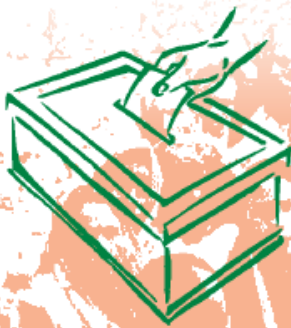




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INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISE

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CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE

Keshab Chandra Ratha¹
Sushanta Kumar Mahapatra²

The crisis of governance lies in the deterioration of moral standards in the political and administrative system. There are much pervasive nepotism, corruption, misappropriation of state funds, absence of transparency and accountability in public administration, lack of respect for the rule of law or lack of ethical behavior in public life. The institutions that constitute the core of India's democratic governance structure are at peril.

The entry of criminal politics further explains the continuing deterioration of law and order in the country. The nexus between corrupt individuals and political parties to appropriate the state defines the crisis of governance in India and results in growing enfeeblement of state and human security. The political process no longer derives the trust of people. The present paper examines the root causes of crisis and comes up with suggested area of reforms to minimize the intensity of the crisis of governance in India.

Keywords

Governance, Accountability, Reform, Politics, Corruption, Civil Society, India.

Introduction and the Concept

Traditionally, governance refers to forms of political system and the manner in which power is exercised in utilizing country's economic and social resources for development. It also deals with the capacity of government to design, formulate and discharge government functions. The concept of governance is not new. It is as old as human civilization. Simply put, governance means the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)³. Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance, and local governance.

Since the governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses formal actors involved in decision making and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decisions. Government is one of the actors in governance. Other actors are also involved in governance. In rural areas, other actors may include influential landlords, associations for peasant farmers, co-operatives, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), research

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3 Cited from UNESCAP (Undated): "What is good governance", United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

DECLINE OF ALL-INDIA PARTIES: PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION TO THE RESCUE

B Ramesh Babu¹

"Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they are today."

- Mahatma Gandhi

"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult".

- Seneca

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

- Buckminster Fuller

Decline of the major or all-India parties and the rise of regional and caste based parties has become an established trend in the country leading to endless fragmentation of the polity. Consequently, 'national' and 'nationalist' perspectives on crucial issues of economic growth, social development, internal and external security are losing out, which is not at all good for the country.

Our electoral system with its inbuilt vote-seat distortion aggravates these negative consequences. The wine take all FPTP system of elections makes the marginal votes crucial for victory, which the candidates and parties want to corner by hook or crook.

These ills can be curbed and the national parties can be revived by switching to the Proportional Representation (PR) system, whereby the legislatures will reflect the distribution voter preferences accurately. Parties will get seats on the basis of the votes they receive. No major section or view point will be excluded or diluted. By introducing Multi Member Constituencies reservations for minorities can be provided. If a minimum cut off point (say 5-10 % of vote polled) is put in place, the unseemly fragmentation of the polity can be curtailed. This would also lead to the regeneration of all-India parties.

The PR system can be introduced through simple amendments to the People's Representation Act. No constitutional amendments are required. PR system could rescue the nation from the status quo, i.e. the mess we are in!

Keywords

Decline of Major Parties, Corruption, Election Costs, FPTP, PR, Multi-Member Constituencies.

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THE ODISHA STATE AGRICULTURAL POLICY 2008: A DOCUMENT OF DENIALS TO FARMERS, RETREAT OF THE STATE AND THREAT TO ECONOMY

Bhabani Shankar Nayak¹

Whose agricultural policy, at what costs and for whom? This article seeks to question the very basis of the Odisha State Agricultural Policy (OSAP) 2008 formulated by the Government of Odisha.

The article argues that the policy is neither in the interests of the agriculture nor in the interests of the majority of farmers. It is a policy associated with the interests of big farmers and intends to increase corporatisation and landlordism in agriculture.

So it is a threat to the state's economy and agricultural communities. The article also depicts the retreat of the state in Odisha to discharge its welfare responsibilities for the farmers in particular and agricultural economy in general.

Keywords

Agricultural Policy, Farmers, Corporatisation, Landlordism, Agricultural Communities, Welfare Responsibilities, Agricultural Economy

Introduction

The state of Odisha comprises 4.74% of India's landmass with total cultivable land of 65.59 lakh hectares of which only 25.20 lakh hectares under cultivation. The population of the state is 36.71 million that accounts for 3.57% of the population of the country (Census, 2001). Nearly 85% of its population lives in the rural areas and depends mostly on agriculture for their livelihood. The contribution of agriculture is highest to the state economy but it is one of the most neglected sectors in the state's planning for economic development.

The state has abundant resources of minerals including precious and semi-precious stones which are attracting foreign direct investment in a massive scale. The mining-led industrial capital finds the state as the best destination to invest. The entry of foreign and private capital is accelerated by the industrial policies of the present government (Nayak, 2007). The focus on private capital led industrialization and development planning by the Government of Odisha has further increased the gap between industry and agriculture. The OSAP (2008:20) acknowledges that industrialization has forced farmers to become commodity farmers. The OSAP 2008 is one more step in a direction which will not marginalize farmers but also have a negative impact on the state economy.

In such a context, an attempt has been made to study the OSAP 2008 which is concomitant with the

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UNSAFE DRINKING WATER: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AGAINST ARSENIC MENACE IN WEST BENGAL

Abhijit Das¹

One of the major problems for the West Bengal (WB) environment is its water. The discovery in the 1980s of arsenic in the groundwater of West Bengal, the main source of drinking water for the country, has added a new dimension to the already existing water security problems in the country. In the affected areas, water drawn from aquifer of intermediate depth (20-80m below ground level) have shown arsenic concentration significantly above the 'World Health Organization (WHO) guideline value', i.e. 10 µg/L.

In West Bengal approximately 79-111 blocks in 8-12 districts are facing groundwater arsenic pollution. The current PHED status report (2007) of arsenic in West Bengal (on the basis of 132262 water samples) concluded that at present approximately the total population at risk in the state is 28.7 million, 36% out of the total population of 80.21 million (2001 census). Consumption of arsenic rich water beyond permissible limit has very serious health implications. Media has occasionally reflected on the morbidity and mortality incidents.

There is no medicine for the permanent solution of the arsenic related health hazards (called arsenicosis), the only solution is to provide arsenic safe drinking water. Editorials, expert interview etc. has been used to draw Government's attention and raise public awareness about the health impacts of the particular water quality emphasizing the need for special action towards public provision of safe water. Institutionally, Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Government of West Bengal (GoWB), has the sole responsibility of supplying drinking water in rural areas.

The present paper describes the decade long different actions and strategies taken by the Government of West Bengal to mitigate the problems of arsenic menace.

Keywords

Arsenic, Health effects, Mitigation efforts, West Bengal.

Introduction

Detection of arsenic contamination of the groundwater in the 1980s in West Bengal, the main source of drinking water, has added a new dimension to the already existing water security problems in the state. In West Bengal health impact due to use of arsenic contaminated water for drinking purpose was first detected by Dr. Kshitish Chandra Saha, the former head of the department of dermatology of Kolkata School of Tropical Medicine. After surveying different villages he informed the government in detail about the arsenic toxicity in 1984.

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A GENEALOGY OF OLD AGE, WELFARE AND PROFESSIONAL POWER

Jason L. Powell¹

Research on social work and older people has tended to concentrate on levels of service satisfaction of social welfare in US, UK and Europe. A Foucauldian perspective is proposed as an alternative gerontological theory which focuses on the changing historiography between social work and older people. It is argued that Michel Foucault offers a methodological strategy called 'genealogy' for understanding how the power of social work constructs both older people's experiences in the mixed economy of welfare and their identities, as constructed subjects and objects of managerial power and knowledge.

Keywords

Social work, Older people, Social welfare, Genealogy, Mixed economy

Introduction

By 2014, there has been an unprecedented international rise in interest and debate about aging, despite the frequent charge that the subject of "aging" has been relatively underdeveloped in social welfare and by social theory in modern global society (Phillipson 2013). This paper draws upon the theoretical work of Michel Foucault in order to sketch out a possible "tool-kit" for the critical analysis of social work as it has been characterised in social discourse. More specifically, this paper attempts a critical engagement of the relevance of Foucauldian analyses and offers compelling insights to old age and the changing influence of social welfare.

Until recently, there has been little serious Foucauldian study of aging and gerontologists have had to rely on a limited number of sources in the work of American and Canadian writers such as Stephen Katz (1996) and Grenier (2007) and more recently from writers in the United Kingdom (Powell and Biggs 2001; Powell, 2009; Powell and Chamberlain 2012). Together with the United States, the United Kingdom has been subject to a succession of social policy experiments, from welfare paternalism and more recently towards personalization of social care (Beresford 2009) in the "Big Society" (Powell 2012). These changes have had significant implications for the social discourses that impinge upon the social construction of social old age. The effects of the decline analogy can be most clearly seen in the dominance of medico-technical solutions to the problems that ageing is thought to pose. This, according to Katz (1996) has led to a significant skewing of gerontological theorising and research toward geriatric medicine and the relative failure of more broadly based social and lifecourse approaches to impinge upon thinking about old age.

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Book Review

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA GROWTH EXPANSION AND ISSUES

Dulumoni Goswami, **Higher Education in India Growth Expansion and Issues**, DVS Publishers, Rs 425, pages 150.

The 21st century has brought along new challenges and opportunities for the country's educators and education planners. The challenges and issues before the education planners in this century lies in solving the problems of access and equity, quality, international dimensions, job-oriented education, and financing, among others.

Dulumoni Goswami has presented an analytical discussion on various issues confronting development of higher education in the country in his book *Higher Education in India: Growth Expansion and Issues*.

The book is an attempt to put across 10 relevant themes for higher education in a simple but exhaustive way. The author needs special appreciation for documenting the history of Indian higher education from the ancient period to the 21st century. In the second chapter, the author presents a comprehensive discussion on the recent reforms in the higher education sector.

While discussing quality issues in the third chapter, the author stresses development of quality in higher education to make it relevant. The role of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in maintaining quality higher education is also critically discussed.

Globalization and its impact on education have been comprehensively documented in the fourth chapter. The author raises issues like commercialization, internationalization and privatization of higher education from a critical angle. The fifth chapter contains an analysis on the financial issues of Indian education in relation to public expenditure on education. He opines that public expenditure on higher education should be enhanced for access and equity in higher education.

Extension, the third dimension of higher education, plays a decisive role for disseminating useful information and ideas to the people outside the regularly organized schools and classrooms.

The UGC's initiatives are elaborately discussed and a brief picture of the current scenario of extension education is discussed in the sixth chapter.

The last chapter is devoted to the status of college education in Assam. The author, while noting that the NAAC visit has compelled Assam colleges to develop their infrastructure and academic activities, says that the state's colleges are far behind from a global point of view.

Overall, the book's presentation is admirable; it is also affordably priced. A good pick for researchers, teachers and students of social science, especially those involved with research on higher education.

G Kamalakar

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