance redressal and a provision for independent scrutiny through the involvement of citizen and consumer groups.

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances in Government of India (DARPG) initiated the task of coordinating, formulating and operationalizing Citizen's Charters. The guidelines for formulating the Charters as well as a list of do's and don'ts were communicated to various government departments/organisations to enable them to bring out focused and effective charters. For the formulation of the Charters, the government agencies at the Centre and State levels were advised to constitute a task force with representation from users, senior management and the cutting edge staff. Even Second ARC's 12th Report *Citizen Centric Administration The Heart of Governance* (Feb 2009) also focused on Citizen Charter as it strongly mentioned citizens at the heart of Service Delivery System. A Citizen's Charter is basically a set of commitments made by an

⁵ <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=107707>

⁶ <http://goicharters.nic.in/chartermain.htm>

organization regarding the standards of service which it delivers. Components of a Citizen's Charter⁷ should include:

- (i) Vision and Mission Statement;
- (ii) Details of Business transacted by the Organisation;
- (iii) Details of clients;
- (iv) Details of services provided to each client group;
- (v) Details of grievance redressal mechanism and how to access it; and
- (vi) Expectations from the clients.

It is critically important that the evaluation system for performance in line with the Citizen's Charter standards is congruent with the department's broader performance information system. Thus, the standards in the charter should not be different from those of individual officials as per their job description or as set out in their departmental indicators. Evaluation should take place regularly, ideally quarterly. This should be IT-enabled so that data can be analysed in real-time and reports on service failure against the charter standards can be generated automatically.

A survey carried out by "The Indian Express" Hyderabad covering applicants for licenses, transfer certificates and fitness certificate applicants highlights the improved service delivery by the Officers of the R.T.O.

The findings of the survey brought forth the conclusion that: "There has been considerable improvement in the functioning of the Regional Transport Authority, though the time taken for processing and issue of certificates is not in accordance with the commitment made in the Citizens' Charter, it has become faster than the earlier duration. The role of touts though not totally eradicated, has been minimised. There was widespread appreciation, specifically among parents about the measures being implemented by the department to check the condition of school buses. The department officials have become more responsive while attending to complaints and grievances. The response to enquiries, both online and telephonic, was comparatively prompt. Unlike in the past, the processing and procedures have been simplified. The department has become more transparent."

4.2 Information and Facilitation Counters (IFC)

An integral aspect of administrative reforms both in the short term and in the longer perspective is related to the speedy and easy access of information to the public on the services and activities of Government and the development of an appropriate Management Information System in Government. There are considerable delays in Redressal of grievances and securing access to information, since Government departments with a public service interface do not have a mechanism to provide information to the citizens across the counter or to deal with their queries and complaints at a single point. The Government of India has decided that all offices of the Government and agencies under it should have a computerized public interface, aimed at dissemination of information to the public for a fee or free of charge. The Central Government Ministries and their agencies should take steps to ensure the provision of all unclassified information on procedures and decisions to the public through facilitation counters which should be set up near the Reception Hall of the Ministry, offices etc. similar to the Lakhina model in Maharashtra. These counters would be operated continuously during the day by trained officials with courteous approach, with the capacity to converse in English and the local language and capable of using computers. These counters can be provided with computer consoles to provide instant information on the status of pending cases, waiting lists, etc. So far 105 Ministries/Departments/Organizations have set up IFCs/"May I Help You"/"Enquiry

⁷ <http://goicharters.nic.in/chandbook.htm>

Counters”. These Ministries/Departments/Organizations have designated a senior officer as Contact Officer who is overall in-charge of the IFC and can be contacted in case of any difficulty or feedback.

4.3 State Wide Attention on Grievances through Application of Technology (SWAGAT), India⁸

SWAGAT (State Wide Attention on Grievances through Application of Technology) was the winner of the 2010 United Nations Public Service Award. The program has been functional since 2003 and is currently active in 248 districts in the state of Gujarat, India. SWAGAT is based on the philosophy of making administration people friendly. The concept behind this initiative is that efficient, transparent and quick Grievance Redressal is the key to citizen satisfaction and the government must be accountable to the public. On a fixed day every month, grievances are registered and made available to concerned officials. Subsequently, the Chief Minister and senior officers at various levels of government interact with the complainants via video conferencing. Cases are resolved on the same day or within a stipulated time frame as decided. Complaints that reach this level must have necessarily gone through lower levels of administration and remain unresolved. This provides incentive for all officials to take grievances seriously as failure on their part might result in serious action from the Chief Minister. Overall mandate of SWAGAT is that the attention should be on grievances to strengthen good governance. A proper analysis of the nature of grievances submitted to Government at all levels must take place. It focuses to activate Administration to solve public grievances at State, District and Sub District level.

Statistics show that about 97%⁹ of all applications received through SWAGAT have been resolved in the period between 2003 & 2010. In the mentioned period (2003-2010) At State level 971 application received and all were solved, at district level out of 49891 received 49614 were resolved and at Sub-District level out of 45117 received application 43621 were resolved. This shows the great success of this reform initiative to incorporate good governance features in the current administrative set up. The administration is more accountable to the public and surveys show an increase in citizen satisfaction. Involvement of multiple officials allows for a fair decision making process. SWAGAT makes higher levels of administration aware of the problems of the citizens, which creates scope for policy reform. Another interesting aspect of SWAGAT is that it doesn't require additional financial resources and works by utilizing the existing budget in an innovative and efficient manner. The program has addressed a variety of cases including those related to corruption, harassment, land reforms and relief for disabled.

“SWAGAT” has been replicated¹⁰ in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for online Grievance Redressal System of Chief Minister as “SAMADHAN ONLINE” in January, 2006 and as “eSAMADHAN” in January, 2007 respectively.

4.4 Strengthening Public Administration and Governance¹¹

This UNDP project is in partnership with the Department of Administrative Reforms, Government of India and aims to disseminate innovative solutions and best practices in public service delivery, governance and public administration at the national and sub-national levels in India. It also

⁸ http://darpg.gov.in/darpgwebsite/cms/Document/file/int_sympto_excell.pdf

⁹ <http://cdn.narendramodi.in/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/swagatonline-ppt-170114.pdf>

¹⁰ http://informatics.nic.in/uploads/pdfs/01d68737_gujarat.pdf

¹¹ http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/operations/projects/democratic_governance/strengthening-public-administration-and-governance.html

highlight inter-state differences and support multi-state studies that will help improve outcomes, as states learn best from examples of other states; Majorly, It promote initiatives that leverage e-governance and m-governance (mobile app based governance) to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of public administration; and support the collation of best international practices in public administration and governance that are relevant to India in support of global and South- South collaboration. This Mission will continue till 2017 with a budget of 1 Million dollars

Funding Support by

| Donor Name | Amount Contributed |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| United Nations Development Programme | US\$ 1,000,000 |

Delivery in Previous Fiscal Year

| Year | Amount |
|------|-----------------|
| 2016 | US\$ 185,710 |
| 2015 | US\$ 206,184.52 |
| 2014 | US\$ 176,766 |
| 2013 | US\$ 8,695 |

4.4.1 The Project's Highlights are as follows-

- The financial support improved outcomes of government programmes in key social sectors such as health, education, employment and livelihoods through assessments of challenges across these sectors.
- It provided technical assistance to help improve governance initiatives and promote reforms related to accountability and improved efficiency of government.
- It helps in identifying, documenting and dissemination of innovative policies and practices that demonstrate enhanced service delivery, transparency and accountability.
- It demonstrated and scaled-up innovative e-governance initiatives in public administration and management.

“5. Bottlenecks & Challenges”

Despite these initiatives, there are challenges in implementation and effective service delivery. There is plethora of recommendations received from Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC). Starting with a bang on Right to Information (RTI) with laudable promises of addressing the major deficit in “good governance”, it is close to 8 years since its final report has been submitted still there is no ‘Action Taken Report’ in public domain as regards the major recommendations of the 2nd ARC.

Subjects dealt by the 2nd ARC are key agendas of contemporary; it is no body's case that these important issues of governance should be addressed through a single reformative step forward. Given the federal character and also accountability to the Legislature, the initiatives of course correction would emanate from multiple points leading to up gradation of the present system of governance which is the widely recognized as incapable of meeting the nation's expectations. The present polity is facing multiple challenges and ineffective redressal is causing the threat of multiple organ failure. Sincere adoption of relevant recommendations of the 2nd ARC would have certainly guided in the positive direction leading to resolution of the various important deadlocks that our nation is grappling with on a day to day basis, it only points to the sorry state of affairs that the recommendations of the 2nd ARC are still wanting effective actions in terms of ground level execution. Out of its total

165 recommendations, 153 fall in the domain of the states and other vital recommendations to cleanse the system and introduce integrity and efficiency has been put on a *snail pace* action.

5.1 One size fits all” approach

There is always a risk of “one size fits all” approach, in which all states, departments and areas are treated in the same manner. This would lead to failures either for reforms, development or both. The principle of need based approach must be implemented while adopting reforms in the administrative system. In case of adopting any technological advancement for enforcing reform must be dealt with care, as first detailed analysis of people’s readiness, administration capability must be taken into account, otherwise the efforts put into reforms may end being futile and unfruitful.

Administrative reforms need to keep pace with the rapid development of the country, particularly to ensure that the benefits of growth are equitably distributed and reach the large numbers of marginalized people. There is also a need to simplify rules and procedures, and ensure greater convergence and integrated outcome-based policymaking, planning and management among divisions. Best practices in public service delivery by some states, such as use of ICT and e-governance, have not been documented in a systematic manner, nor are there mechanisms to support states in adapting and replicating such best practices. As a result, states are unable to learn from other states’ experiences, and often end up repeating the same processes.

“6. CONCLUSION”

The quest for reforms & innovations in the administration has been on-going for quite some time, but with the need for the world to achieve the commitments made by its leaders in the UN Summit in 2015, it has attained a level of urgency. The global consensus on the urgency of reinventing government is not only manifested in the research efforts that are focusing on how to improve the performance of governance and public administration institutions. It is also seen in the innovators’ readiness to come together to share information and knowledge about their innovations to minimize wastage of resources and time in re-inventing the wheel. It has dawned on most people concerned with the improvement of performance in the public sector that although innovations in government are circumscribed in scope, they have the potential to trigger a bigger process of transformation of the State and produce general positive benefits for citizens through improved service delivery. There are networks of innovators being formed for purposes of sharing and adapting successful practices in innovation.

In Indian context as far as 2nd ARC is concerned, Starting with a bang on Right to Information (RTI) with laudable promises of addressing the major deficit in “good governance”, it is close to eight years since its commencement and nearly 8 years since the last Report submitted in April, 2009, still there is only few ‘Action Taken Report’ in public domain as regards the major recommendations of the 2nd ARC. As per the reply to an application under RTI¹² moved on 1st June, 2014, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, has disclosed that the total expenditure incurred in the working of the Commission till January 2013 amounts to approximately Rs 11.90Crores. Taking example, to know the status of adoption of all recommendations under the Fifth Report on 2nd ARC, the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DoARPG) informed that out of a total of 165 recommendations not even a single recommendation was accepted by the Government and later on if few were accepted, those were left for States for implementation and rest were either rejected or referred to be incorporated under Model Police Act.

¹² RTI Application No (DARPG/R/2014/60180 dated 01/06/2014.

Subjects dealt by the 2nd ARC are key agendas of contemporary Administrative Reforms; it is no body's case that these important issues of governance should be addressed through a single reformative step forward. Given the federal character and also accountability to the Legislature, the initiatives of course correction would emanate from multiple points leading to up gradation of the present system of governance which is the widely recognized as incapable of meeting the nation's expectations. The present polity is facing multiple challenges and ineffective redressal is causing the threat of multiple organ failure. Sincere adoption of relevant recommendations of the 2nd ARC would have certainly guided in the positive direction leading to resolution of the various important deadlocks that our nation is grappling with on a day to day basis, it only points to the sorry state of affairs that the recommendations of the 2nd ARC still want effective actions. Out of its total 1514 recommendations, 987 fall in the domain of the states and other vital recommendations to cleanse the system and introduce integrity and efficiency has been put on a *snail pace* action.

A careful analysis of the various strands of reforms attempted in recent years clearly suggests that these represent a bundle of remedies meant to pacify the diverse concerns of competing interests without resolving their underlying contradictions. While, there is a strong thrust towards strengthening the position of citizens through an expansion of participatory spaces, there is also an evidence of increasing marginalization of the poor on account of reduced commitments of state intervention in many spheres. 'Reforms' discourse in India has, in fact, been shaped by the somewhat competing claims of new public management and democratic strivings, evident in concerns for efficiency, effectiveness and autonomy on one hand and access, equity, citizen-centricity and accountability on the other. It is important to work towards a resolution to ensure that the imperatives of democracy are not compromised and administrative spaces remain relevant to their effective realization so that both the reforms processes and the reforms outcomes are as inclusive and citizen-centric as possible.

The *Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration Report of the Secretary-General (2003)*¹³, highlights that good governance is also the key ingredient in making the difference between noble aspirations and effective realization, together with effective institutions, adequate material resources and international support.

An efficient public administration system is the foundation for a transparent and accountable government and fosters equitable growth. In a world of transitioning democracies and economies, it is imperative that nations must put effort in building strong public service systems for economic growth, peace and stability, leading to Good Governance. A responsible administration must focus on transparency, accountability and equity to manage the reform process. Additionally, a well-functioning system would be one that is proactive and not reactive to challenges. In order to sustain efforts towards a better public administration, it is paramount to support each initiative to encourage innovation in each public institution, to motivate public servants to help bridge the gap between governments' actions and citizens' expectations, as People's participation in governance is recognized the world over as a prerequisite of good governance.¹⁴ Where capable administrations are lacking governments are incapacitated; and where governments are incapacitated, goals of good governance falls short.

As administration is the cornerstone of government's work, plays an essential and critical role in improving people's lives. Reinventing and Reforming Administrative System is a positive and

¹³ <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Governance.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://publicadministration.un.org/publications/content/PDFs/Good%20Practices%20and%20Innovations%20in%20Public%20Governance%202012-2013.pdf>

necessary way forward. Without public administration modernization and transformation to adapt to today's needs, realizing goals of Good-Governance will be impossible.

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