

## **Note on GOOD GOVERNANCE**

### **Objectives**

At the end of the session the participants will be able

1. to explain in a few sentences what good governance is
2. list out the principles of Good governance
3. spell out the importance of good governance in the institutional context

### **Introduction**

In any discussion on good governance, attention must be focused on the primary responsibilities of the government. These must include the maintenance of law and order, administration of justice, and welfare of economically and socially weaker sections of society in terms of provision of safety net for them. Here again it is seen that, in its anxiety to do thousand and one other things, these primary responsibilities have been neglected over the years. It can truly be said that he who governs the least governs the best! If this principle had been followed in governance all these years, India would not have presented a picture of such squalor, filth, illiteracy and poverty even fifty years after Independence. The main question is whether we are prepared to learn lessons for the future from our experience of the past.

At the outset, it needs to be appreciated that the concept of good governance is much larger than mere administrative reforms in the conventional sense of the term. In fact, it covers much more ground and substance than administrative reforms. Good governance has much to do with the ethical grounding of governance and must be evaluated with reference to specific norms and objectives as may be laid down. It looks at the functioning of the given segment of the society from the point of view of its acknowledged stakeholders and beneficiaries and customers. It must have firm moorings to certain moral values and principles. Good governance, as a concept, is applicable to all sections of society such as the government, legislature, judiciary, the media, the private sector, the corporate sector, the co-operatives, societies registered under the Societies Registration Act, duly registered trusts, organizations such as the trade unions and lastly the non-government organisations (NGOs). Public accountability and transparency are as relevant for the one as for the other.

The five basic principles of good governance as given by the United Nations Development Programme are as given in the Box 1

<b>Box 1 : Five Principles of Good Governance</b>	
<b>The Five Good Governance Principles</b>	<b>The UNDP Principles and related UNDP text on which they are based</b>
<b>1. Legitimacy and Voice</b>	<b>Participation</b> - all men and women should have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their intention. Such broad participation is built on freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively.
<b>2. Direction</b>	<b>Strategic vision</b> - leaders and the public have a broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, along with a sense of what is needed for such development. There is also an understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which that perspective is grounded.
<b>3. Performance</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b> - institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders. Effectiveness and efficiency - processes and institutions produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources.
<b>4. Accountability</b>	<b>Accountability</b> - decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organizations and whether the decision is internal or external. <b>Transparency</b> - transparency is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.
<b>5. Fairness</b>	<b>Equity</b> - all men and women have opportunities to improve or maintain their well being. <b>Rule of Law</b> - legal frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights.

**1. Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users**

- 1.1 Being clear about the organisation's purpose and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users
- 1.2 Making sure that users receive a high quality service
- 1.3 Making sure that taxpayers receive value for money.

**2. Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles**

- 2.1 Being clear about the functions of the governing body
- 2.2 Being clear about the responsibilities of non-executives and the executive, and making sure that those responsibilities are carried out
- 2.3 Being clear about relationships between governors and the public

**3. Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour**

- 3.1 Putting organisational values into practice
- 3.2 Individual governors behaving in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance

**4. Good governance means taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk**

- 4.1 Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken
- 4.2 Having and using good quality information, advice and support
- 4.3 Making sure that an effective risk management system is in operation.

**5. Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective**

- 5.1 Making sure that appointed and elected governors have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well.
- 5.2 Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.

5.3 Striking a balance, in the membership of the governing body, between continuity and renewal

**6. Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real**

6.1 Understanding formal and informal accountability relationships

6.2 Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public.

6.3 Taking an active and planned approach to responsibility to staff

6.4 Engaging effectively with institutional stakeholders

**Conclusion**

To achieve Good Governance the Government shall be on a mission to follow clarity, conviction, compassion and consistency in governance which are prerequisites to achieve the principles and vision of good governance. Clarity promotes transparency, participatory and efficient governance. Conviction promotes accountable and effective governance. Compassion promotes consensus oriented, equitable and inclusive governance.

Consistency promotes responsive governance, follows the rule of the law and modernizes itself according to the needs and changes of the society upholding the guiding principles of the Constitution. The Government shall act as a facilitator for the people, market and civil society and remain a prudent regulator to ensure social equity and fair competition in the society. The changes in the role of the Government will be carefully defined and communicated so that the people will understand that changes are in their interest. Decentralization is an essential part of the government to make more efficient and responsive. The Government shall Strengthen local government and management by devolving administrative and economic powers and responsibilities. The Government will directly involve people in the management of the services they use. The Government is committed to minimize citizen interface with the Government Departments by introducing the Internet, Web and groupware technologies will be used to create national electronic highways and networks at all points of contact between the people and the Government. The primary task of the government shall be to ensure efficient and responsive services, making it easy for the people to gain essential information from the government and ensure that they have

recourse to mechanisms that punish wrongdoing. Charters shall be introduced to improve the quality and effectiveness of public services.

### **References**

1. REPORT OF THE ONE MAN COMMITTEE ON GOOD GOVERNANCE DR. MADHAV GODBOLE JULY 2001.
2. The good governance standard for public service delivery by the independent commission in public services.
3. Principles for good governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century- Policy Brief No.15- August 2003 By John Draham et al.

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