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AN APPRAISAL OF GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A CASE STUDY

Deepak Sharma*

Urbanization is inevitable and is directly linked with the process of economic development and both are complementary to each other, thus Urban governance has assumed a swelling significance. Managing this progression of urbanization is proving an enormous challenge to political leaders, policy makers, municipal authorities and people at large. To fortify the concerns of governance system in an effective manner, the role of ICT and Good Governance practices has been considered significant. In light of this, need of effective grievance redressal holds the key for success of local governments.

The present study analyzes and assesses the various modes of grievance redressal mechanism and their effectiveness at Municipal Corporation Chandigarh. The study finds that there are stern weaknesses ranging from poor awareness about the mechanisms, role to discharge of duties on part of official's and failure of Good Governance initiatives. Although inception of online grievance redressal in local government has shown some benefits but lacunas need to be addressed on an urgent basis to capitulate rewarding results at the core level.

Keywords

Urban Governance, Grievance Redressal, Local Governments, Stern Weaknesses, Rewarding Results

Introduction

Governance draws its genesis from the origin of civilization. It literally means the process of decision making and the process by which the decisions are implemented (or not implemented).¹ To put it simply, governance is what the government does. Public agencies exercise political economic and administrative authority to administer multifarious affairs which directly affects needs of public. Further governance relates to effective management of affairs of country at all levels, guarantee its territorial integrity, and secure the safety and overall welfare of its people.² At the grass root level, local government is the agency which is close to the population. Under the wave of decentralization, local governments are provided with power and authority to deal with problems at local level and also to entertain needs of local citizens with effective service delivery mechanisms.

Governance at local level is decentralised because it understands the concern of local residents, eliminate the confusion of jurisdiction and makes the decision making responsive to people for whom services are intended³. The modern-day era of development is much complex than earlier times, in today's era the quality of governance is being acknowledged as one of considerable

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GLOBAL EDUCATION: CHALLENGES IN INDIA

G Kamalakar*

"The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think – rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men." – Bill Beattie

India has the largest number of higher education institutions in the world, with 348 universities and 17,625 colleges. At 10.5 million, the number of students enrolled is the third largest globally.

However, the Gross Enrolment Ratio is low as compared to other countries, including developing countries. Critical gaps exist in the capacity and management systems of the higher education structure.

India's large and young population requires access to affordable and credible higher education in order to raise equity and promote inclusive growth. Its emerging role in the global economy, as well as its declining age dependency ratio in an environment of dwindling workforce in developed countries, afford it a key role in international industry and services sectors. India also has the capacity to transform itself into a global education services provider. These objectives would require a huge increase in the expenditure on higher education, both by the government and the private sectors.

A climate must be built for attracting investment in education from private domestic and overseas sources. Regulatory authorities need to be set in place. Additionally, mechanisms for quality of service provision, accreditation, curriculum revision, and others need to be established. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Indian Council for Research in International Economic Relations (ICRIER) have collaborated on preparing a paper outlining recommendations to revitalize the higher education sector in India with greater participation of the private sector in a more liberal and encouraging investment climate. The paper is based on an earlier Working Paper by Pawan Agarwal entitled 'Higher Education in India: The Need for a Change' of May 2006.

Keywords

Higher Education, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Young Population, Global Economy, Government, Private Sectors, CII, ICRIER

Introduction

Globalization has wide ranging potential to influence all sectors of development. Besides its impact

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GLOBALIZATION AND IMPLICATIONS TO GOVERNANCE IN POST-INDUSTRIAL ECONOMIES

Jason L Powell*

This article explicates how post-industrial changes in the form of globalization have changed social welfare and public policy making worldwide. In contrast with the economic downturn and global softening of labor markets which cry for greater social protection, the welfare state of the last century has been replaced by a competitive state of the 21st century, as a 'non-sovereign power' mindful of its global positioning but less powerful in shaping daily life among social forces including the role of NGOs.

Indicating a lag between transnational developments and the way analysts think of social policies, the paper asserts that nation-states nonetheless serve important administrative functions in a world dominated by transnational corporate interests. In considering all the challenges to justice and governance, social welfare needs to be redefined and extended while market economy must be guided by moral principles that embody fundamental human values.

Keywords

Globalization, Social Welfare, Public Policy Making, NGOs, Administrative Functions, Market Economy

Introduction

As we move into what could be called the 'global century', many aspects of social and economic life are changing and post-industrial shifts are unparalleled by virtue of the interconnectedness. New technologies, new economic relationships, new social processes, and new political developments are all characteristics of globalization (Hudson and Lowe, 2004: 22) in a post-industrial age featured by information, innovation, finance, and services. As the world has contracted, people's quality of life has changed regardless of where they live. In fact, the propagation of free market mindsets in emerging economies has created collective network connections with considerable good but pervasive inequalities as well (Walker 2001).

A fundamental aim of this paper is to argue that these changes are part of a economic transition to post-industrialism associated with risks and inequalities that shape human experience in the midst of a formidable global financial climate. There is an obvious tension with this. On the one hand, life expectancy, health statuses and per capital incomes are at an all-time high and many feudal practices have been relegated to the past (Phillipson, 2006) and on the other hand, vast numbers of people

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INDIAN RIGHT TO INFORMATION: TESTING THE CONTINGENCY APPROACH TO TRANSPARENCY BY STIRTON AND LODGE

Chetan Agarwal*

Right to information movement in India started in 1990s intensifying the process of paradigm shift from state- centric to citizen-centric model of development. Grassroots movements began in India demanding freedom of information in order to combat corruption deeply rooted in the Indian public sector. Being pressurised from all sides, the state finally responded and passed the Right to Information Act in October, 2005 to promote good governance. In this study the framework developed by Stirton and Lodge was applied. Stirton and Lodge (2001) developed a contingency approach to build transparency into an institution. They suggested that public service architecture must be analysed and accordingly transparency mechanisms should be built into the system in order to promote transparency.

This study extends the idea of transparency mechanisms by suggesting that underneath each of these doctrines of public sector architectures are 'dominant' instruments which in turn activate certain mechanisms to promote transparency. I conducted content analysis, interviews, and secondary analysis and the results clearly showed that the RTI as an instrument is reducing potential information asymmetries which in turn are exercised by Indian public in the form of 'voice' and 'representation' to promote transparency. Media and civil society organisations have played a crucial role in passing, scrutinising, and monitoring the implementation of the Act.

Keywords

Right to Information, RTI, Corruption, Transparency, Administration

Introduction

The cliché is not quite right: information by itself is not power. But information is a vital first step in the exercise of economic and political power. Opening up channels of information brings about changes to who can do what. The last few decades have witnessed the rise in citizens from all parts of the world demanding more information and increasingly unwilling to tolerate secretive decision making. As a result, major freedom of information laws have been adopted by the UK, Japan, India, South Africa, Mexico and a host of other countries (Florini, 2007).

Sweden secures the place as the first country to have a law granting its citizens access to government records, enacted in the late 18th century. By 2012, the total number of countries having such laws was

*Works towards training the unorganized cleaning sector workers.

TARGETED PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM AND THE FOOD SECURITY DEBATE

Kalpana Prasad

Targeted Public Distribution System, which aims at a target group, was introduced in 1997. This gave rise to a debate between a Universal Public Distribution System and a Targeted Public Distribution System. After going through this debate, this paper argues that a Universal Public Distribution System is more suitable for India.

Keywords

Target Public Distribution System, Universal Public Distribution System, Debate, India.

Introduction

This paper analyses the views of scholars, policy makers and academicians on the Public Distribution System and situates itself within those. First we look at the views of those who argue for a Universal Public Distribution System (PDS) and then that of those who argue for a targeted PDS. We then look at the alternatives suggested and arrive at our own findings.

The proposed Targeted Public Distribution System has to be seen in the context of further liberalization of the economy. In the 1990s when the liberalization process was further strengthened by incorporating more changes, the food security system of the country also underwent changes. In 1992, Revamped Public Distribution System was introduced and later in 1997 targeting was introduced and PDS became Targeted Public Distribution System which gave rise to the debate between a Universal and a Targeted Public Distribution System.

The spiralling food prices and the high rate of inflation in the past few months draw our attention to the food security of our country. The poor people are the worst sufferers. The government plans to pass a 'Food Security Act' and guarantee 'Right to Food' as a Fundamental Right to the people. The Supreme Court has also realized the problem and has directed the government to distribute food grains free of cost to the poor. At this juncture when a Food Security Act is being implemented it becomes important to analyze the debate between an Universal and a Targeted Public Distribution System.

Arguments in Favour of a Targeted Public Distribution System

There is no consensus among the proponents of a Targeted Public Distribution System on the means of targeting. Many like Radhakrishnan (1996) argue for a Targeted Public Distribution System. According to him, the poor have a threat to food security and are exposed to risk of uncertainty both in food and labor market. He argues for a demarcation between poor and moderately poor and says that

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WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENIC PRACTICES IN RURAL INDIA: A CASE STUDY OF GARGEYAPURAM VILLAGE, KURNOOL DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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Water is a precious commodity. Provision of clean drinking water, sanitation and a clean environment are vital to improve health and life span of people. To examine sanitation and hygienic practices in rural India, we have selected Gargeyapuram village, Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh for our study. The main objectives of the present study are to investigate the factors influencing the construction of household taps and toilets and hygienic practices in the village.

We have found that 14% of households have their own tap connections. Secondly, 42% of the households have toilet access. Thirdly, men- 58%, women- 57% and children- 91% of the persons of the households are taking bath daily. Finally, majority of the households are far away for tap connection and toilet access in general and particularly in SCs and STs.

Keywords

Precious Commodity, Drinking Water, Hygienic Practices, Rural India, Household Taps

Introduction

Water, sanitation and hygiene service are very important to address the poverty, livelihoods and health. Water is a precious commodity. Provision of clean drinking water, sanitation and a clean environment are vital to improve the health and life span of people. Women and girls spend hours fetching water from different sources like Public Stand Post (PSP), Hand Pump (HP), Household Tap (HHT), Open Wells (OW), Agriculture Wells (AW) and Surface Water (SW). Sanitation is a basic need like food and drinking water. A sanitary toilet within or near home provides privacy and dignity to women. Sanitation and hygienic improvement is very important for the development of society.

Since Independence, sanitation is in a very pathetic condition in our country. These days, sanitation conditions have been improved by the efforts of Central and State Governments and however still improvement is required for the better sanitation and hygienic practices in rural areas. Due to lack of proper sanitation facilities, human beings are still practicing open defecation. Practice of open defecation is due to several factors and the most prominent being the traditional behavioural pattern, lack of finance and lack of awareness about the health hazards. In these constraints, for study purpose, we have selected Gargeyapuram village, Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

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Book Review 1

REFORMING CIVIL SERVICE FOR A LIBERALISED INDIA

S K Das, **Building a World-Class Civil Service for Twenty-First Century India**, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010, Rs. 675.00, pp. 1-269, ISBN: 0-19-806866-2.

The process of globalization and liberalization has thrown new challenges to the bureaucracy in countries around the globe. The bureaucracy was not equipped to face the challenges posed by the process of globalisation. As a consequence to these changes, several countries resorted to different means and ways of transforming the civil service in their country keeping in mind the challenges posed by the process of globalisation. The process has involved reformation in government structures. India being a part of the said process has also geared up to the challenges.

The present book identifies the need and process of creating a world class civil service towards achieving the goal of twenty first century India. Using a comparative approach, the author identifies a range of issues in the process of such a transformation in the Indian civil service and to make it a world-class organization. Taking example from the reform experiences of Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, and the UK, the author argues for such reform in India as well. There are many challenges to such a transformation which are identified and also are discussed the changes required in the entire governance structures of the country for achieving a high performing world class civil service. The book contains twenty chapters grouped into five different parts. A brief outline of the book is presented below.

Chapter 1 deals primarily with the nature of civil service that in India we have today. It also brings out the continuity from the colonial times who initiated the civil service in india. The chapter presents comprehensive discussion on the civil service reforms in different countries around the world, where a modern civil service has emerged which is focused on professionalism and results. The chapter sets the tone for such reforms in the Indian context. Performance and accountability has become the hall mark of efficient civil service. Thus an argument is made in Chapter 2 for making a distinction between policy formulation and policy implementation highlighting the importance of clarity in purpose and task. Accountability is diluted when there is no clarity of purpose and task. While dealing with policy making Chapter 3 highlights that policies are made without much concern to the long run context and primarily as a response to the immediate necessity. Therefore it is suggested that policy making should be a process of continuous learning and forward looking.

Chapter 4 deals with public service delivery. The author suggests the creation of a separate autonomous agency for service delivery. The advantage of such an autonomous agency is flexibility in function than the present system of departmentally managed service delivery. In a separate agency performance measurement and fixing accountability is easier is further argued.

In Chapter 5, the importance of result-orientation is highlighted. The author shows how in the existing system government functioning is process driven rather than result driven. Therefore a mechanism should be developed which accesses the performance in terms of result is suggested.

Chapter 6 deals with performance measurement. There are several inputs which are highlighted such as; aspirations set of targets, ownership and accountability, performance review and reinforcement to

Book Review 2

BUREAUCRACY AND POLITICS

Dr Mohammed Ali Rafat, IAS, **Bureaucracy and Politics**, New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2012

Dr Mohammad Ali Rafat, an officer of the All India Services has brought out a daring commentary on the contemporary challenges of All India Services and how they have conveniently deviated from their assigned path of serving the citizens of this great country. It is a scholarly work relating to the growth of service jurisprudence in the domain of All India Services.

The author has done extensive research on the aspects of historical evolution of Indian Civil Service leading to the creation of All India Services, viz., IAS, IPS, IFS, and passing of All India Services Act, 1954. The author traces the evolution and growth of Indian Civil Service from pre-independence era and highlights the changing environment in the country especially in the political arena and how these changes have influenced the All India Services. The author is nostalgic about the glorious past and the reputation enjoyed by the All India Services during the time of its inception.

The constitutional convention and values which form the basis for the All India Services appear to be slowly eroding with powerful political personalities making serious amends to the fine fabric of the AIS. There are striking examples of how political system, the judiciary and the executive have collided together in spoiling the governance system in the country. There are daring examples and names of politicians who have maneuvered with the governance system for individual benefits. The other areas which are touched upon by the author is the issue of service jurisprudence arising out of the intra-service conflict among the cadre officers recruited to IAS/IPS from different sources.

The author is of the view that there is a very clear sign of decline in the standards of civil services in India which includes both professional standards as well as ethical standards. He further concludes that as professionals and the civil servants have failed to rise above mediocrity and have failed in delivery services to the people of this great nation, in turn have failed all those who had high expectations from these services and men and hope that they will change the fate of many in this nation.

The fact that the civil servants are obsessed with their individual career advancement and follow the policy of appeasement to their political bosses clearly shows the extent of degradation that has set into the system over a period of time. The author in clear terms talks about the need to reform the system and streamline governance roles and relationships.

The author discuss in length about the All India Service Act of 1951 and the various rules and regulations that were passed by the Governments defining the service conditions.

The author also compared the civil services in other countries, especially England, with Indian Civil Service. The book also deals with the question of the relationship between the political executive and the bureaucracy which is a very sensitive subject not only in India but in other democracies of the world as well.

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