



GOVERNANCE: EXAMINING DEVELOPMENT AT THE GRASSROOT LEVEL, A COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

Yashna Singh

ABSTRACT

The focus of governance studies among academics has gradually shifted to grassroots and decentralized governance. While everyone acknowledges the importance of political participation in local governance, not much focus is placed on the invisible and covert forms of political interaction that frequently intrude into formal research. This paper aims to investigate the scope and character of traditional perspectives, primarily focusing on Gandhian and Nehruvian perspectives, as well as everyday politics.

KEYWORDS: Grassroot Governance, Everyday Politics, , Participatory Governance, Decentralized Democracy, Gandhian and Nehruvian perspective etc

INTRODUCTION

After the public-sector reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, the state's nature and role underwent specific changes that can be specifically described by the term "governance." Generally speaking, these reforms are credited with causing a change away from a hierarchical bureaucracy and toward a greater use of networks, markets, and quasi-markets, particularly in the provision of public services. Global developments, such as a rise in transnational economic activity and the establishment of regional institutions like the European Union (EU), exacerbated the effects of the reforms. When interpreted in this way, governance conveys the widely held perception that the state is becoming more and more dependent on other institutions to carry out its policies, secure its goals, and create a legal framework.

"The manner in which the power is exercised in the administration and management of a country's economic and social resources for growth and development" is the general definition of governance.

It makes a clear division between the aspects of good governance that are political and economic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature propose a comparasion between the perspectives of traditional ideologies regarding governance at grassroot level with contemporary perspective.

TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Gandhi's idea of governance is the main topic of this chapter. Ramarajya was the perfect system of government, according to the Mahatma. Gandhi understood by Ramarajya a system of governance that emphasizes democratic self-governance, equality of opportunity, decentralization of administration, and grassroots empowerment of the general population. The chapter covers the various measures that the Congress and other parties have taken since independence to put Gandhi's ideas about

Panchayat Raj into practice. More recently, the chapter highlights the new initiatives of the Narendra Modi government, including the Clean India Mission (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan), the Model Village Plans (Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana), and the initiative of Smart City.[1]

Mahatma Gandhi was the first notable figure of the 20th century to effectively use nonviolent means to combat social injustices and acts of violence, such as racism, casteism, colonialism, and so on. These two ideas, satyagraha and sarvodaya, are firmly grounded in the ideas of truth. Gandhiji believed that a person with the highest integrity and a firm belief in the statement "Truth is God" could and should use satyagraha as a weapon[1] In a same vein, he positioned the Sarvodaya ideology at the center of all of his social and economic initiatives. The idea of Sarvodaya was formulated by Gandhiji subsequent to his profound inspiration from John Ruskin's 'Unto This Last'. Truth is God to him.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister, saw panchayats as crucial socioeconomic and political institutions at the village level. He emphasized the value of individuals taking on responsibility when he established the panchayati raj in Rajasthan in 1959, saying, "To uplift millions of villages is not an ordinary task; the reason for the slow progress is our dependence on official machinery." Since an officer is an expert, he is most likely required. However, this is only possible if the populace assumes personal accountability. The people must be given actual power in addition to just being consulted.

The concept of a district development council and a village plan were corporatized by the First Five Year Plan, which also acknowledged the need for decentralized planning through a democratic decentralization process. At various points in time, the Indian government established a number of committees to support the institutions of local self-government. The first was the 1957-formed Balwantray Mehta Committee, which



advocated for a three-tier system and stressed the need for democratic and elected institutions at the lowest possible level.

Following this, the Ashok Mehta Committee (1977) suggested establishing a district and village level two-tier system. In its 1983 report, the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations recommended that decentralised planning cannot succeed unless panchayats are heavily involved in village-level development and administration. Strangely, though, these institutions have been permitted to stagnate rather than fulfill their mission.

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Technological, economic, and social dynamism in the twenty-first century: Governance prospects:-[5]

Social, economic, and technological forces appear ready to place more responsibility and more freedom on people's shoulders. The 21st-century governance framework has two primary reasons: In the global knowledge economy and society, power increased because it was anticipated that decision-making responsibilities and rights would spread. First, if realized, tomorrow's technological, economic, and social dynamism will most likely have the dual qualities of expanding the realm of actionable options and dismantling a large number of the restrictive institutions and laws of the past. Second, a redistribution of power within and between governments, corporations, communities, and families is likely to be necessary in order to fully capitalize on future innovative tools, new methods of organizing economic activity, and highly heterogeneous social orders.

Technological Dynamism

It implies a fundamental shift in the ability to make and carry out the decisions that shape future technological developments, it appears likely to provoke new forms of governance. In the area of biotechnology, this co-dependence is perhaps best illustrated. This isn't because the moral and technological conundrums raised by genetic engineering are particularly unusual, nor is it because apathy will abruptly decline dramatically in the coming years. Previous scientific breakthroughs, such as those in nuclear science during the 20th century, raised concerns about human survival and led to a great deal of political activism from concerned citizens.

Economic Dynamism

This is not a novel phenomenon, much like the waves of technological breakthroughs previously discussed. In the past, market-driven economic transformation has proven to be a powerful force, frequently surpassing established norms and practices that strengthen authority. Leading industries and businesses, managerial echelons and strategies, prevalent production processes, and skill sets have all seen frequent upheaval. Like the technology discussion before it, future economic changes and new forms of distributed and flexible governance may be what set apart the upcoming period of economic dynamism from earlier transitions.

Social Dynamism

The possibility of such a big shift in society presents opportunities as well as risks for governance. Extreme differences in po-

wer and the ability to use it can make decisions much more difficult on the one hand, but they also run the risk of igniting harmful social conflict on the other.

CONCLUSION

From Gandhian Philosophy :- [2]

- **Democratic decentralization**
The significance of democratic decentralization lies in Gandhi's concept, which is a reflection of his strong conviction in truth, nonviolence, and individual freedom. He refers to it as village Swaraj, or Panchayati Raj. He envisions each village as a tiny republic that is self-sufficient in meeting its basic needs, organically and non-hierarchically connected to the larger spatial entities, and with the greatest amount of autonomy in determining local matters.
- **Village: As a unit of decentralization**
Gandhi emphasized that any concentration of political or economic power would go against every fundamental tenet of participatory democracy. Gandhi proposed the creation of village republics as units of economic autonomy as well as parallel polities to counteract centralization. The village is a decentralized system's lowest unit. A village must be sufficiently small politically for all residents to be able to actively participate in making decisions.
- **Potential in gramsevak**
In addition to the elected officials in the panchayati raj institutions, he believed that "Gramsevak" held enormous potential for local leadership. He believes that the village needs a skilled labor force that is prepared to work in rural areas in order to become self-sufficient. According to his opinion, the Gramsevak would instruct the villagers in a variety of subjects, including agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, health, and education. They must first gain the villagers' trust by becoming close to them and becoming emotionally attached to them. They must teach them how to take care of themselves and get them the resources and assistance they need.

From Nehruvian Philosophy

The first prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, laid a lot of the groundwork for India's post-independence. Policies such as democratic socialism, non-alignment, secularism, and institutionalization of democracy can all be seen as reflections of this.

- **Establishment of Institutional Democracy**
The Preamble of the Indian Constitution was drafted by the Constituent Assembly under the guidance of the Nehruvian ideals outlined in the "Objective Resolution." Nehru supported panchayati raj institutions, or grassroots democracy, in India.
- **Ideal of Secularism**
Nehru held that everyone who had contributed to India's history and civilization had a special responsibility to uphold the rights and advance the welfare of the minority population. This contributed to the development of the "Unity in Diversity" narrative.



Governance track record in 21st century at grassroot level Of present government :-[3]

- **Taking Care of the Girl Child: Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**

The Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) program was launched by the Indian government in 2015 in response to concerns regarding gender inequality and women's empowerment in the nation. The phrase "Save the girl child, educate the girl child" is what the name Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao means. The program aims to educate citizens about gender bias and to improve the effectiveness of welfare services for girls. An initial investment of Rs. 100 crore was used to launch it.

- **Using JAM's Power: Jan Dhan, Aadhar, and Mobile**

The government uses a tool called JAM Trinity—Jan Dhan, Aadhar, and Mobile—to send cash benefits straight to the designated beneficiary's bank account. The development and transformation of India's digital landscape can be attributed primarily to JAM Trinity.

- **Driving India's Development**

- **Creating Farmers for a Wealthy India**

Several actions made to significantly increase agriculture Our nation has always been built on its farmers, and the NDA government is working to make this foundation even stronger through sound and creative policies.

REFERENCES

1. https://www.mkgandhi.org/articles/satyagraha_sarvodaya.html
2. *Mainstream*, VOL LIV No 41 New Delhi October 1, 2016
Gandhi and Governance: Relooking Development at Grassroot Level Monday 3 October 2016 by Pradeep Nair and Sandeep Sharma
3. <https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/governance-track-record/>
4. <https://niua.in/intranet/sites/default/files/Everyday%20Politics%20and%20Grassroots%20Governance%20in%20Urban%20India.pdf>
5. *Governance in the 21st Century*, ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT