

The importance of good governance to democracy politics essay



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Democracy cannot flourish in the absence of good governance. The pre-condition for good governance is effective democratic institutions for democratizing the society. Improvement of the living standard of people cannot happen where people cannot participate in governance, human rights are not respected, information does not flow, and civil society and the judiciary are weak. Nine criteria of to be referred as the Nine I's of good governance or Nine ' I ' model of good governance. In the absence of these Nine I's good governance in Bangladesh like any other country will be a far cry. These components constitute the foundations of modern democracy and create the underpinning to establish free economy and spur domestic and foreign investment, specially the potential investment of the Non Resident Bangladeshis (NRB's) particularly in the case of Bangladesh.

It is not true that only elections lead to a democracy. Democracy should be home work (Manifesto) of the political parties where they ought to outline their ideas and concept of democracy they want to offer to the citizens in lieu of their votes. The political parties should make it vividly transparent as to how and when they will apply their policies for establishing a democratic society ensuring parity, rule of law, equitable distribution of wealth, social justice, freedom of speech and thought if voted to power. The political philosophy and the commitment of the political parties should be expressed in the form of party manifesto much ahead of elections for empowering the voters so that they can make good governance may be used to determine whether any country qualifies to have good governance are:

1. INDEPENDENT AND NON PARTISAN ELECTION COMMISSION

2. INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW

3. INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

4. INDEPENDENT ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

5. INVESTING IN THE PEOPLE

6. INDEPENDENT AND EFFECTIVE PARLIAMENT

7. INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

8. INDEPENDENT OMBUDSMAN SYSTEM

9. INVESTMENT FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT.

I would propose these Nine components informed decisions before casting their votes during the elections. In Bangladesh, unfortunately the practice of presenting the manifesto of the political parties are not transparent and as such it may be stated that political commitment of the parties to the people is also not transparent which gives the parties a space to shift form their commitments and promise after the election.

Sound policies and their execution are essential pre-condition of development. Good Governance necessarily means govern justly, invest in the people, and encourages private economic enterprise.

Bangladesh is yet to promote principles of good governance, and initiative of our civil society reinforces the need for good governance. Through cooperative ventures of our parliament, judiciary, executive organ of the

state along with the civil society it is possible to enact policies and design the governance so that human dignity and freedom are allowed to flourish. Some of the principles of good governance date back to the time of ancient Greece . Others are principles developed in more recent years, or lessons learned from our own history and that of other democracy practicing societies. Broadly speaking, good governance promotes fundamental and universal human rights. As per constitution of Bangladesh , the political power lies with the people (Article 7). Principles of good governance allow people to pursue their lives in a just, equitable and democratic society. Countries like Bangladesh need the tools to educate their citizens to take part in the opportunities offered by the global economy. We need to do hard work to eradicate corruption.

Perhaps the most basic and important principle of good governance is that a nation's political institutions be democratic. In the words of Abraham Lincoln, democracy is a form of government " of the people, by the people, and for the people." This means that the rights and principles of democratic government can and should be universally applied. They are not a uniquely American invention. The right of every person to speak freely about his government is a basic human right to overcome bad governance even by a elected government by the party, for the politician and nothing for the people. The right of any citizens to express his opinion about his government is one that is supported by the doctrine " Rule by the Ruled" as has been recognized by nations all over the world. Now let us examine the Nine I's of Good governance

INDEPENDENT AND NON PARTISAN ELECTION COMMISSION

Independent and Non Partisan Election Commission is a precondition for free & fair participative elections to elect public representative to the parliament. Elections, however, are not the only cornerstone to democracy. Accountable leadership and fulfillment of the will of the people are essential to ensuring that elections are a means to a democratic society, not an end in themselves. It is critical that a nation's elections be free and fair in level plane ground. This means that every citizen have a equal access and opportunity to compete to become public representative. Voters have a choice among candidates and that they have a right to information concerning those candidates' background.

Free and fair elections are open and transparent to all people without discrimination based on sex, religion, or race. Such elections are not restricted by government interference and coercion by money and muscle. The right to free and fair elections should be guaranteed by independent nonpartisan election commission having appropriate capabilities and skill to deliver honest acceptable elections. And such elected government can only be held accountable to their citizens. Voters should be able to participate freely in the political process, whether through political parties or independent candidates.

INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW

Another criterion of good governance is independent judiciary, important for preserving the rule of law. It is very essential to have a strong judiciary and courts to ensure that a nation's laws are enforced constantly and fairly. All

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organs of government must be law abiding. The rule of law also is the basis for the formation of business enterprises and the establishment of a free market, which underpin economic development. Citizens or their elected representatives should be involved in all levels of lawmaking including the local government.

Another characteristic of good governance is the presence of constitutional limits on the political power. Such limits include transparent, credible, periodic elections, guarantees of Fundamental Rights, guarantees of Human Rights by a independent judiciary, which allows citizens to seek protection of their rights and redress against government actions. These limit help make government departments accountable to each other and to the people.

Accountability is another characteristic that is considered globally for the eligibility when determining whether a country practices good governance.

Not only should the law be enforced, but it should also be enforced fairly and without any sort of discrimination. Good governance means equal protection for all without any discrimination of sex, cast, creeds, and race. An open and easy access to judicial and administrative systems. A nation's courts should not be open to only a select few. Government agencies should allow appeals of regulations as well as citizen participation in their decision-making process, and citizens should be granted access to these bodies in a timely and easy manner. Governments also have a duty to protect their citizens from criminal violence, especially the practice of trafficking of persons.

Women, girls and children are most vulnerable to this illegal trade, which can only be stopped by diligent law enforcement. Respect for the Citizens &

rights' relating to personal privacy is a far cry in a weak democracy like Bangladesh .

INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

To function properly, a democratic society must ensure free exchange of information and ideas. This is best realized in the creation of a free and open media and the freedoms of speech and expression. A free and independent media provides voters with the information they need to make informed decisions. It facilitates the exchange of political discourse, creating an " open place for ideas" where no view is neglected and the best are chosen. Free Media can also serve as a check on government power ensuring that bureaucracy, public officials and government departments remain accountable to the voters. The media's ability to report on trade and industry and the economy is also important for preserving public trust in the free economy and for attracting domestic and foreign investment including the potential investment of the NRB's. The right of the free media to publish, to editorialize, to criticize, and to inform is a fundamental principle of democracy.

INDEPENDENT ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION

Good governance also means combating corruptions, and countries can not be considered having good governance, if they are corrupt. To preserve the integrity of democracy, governments must strive to rid themselves of corruptions and bribery. Corruption destroys economic foundations, impedes the ability of developing countries to attract foreign investment. Corruption hinders the growth of democratic institutions, and concentrates power in the hands of a few having money and muscle. The best way to combat

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corruption is for governments to be open and transparent. Official Secrecy Act must not be abused. While in certain cases governments have a responsibility to retain secrecy and confidentiality regarding national security and alike issues. Strong laws against corruption, application of such laws and the actions of law enforcement agencies that work against corruption demonstrate a government's commitment to this principle.

INVESTING IN THE PEOPLE

Good governance requires that governments invest in their people and work to preserve the welfare of their citizens, without regard to gender, race or religion. Governments should invest in health care, nutrition, housing, education, and poverty elevation. They should ensure an economic environment where people can find jobs and establish business enterprises. Along with other measures, a government's ability to provide job and a high standard of living for its people is considered by the democratic world in determining governmental effectiveness. The importance of the other Four - I's i. e., Independent and Effective Parliament, Independent Human Rights Commission, Independent Ombudsman System, Investment Friendly Government could not be discussed here due to limitations of space which I have intention to discuss later in some other articles of mine.

CONCLUSION

Only practicing these components (Nine- I's) of good governance results in a democratic society where people can pursue their hopes and aspirations. This will facilitate the creation of free markets, which are trusted by investors and financial institutions. Good governance is a pre-condition for any

economic development. Development cannot flourish where people cannot
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participate in governance, human rights are not respected, information does not flow, and civil society and the judiciary are weak. UNDP and the World Bank, among others, have come to realize that development assistance that focuses only on economic governance at the expense of democratic governance fails. The proof is that, 42 of the 49 high human development countries on the UN Development Index are democracies (UNDP source). With few exceptions, all of the world's richest countries have the world's most democratic governance.

The fundamental rights and the standard of living of Bangladeshi citizens will be enhanced through good governance. But one has to remember the rule that no good governance - no democracy. Governments that govern rationally with the commitment of good governance become democratic and get support for their reform efforts from their people as well as from the democratic world. #