

PEOPLE'S RESPONSES AND PROBLEMS IN GOVERNING PRACTICE AT CHHEDEHA RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF BAJURA DISTRICT

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Abstract

Good governance is the key for development and prosperity. Effective, stable, and accountable governments are essential in the fight against poverty. It is the critical factor in poverty reduction as well as in achieving development objective in its right. Good governance does not occur by chance. It must be demanded and nourished explicitly and consciously by the nation-state. Local government is the closest tier and unit of government to the citizen at the lowest level. Good governance is the major yardstick for people's prosperity. Well accepted good governance always addresses the felt needs of local people. If governing practice does not run according to people's desire, it always stimulates the corruption and instability. This manuscript examines the major problems and people's perceptions in light of local level governing practices including planning, budgeting, fund mobilizing, participation and entire developmental activities. Lack of knowledge governance values and principles, poor service delivery, unnecessary interference, inconsistency among the political parties, prevalence of corruption, low level of practical and theoretical ideas of service delivery mechanism among the elected members, lack of honesty between elected members and government personnel are the key problems of good governance in practice.

Key Words: Corruption, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Governance and Practice

1. INTRODUCTION

Governance is a key determinant for growth, development and poverty reduction. Governance has been understood variously as 'the management of society by the people' (Albrow, 2001), and 'the exercise of authority to manage a country's affairs and resources' (Schneider, 1999 cited from Dayanandan, 2013). It comprises the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (Imran, 2009). The terms 'governance' and 'good governance' are being increasingly used in development literature. Since the end of the 1980, the issue of good government is dominating the interactional discussion in between development and service delivery mechanism (Wohlmuth, 1998).

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The concept of 'good' in 'governance' is an attachment to the word 'governance' and it is seen as the process and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised (WB, 2004). Furthermore, governance includes how governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced with an emphasis on the capacity of government to manage resources and respect the rule of law (World Bank, 2004; Boyte, 2005). Therefore, the word 'good' in governance implies the proper exercise of authority, management of resources and respect for the rule of law in accordance to laid-down principles for the benefit of all in a society.

As said by the Kofi Annan "good governance is perhaps the single most important factor for eradicating poverty and promoting development." It is the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a count affairs at all levels (Jindal, 2014). Good governance in the public sector aims to encourage better service delivery and improved accountability by establishing well service delivery system (IFAC, 2013). Effective governance in the public sector encourages better decision making, efficient use of resources and strengthens accountability for the stewardship of resources (Mutahaba, 2012). The most repeated word and ideology that Nepal assimilates in every political and social revolution agenda since 1951 was 'good governance'. Despite this, many types of corruption are prevailing in Nepal that range from petty corruption, grand corruption, legal, moral and political corruption to organized crimes, which have become one of the impeding formidable forces in ensuring good governance. The absence of effective and creative government, development schemes can't attain their objectives.

Odugbemi (2008) a large body of research shows that in the longer term, good governance is associated with healthy economic growth, lower income inequality, high moral ethical values, strong meritocracy system, political stability and good education. Good governance and federal democracy are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. In good governance, many of the scholars embrace eight indicators as prerequisites; inclusive participation, rule of law, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness, accountability, consensus oriented and inclusiveness. Corruption becomes automatic when one or the series of indicators of good governance do not function. Nepal lacks substantial inclusive participation, rule of law, accountability and consensus orientation indicators. Nepal should enshrine the values of good governance in order to meet its envisioned goals to be a developed country by 2022.

By nature good governance is very vague and wider concept, even though; it is the key for development and prosperity. Effective, stable, and accountable governments are essential in the fight against poverty. It is the critical factor in poverty reduction as well as in achieving development objective in its right. In developing countries like Nepal, the struggle to alleviate poverty and improve the living standard of mass people, researches which will conduct on good governance have an imperative place. Hence this study would be significant in many ways. It can provide stakeholders at all levels to acknowledge the best alternatives for promoting good governance. It also provides best insights for policy makers and administrators to develop good policies measures and strategies for democratic issues at local level to assure good governance in reality. This manuscript was a case study in Chhededaha rural municipality ward no. 1 of Bajur district. As a very small study its conclusion may not be generalized.

Good governance is commonly discussed both on the national and international arena. Many studies undertaken by national and international agencies they found that corruption is more rampant in Nepal. This is the major issue felt by the federal democratic republic government Nepal, more acutely. This manuscript was focused on: Is the existence of governmental agencies and their practices are responsive for people's development? What are the existing challenges and problems that crates negative role for practice of good governance at local level? Covering these major research questions, this manuscript explored the existing problems and challenges of good governance in the study area focusing on efficiency, perception and problems of governing practices at local level.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out in Chhededaha Rural Municipality Ward no. 1 of Bajura District. According to Chhededaha Rural Municipality Profile (2075), there were 545 households. All the ordinary households of the study area were the universe. Out of the total households, 60 households were taken as a sample through random sampling techniques. The study was based on cross-sectional and descriptive research design. It was descriptive as it analyzes the present practice of good governance in the study area. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were gathered through field work by applying the questionnaire interview, key informant interview and focus group discussion. To accomplish the work, secondary data obtained from relevant books, journals, seminar papers, magazines, Act and Regulation and newspapers through document study method. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as table and percentage.

3. RESULT

Effectiveness and Efficiency of Local Governance Practices

Effectiveness and efficiency is the process and procedures in institutions that results the best use of resources and fulfillment of members interest. Efficiency and effectiveness both are the key components of local level good governance practices. Following table show the effectiveness and efficiency governance practices of the local area.

Table: 1 Efficiency Measures of Governance Practices

| Effectiveness and Efficiency in Governance Practices | Very High | High | Medium | Low | Very Low | Total |
|--|-----------|------|--------|-----|----------|-------|
| No. of Respondents | 2 | 5 | 10 | 27 | 15 | 60 |
| Percentage | 3.5 | 8.5 | 17 | 45 | 25 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The survey result shows that 45 percent of the respondents' said the existing governance practice is low, 25 percent is very low, 17 percent is medium, 8.5 percent is high and only 3.5 percent is very high. This shows that local people are not satisfied with the local governance practice and service delivering practices in the study area (Table 1).

People's Perception on Good Governance Practices

People's participation is a pure democratic self-governance system of managing local resources entity based on and in complying with the principles, values and philosophy of inclusive democracy. The level of awareness of local people on good governance practices is presented as per the following table.

Table: 2 Local People's Perception on Governance Practices

| Level of Awareness | Very High | High | Medium | Low | Very Low | Total |
|--------------------|-----------|------|--------|------|----------|-------|
| No. of Respondents | 14 | 21 | 10 | 13 | 2 | 60 |
| Percentage | 23 | 35 | 17 | 21.5 | 3.5 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The question here is to what level of the awareness on good governance practices in local level? Local people have got a great role in practicing good governance and restoring rule of law as they are the most powerful organ. The survey results indicated, the majority (35%) of respondents' have on high, 23 percent on very high, 17 percent on medium, 21.5 on low and 3..5 percent on very low. The responses are measured by the degree of frequency (Table 2).

Problems of Good Governance

It is difficult to achieve good governance in totality in a country like Nepal. There are many deeply rooted seen and unseen challenges in governing system in Nepal. The study also wanted to know the existing challenges that enforcing the good governance practices in the study area. Respondents were asked to choose among nine variables relating to governance practices in terms of problems of good governance at local level. The indicators of problems are; corruption, political interference, delays, incompetence, nepotism, lack of funds, misuse of funds, poor management and low technology. The existing challenge beyond the good governance practice in the study area is presented by the following table.

Table: 3 Problems of Good Governance Practices at Local Level

| S.N. | Major Problems | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Corruption | 33 | 55 |
| 2 | Incompetence | 4 | 6.5 |
| 3 | Political interference | 8 | 13 |
| 4 | Delays incompetence | 3 | 5 |
| 5 | Nepotism | 6 | 10 |
| 6 | Lack of funds | - | - |
| 7 | Misuse of funds | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | Poor management | 4 | 6.5 |
| 9 | Efficient use of technology | - | - |
| Total | | 60 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Above table shows that the most prominent challenges which hinder good governance practices in local level are multiple. Among the variables mentioned in the table, the corruption has been seen more leading problems in local level governance system. Out of total, 55% said corruption is key problems of governance, 6.5 % by incompetence, 13 % by political interference, 5% by delays, 10 % by nepotism, and 3% misuse of funds and by 6.5 % by poor management. It is conclude that corruption is chronic problems of local governance practices in local level (Table 3).

Corruption in Governance Practices

Corruption has been described 'as the abuse of cooperative resources for private gain'. It impedes a 'governance' ability to use its available resources to progressively achieve the full realization of membership rights because development is mismanaged, misused or misappropriated. Local peoples view on corruption in local level is shown as per the following table.

Table: 4 Members Response on Corruption in Local Level Governance Practices

| People's Response on Corruption | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Yes | 57 | 95 |
| No | - | |
| Not Known | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Positive and achievement oriented way of governance in local level are sometimes distorted by leaders due to corruption. The 95 % respondents complained that there is a prevalence of corruption in the governance practice in terms of misuse of resources, seepage. It was measure by peoples' response. On the other hand, 5% do not know whether corruption exists or not. That is why; they have no any ideas about budget, resource, governance and democracy. Thus corruption prevents the governance from fulfilling its obligations, erodes the legitimacy of good governance and subverts the rule of law (Table 4).

4. DISCUSSION

A study conducted by the Government of Malawi (2005) on Governance and Corruption Baseline Survey to identify the locus and extent of corruption in the country. The survey indicated that: Nine out of ten Malawians perceived corruption to be a serious problem which destroys people’s confidence in public institutions. As similar, this study also shown that, fifty seven out of sixty respondents said there is problem of corruption. This manuscript also found that 95 percent local ordinary households said there is a corruption in governing practice at local level. Rashid (2008) conducted a survey of the quality of customer service provided by public agencies in Malaysia, focusing on the road transport department. The study found that most of the respondents were unsatisfied with the quality of customer service representatives, facilities, procedure for

receiving service and the general atmosphere of the department itself. Mughal (2005) examined the level of good governance and role of the government in the provision of sustainable public housing development in Malawi. The study highlighted the existence of poor governance practice in public organizations. This manuscript also found very low and low service delivery mechanism having nine variables such as corruption, political interference, delays, incompetence, nepotism, lack of funds, and misuse of funds, poor management and low technology at local level.

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