

Importance of Good Governance in District Administration

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Abstract

Good Governance has a great importance in District Administration. District in India is a most important and basic unit of field administration as it is a suitable geographical unit set with practical methods of management of public affairs. This level can also be called the 'pivot' or 'cutting edge' level of administrative structure because it is at this level that the government comes into direct contact with its citizens. All government agencies' programmes and policies take a clear cut shape at district level. District is the main point of contact between administration and people. All the welfare activities, planning and development functions are performed at the district level. So the district is the nodal point of administration in India. Good Governance simply means looking after the welfare of all in all respects. Good Governance involves high level of organisational efficiency and effectiveness for responding in a responsive way in order to attain the predetermined desirable goals of the society. If Good Governance is achieved at district level, then administration can solve the problems of citizen's in a right and easy way because at the district level people comes into direct contact with administration. The present paper is discussing about the new projects/schemes of Center Government or State Government to achieve good governance at district level and also talks about the problems of these projects/schemes and give suggestion.

Introduction:

Good Governance is a catchphrase in today's globalizing economy, which has received considerable attention the world over. The last decade of 20th century witnessed the phenomena of globalization, liberalization and privatization (LPG). The concept of good governance is often associated with this trio. Good governance may be characterized as a participatory, consensus, arrived, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient government based on the

rule of law. The purpose of good governance is not only to provide basic amenities to the people but a life, which is qualitative and dignified in the real sense of the term. The historical perspective of Good Governance is deeply embedded in Kautilya's value system.

There is no accepted definition of governance. There is divergence of opinion about the meaning of governance between the conservatives and the liberals, between socialists and the communists. The World Bank, for example, has sought to take a middle position by defining governance particularly as the traditions and the institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (i) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; (ii) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (iii) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social communications among them. In recent years the word governance has become a very fashionable term and is being used in a variety of ways and that covers a large number of organizations both in public and private domains.

Citizens, all the world over look up to the nation-state and its organs for high quality performance. When good governance is guaranteed, citizens go about their personal business and pursuits with enhanced expectations. On the other side of the spectrum, bad or indifferent governance not only restricts opportunities of success but it can even degenerate into sectarian conflicts and civil wars. In such an atmosphere personal accomplishments as well as social achievements get severely restricted. Good governance helps create an environment in which sustained economic growth becomes achievable. Conditions of good governance allow citizens to maximize their returns on investment. Good governance does not occur by chance. It must be demanded by citizens and nourished explicitly and consciously by the nation state. It is, therefore, necessary that the citizens are allowed to participate freely, openly and fully in the political process. The citizens must have the right to compete for office, form political party and enjoy fundamental rights and civil liberty. Good governance is accordingly associated with accountable political leadership, enlightened policy-making and a civil service imbued with a professional ethos. The presence of a strong civil society including a free press and independent judiciary are pre-conditions for good governance. What is 'good' governance in the Indian context? The central challenge before good governance relates to social development. In his famous 'tryst with destiny' speech on 14 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru articulated this challenge as 'the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunities'. Good governance must aim at expansion in social opportunities and removal of poverty. In short,

good governance, means securing justice, empowerment, employment and efficient delivery of services.

The concept of Good Governance seems overtly innocuous and simple but covertly other way round and complex. It is so demanding and challenging. Indeed a tough task to be tackled with utmost care and dexterity. The modicum of Good Governance and District Administration demands the apt application of an adage “Think globally and Act locally”.

District administration:-

Indian administration has been divided into different territorial units, which are called Districts, for good development and efficient supervision. The District Administration in its real form is a British legacy. The District is the nodal point of administration in India. It can also be called ‘cutting edge’ level of administrative structure. All government agencies coverage and programmes and policies took a clear cut shape at district level. District is the main point of contact between administration and people. All the welfare activities, planning and development functions are performed at the district level.

District chosen Barnala for study:-

Barnala is one of the districts of Indian state of Punjab. Prior to 2011 Barnala was part of Sangrur district. Barnala became a district on 19/11/2006 and Sr. Surjit Singh Dhillon was the first to be appointed as Deputy Commissioner of Barnala. It is a centrally located district bordered by Ludhiana district on the north, Moga district on northwest, Bathinda district on west and by Sangrur district on all other sides. District Barnala has two sub-divisions Barnala and Tapa, three sub-tehsil Tapa, Bhadaur, Dhanaula and three blocks Barnala, Sehna and Mehal Kalan. District has 5 Municipal committees. Seat of Parliament is attached with Sangrur. Every Department has well established office for the local people convenience.

According to the 2011 census Barnala district has a population of 596,294. This gives it a ranking of 527th in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 419 inhabitants per square kilometre (1,090/sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 13.16%. Barnala has a sex ratio of 876 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 68.9%. Area Telephone Code: 01679 Postal Code: 148101 Vehicle Code Range: PB 19.

Research Methodology:

For the completion of the research work, both primary as well as secondary sources were used. In primary data, researcher interviewed Deputy Commissioner, Tehsildar and District

Suwidha Administrator and District Informatics Officer with the help of unstructured interview style. The secondary data includes books, journals, newspapers, etc related to the topic.

Steps Undertaken by District Administration to insure Good Governance in Barnala District:-

To ensure Good Governance in District Administration, this paper limited to e-governance measures. Many steps are taken by district administration of Barnala to ensure Good Governance in the district, which we are discussing here:

1. Ensure Paperless Governance:

For paperless governance, e-district Project is launched. With the implementation of this project most of citizen based services have been made online. Not only the front-end but the back-end have also made digital. i. e. in most of the services, all the documents eg. Birth, death, certificate etc. are getting generated through the system using Information Technology.

To add into it e-office software is under has been implemented in the district. E-office is software that results into paperless solutions as far as office work of district administration is concerned.

2. To Increase efficiency and transparency:

To increase efficiency levels in delivery of services to the general public, pendency meetings are conducted on regular basis and all the concerned departments are strictly monitored and pendency levels have come down to zero percent in most of the cases. Barnala district has its official website named Barnala.gov.in which provides all basic services to the citizens like suwidha service application forms, telephone directory of all officials at district level, history of barnala district, Right to information officers list, information about Adhaar Card, Punjab Grievances Portal etc. in Punjabi and English languages.

3. For Public Awareness:

To aware public about any new scheme/ service, display through hoardings/ banners are made at public areas like Suwidha Centers, DTO's offices etc. at district level. Moreover, whenever any new service is launched by state government proper awareness is given through other Medias as well.

4. To start e-conferences:

As far as e-conferencing is concerned, the Punjab government launched a network named PAWAN. The State Government has already established Punjab State Wide Area

Network (PAWAN) vertical connectivity to act as an intra-government network with 8 Mbps connectivity from the State Hqrs to District Hqrs and 2 Mbps from District Headquarter to Block Hqrs. 193 Point of Presence (PoPs) upto Block level has been connected to the PAWAN. 193 Point of Presence (PoPs) upto Block level has been connected to the PAWAN. More than 400 offices have already connected horizontally with PAWAN network.

5. Community Policing Program 'SAANJH':

Saanjh is a six-tier body at the head of which is the Community Affair Division and State Level Steering Committee that provides policy guidelines, support for capacity building and strengthens systems of planning, management, participatory and integrity mechanism. At the district level, Community Police Resource Centers and the district level committees to ensure the networking of CPRCs (Community Police Resource Centers) with other government departments and administrative structures. It also streamlines the training of personal at district level and coordinates with the fifth and sixth tier i.e Sub-division Community Police Suvidha Centers (CPSC) and Police Stations Outreach Centres (PSOC) at the police station level.

6. National Informatics Center:

National Informatics Centre (NIC) was established in 1976, and has since emerged as a "prime builder" of e-Government / e-Governance applications up to the grassroots level as well as a promoter of digital opportunities for sustainable development. NIC, through its ICT Network, "NICNET", has institutional linkages with all the Ministries /Departments of the Central Government, 35 State Governments/ Union Territories, and about 625 District administrations of India. NIC has been instrumental in steering e-Government/e-Governance applications in government ministries/departments at the Centre, States, Districts and Blocks, facilitating improvement in government services, wider transparency, promoting decentralized planning and management, resulting in better efficiency and accountability to the people of India.

Evaluation and Suggestions:

On the basis of above discussion, we can say that Punjab government has taken many important steps to ensure Good Governance. After almost 60 years of Independence, the government shows sincerity about Good Governance. To ensure Good Governance, the government starts some new projects like NIC, Right to Information Act, Right to Service Act, e-

district, Suwidha Centers, Video Conferencing with PAWAN, Community Policing Program ‘SAANJH’, Department of Governance Reforms government of Punjab etc. With the implementation of these projects/schemes the government becomes efficient, transparent, accountable and effective to some extent. To increase efficiency levels in delivery of services to the general public, pendency meetings are conducted on regular basis and all the concerned departments are strictly monitored, due to this the pendency levels have come down to zero percent in most of the cases.

There are some problems in these projects/schemes or steps taken by government to ensure good governance, which are discussed below:

1. However, government starts the e-district project, which is very useful for public, but there are still some imperfections in its software, which should have to be solved immediately.
2. There is political interference in the appointment of suwidha center’s employees, due to that eligible candidates are not selected. It affects the work of suwidha centers.
3. In many of the services which are provided by suwidha centers, there is still a lot of paper work, harassment, and wastage of time.
4. It is also seen that there is a lack of public awareness about these e-governance projects/schemes of government like e-district.
5. There is also no provision of emergency service delivery for essential services by the government.

So here are some **suggestions** to improve the present status of these projects/ schemes:

1. The appointment of Suwidha center employees should be totally transparent and on basis of merit.
2. In some important and primary services provided by suwidha centers, the time period for delivery of services should be short down.
3. To aware public about new projects/schemes of district government or state government, the district administration should have to distribute printed material about that scheme door to door and should also organize seminars in rural as well as urban areas. State government should aware public about their projects through electronic media regularly.

4. There is a need to start emergency service delivery in some importance and essential services.
5. There is also a need to start video conferencing at tehsil and block levels; it saves the time of officers.

Conclusion:

At the end we can say that the district in India is a most important and basic unit of field administration as it is a suitable geographical unit set with practical methods of management of public affairs. The government starts many new projects/schemes to ensure Good Governance. At district level these projects are very useful for general public. Because district is the main point of contact between administration and people. There are some problems in these projects/schemes, if government successfully solves these problem, then these projects would become very useful for general public.

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