



GOOD GOVERNANCE IN ANDHRA PRADESH: A CRITICAL STUDY OF JANMABHOOMI PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

The 'governance' a synonym for 'government' refers to the formal institutional process which maintains public order and facilitates collective action in a nation state. However, the growing interest on the governance reveals that there is significant change in its meaning and scope in its new context. Governance is about a reinvented form of government which is better managed and deals with the capacity of government to design, formulate and implement policies and, in general, to discharge government functions. Its focus is on the governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government and refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors has become blurred. Governance thus denotes the creation of a structure or an order which cannot be externally imposed but is the result of an interaction of multiplicity of governing systems and each other influencing actors. Governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action.

Introduction:

The term 'good governance' is an adjective of 'governance' that associated with efficient and effective administration and termed as 'new public management'. Good governance is viewed as what people expect from their government and the willingness and capability of the government to rise up to those expectations. The most important ingredients of good governance are, thus, basically: rule of law; accountability; decentralization; honesty or probity in public affairs; independence of judiciary; human rights; people's participation; equality of treatment as needed in pluralist society; absence of discrimination on the basis of color, race, language, faith, sex, region etc.; administrative responsiveness; social sensitivity; ethical approach or conduct; effectiveness; willingness to learn and having an urge to improve as well as evolve capability to anticipate the nature and direction of change to cope with the challenges as they arise from time to time. Precisely, the good governance, thus, demands vigilance on the part of the people and responsiveness on the part of those who carry the responsibility of governance.

Importance of the Study

Andhra Pradesh, the southern state in India has made strong endeavors to promote and realize good governance. With the onset of World Bank led reforms process in Andhra Pradesh "Good Governance" has become catchy word. The government of Andhra Pradesh is committed itself to become a simple, moral, accountable, responsive and transparent government. It is in this name that a



number of reform processes were introduced in the state. Among them, the *Janmabhoomi* a program for good governance intended to reach the citizen's doorsteps identifying their needs and aspirations seeking their participation was inaugurated in Andhra Pradesh by Mr. Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the then Chief Minister on Gandhiji's birth day the October 2, 1995. The salience of the *Janmabhoomi* program was a democratic innovation, to secure citizen's participation for their welfare and all round development.

However, the performance of *Janmabhoomi* program, various dimensions of its complexity, the extent to which the citizen's participation has not been examined critically. Despite all social and economic policies that have been implemented by successive administrations, Andhra Pradesh has remained a laggard in social, economic and political developments. In Andhra Pradesh the present condition of good governance is not satisfactory. There are many problems/ barriers for good governance. In this study an attempt will be made by critical understanding of *Janmabhoomi* program as a concept of good governance and the challenges that governance system faces while striving for the effective and sustainable democratization of the society. It is argued that the grass-root democratic institutions have not fully succeeded in empowering a sizeable portion of the electorate who live below the poverty line; nor they been entirely successful in accommodating the competing demands of different sections that are inherent in Andhra Pradesh.

What is Governance?

The Governance refers to "all processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through laws, norms, power or language. It relates to "the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions. To distinguish the term governance from government: a government is a formal body invested with the authority to make decisions in a given political system. In this case the governance process, which includes all the actors involved in influencing the decision-making process (such as lobbies, parties, Medias), is centered on the relevant "governing body". Whether the organization is a geopolitical entity (nation-state), a corporate entity (business entity), a socio-political entity (chiefdom, tribe, family, etc.), or an informal one, its governance is the way the rules, norms and actions are produced, sustained, and regulated. The degree of formality depends on the internal rules of a given organization.

Significantly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and good governance, among other initiatives, were products of the post-Cold War period, and today may be victims of the post- post-Cold War period. Context analysis is crucial before we proceed to unpack the concepts. Given the security-obsessed times in which we now live, we may even look back with nostalgia at the early



1990s when there was a gradual elaboration of an expanded normative framework for international affairs under the UN umbrella. Indeed, in the early part of the decade, a series of international conferences sought to generate a global agenda on issues ranging from population and sustainable development to human rights and gender. These conferences served to underline the importance of multilateral approaches to addressing global problems and affirmed the role of the United Nations as an important instrument of global governance.

What is Good Governance?

Good, in the context of good governance means those decisions, policies and actions which aim at the welfare of all. Because of a generally implied orientation of the people in favor of democracy, defined as a government of the people, by the people and for the people, the 'good', 'welfare' or 'interest' of the people is assumed to be the necessary condition of good governance. The World Bank, for the first time in 1989, highlighted the concept of good governance. By good governance, it meant, sound public management, and in this context, identified four dimensions: (i) public sector management; (ii) accountability; (iii) legal framework for development; and (iv) information and transparency. In 1992, the Bank's document *Governance and Development* said, " Good governance is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies." In the context of India, Kautilya, in his treatise *Arthashastra*, propounded the traits of good governance by the ruler-king, as follows: " In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider as good". Pai Panandiker sees good governance as it pertains to a nation state which handles its people to lead a peaceful, orderly, reasonable, prosperous, participatory life. Vivek Chopra defines good governance as unambiguously identifying the values of society and pursuing those. O.P. Minocha, taking cue from World Bank guidelines, defines the criteria of good governance as "political accountability, availability of freedom, law abiding, bureaucratic accountability, information available transparently, being effective and efficient, and cooperation between government and society". U.C. Agarwal says, " The tests of good governance lie in goals and objectives of a government, in its policies and programmes, and the manner of their execution, in the results achieved and , above all, in the general perceptions of the people about the quality of functioning of its various agencies, their attitudes and behavior towards the public, their sincerity, honesty and commitments towards public duties. It is also important to see that there is no undue concentration of power.

Concept of e-governance:

The term 'e-government refers to the use of ICT (information communication technology) by government agencies to transform Q relations with citizens and businesses. The World Bank refers to e-governance as the use of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) by the government agencies. In other words, "e-governance may be



defined as the delivery of government services and information to the public by using electronic means".⁹ Traditionally, the interaction between a citizen or business and a government agency takes place in a government office. With emerging information and communication technologies it is possible to locate service centres closer to the public. Such centres may be a kiosk in the government agency, a service kiosk close to the clients, or the use of a personal computer in the home or office. Thus interpreted "e-government is the ability of the government to provide access to services and information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is an emerging force today.

Growth of e-governance:

The efforts for e-governance have started since the last decade and have gathered momentum in the last few years. Government is trying to project itself as a facilitator of business and not as a regulator. This is bringing about a change in rules and regulations, organizational restructuring and a change in the manner in which government officials deal with the public. People have also accepted e-governance as they no longer take to streets on the news of computerization, disinvestments and removal of tax barriers. Similar approach is required in dealing with e-governance. Today, e-government is useful in many ways¹⁵: In relation to public:

- 1) Tax payments
- 2) Paying bills
- 3) Voter information
- 4) Birth and death certificates
- 5) Reservations and status information
- 6) Complaint Tracking
- 7) Video on Demand
- 8) Public Information In relation to Business:
- 9) Supplies
- 10) Procurement
- 11) Proposals and Bids
- 12) Data Sales
- 13) Permitting and Licenses
- 14) Inventory Management In relation to Employees:
- 15) Intranet
- 16) Document Management
- 17) Executive Info Systems Enterprise Resource Planning
- 18) Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- 19) Customer Relationship Management In relation to Government:
- 20) Information Exchange
- 21) Reporting • Regional Planning
- 22) Transfer of funds
- 23) Joint Power Agreements

Stages of e-governance development:



Delineate five stages in the development of e-governance. Stage 1: Emerging Web Presence a country has formal but limited web presence through a single or a few independent government websites that generally serve as public information sources. These sites provide users with static information on government or its ministries, agencies, elected officials, etc. Contact information like addresses, phone numbers, office hours, calendars, etc are posted. Frequently asked questions may also be found. Stage 2 : Enhanced Web Presence A country's web presence expands as users can access dynamic and specialized information that is regularly updated through increasing number of websites. An official national government website or homepage may serve as an entry point linking users to other branches, ministries, departments, and sub-national government sites. Official government publications, legislation, news-letters and other useful documents can be downloaded or ordered online. Search features, e-mail and areas for posting comments are accessible. Stage 3 : Interactive Web Presence A country's presence on the internet expands dramatically with an increase in the number of official websites providing access to a broad range of government institutions and the services they provide. A national government website frequently acts as a portal

During several traditions, the Millennium Declaration was a culmination of these processes and provided a global plan of action to deal with the world's most persistent problems. The MDGs formed part of an innovative international approach to international affairs firmly grounded on the concept of "liberalism" as fundamental to peace and economics. According to that approach rooted in Western history, political and economic liberalization would be effective antidotes to violent conflict and to poverty and underdevelopment, all under the tutelage of the rich countries and in particular a new United Nations revitalized after the disappearance of the Soviet Union. Thus, promotion of human rights, democracy, elections, constitutionalism, rule of law, property rights, good governance, neo-liberal economics have become part and parcel of the international peace building/good governance project as well as the basis for a rapid surge in social and economic affairs.

E-Governance Andhra Pradesh:

Andhra Pradesh has been in the forefront of implementation of e-governance projects in the country. A large number of our initiatives have been replicated not only in India, but also in foreign countries. For example through Mee Seva, we are ensuring efficient, hassle-free, transparent and accountable delivery of government to citizen (G2C) services. Mee Seva has been adopted as a national model of good governance for delivering G2C services. The e-District MMP has been accordingly redesigned. Similarly, other initiatives of Andhra Pradesh, such as Webland (Land Records Management Information System), e-PASS (e-Payment and Application System of Scholarships), Online Recruitment Processing System (ORPS), Comprehensive Financial Management Systems (CFMS), e-Hostel, Rajiv Yuva Kiranalulu skills training tracking system, CFST (Citizen Friendly Services of Transport Department), e-Procurement, e-Suvidha (Complete Application for Municipalities), e-Return (Commercial Tax), IPoM (Integrated Poverty Monitoring



System designed in the context of tracking the national flagship programme: Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission for Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India), AGRISNET, Online Soil Health Card Generation System, CARD (Computer Aided Administration of Registration Department), Aarogyasri, SRDH (State Resident Data Hub), e-Cops, AP State Portal, Forest Fire Risk Zonation Mapping, and Jawahar Knowledge Centers have made outstanding contribution towards good governance. Some of these initiatives have received national awards. Our e-Procurement project was listed in the “Top 20 Programs: IBM Innovations in Transforming Government” Awards in the world by the Ash Institute of Harvard University.

Also implementing AP State Wide Area Net Work (AP SWAN) which is connecting State Network Centre (SNC) at Secretariat to 23 District Network Centres (DNCs) at respective District Collectorates with 8 Mbps Bandwidth and 1,088 Mandal Network Centres (MNCs) are connected to the respective District Headquarters with 2 Mbps bandwidth each. This allows us to bring speed, efficiency, reliability and accountability in our functions. AP has also been ranked as leader in e-readiness assessment as per the India e-Readiness Assessment Report. So far we have taken a distinct lead in e-governance initiatives in the country and we are going to continue with it.

“E-governance is easy Governance, e-governance is Effective Governance and at the same time, e-governance is most economical Governance”

– PM Shri Narendra Modi

E-Governance harnesses the power of information and Communication technologies (ICT) to provide quality services to citizens in a timely fashion. Today e-governance has become the crucial tool to achieve ‘good governance’. E-Governance can ensure that the government is transparent, accountable, responsive and efficient. Studies have shown that e-governance can be a panacea for many hurdles faced in implementing citizen-centric services and helps to promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government. Since late 90s, Andhra Pradesh has been at the forefront in integrating IT with governance. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is renowned for his penchant for IT and e-governance. He played a pivotal role in launching the citizen centric eSeva online service portal in 90s. Millions of transactions are conducted at mee seva centers every year. Since then, the state has marched forward in expanding the reach of e-governance.

In Andhra Pradesh

The present administrative reforms and social policies of Chandrababu Naidu government in Andhra Pradesh can be understood in the light of the historical process of socio-economic and political developments in the state. In this process, it is necessary to analyze the emergence of the dominant classes/castes in terms of political authority and economic power, in the region of coastal Andhra Pradesh. Because, this section's social and political urge has been translated into



administrative reforms by the earlier NTR government and present reshaping efforts of Chandrababu Naidu government. This section also forms the very substantial bastion of TDP's social base from its origins to the present days.

As noted by R.S Rao, "historically the development of modern Andhra in terms of growth started with advent of major irrigation in Krishna and Godavari areas during the mid nineteenth century. The construction of major irrigation dams on the Krishna and Godavari rivers had greatly influenced the socio-economic conditions of coastal Andhra region. Particularly, agriculture became remunerative for peasant castes. They began intensive cultivation of rice and cash crops like cotton, sugarcane and tobacco for growing market. The rise in agricultural production transformed the stagnant economy into market economy. At the societal level, "this growth process in agriculture led to emergence of the middle class from Sudra upper castes".

The benefits of the growth process in agriculture did not reach the poor. But the numbers of agricultural labourers expanded, with no improvements in their living conditions. A comparison of wage rates prior to irrigation development with post irrigation indicates an increase in money wage that got neutralised by an increase in the prices of food grains. As G. N. Rao points out, during the years 1850 to 1890, "the agricultural growth and absence of any improvement in the condition of the agricultural labourers had gone hand in hand".

Socio-Economic and Political Context of Janmabhoomi Programme

The 1994 elections to the state Assembly has brought the TDP back into power with overwhelming majority under the leadership of N.T.Rama Rao. The main campaign issue in the election time has been the subsidised rice, power and total prohibition. The defeat of the Congress Party has been characterised as a result of its new economic policies introduced at the national level in 1991. The major changes brought in by the economic reforms, "primacy of market in distribution, retreat of the state, withdrawal of subsidies, privatisation of public sector undertakings have the consequences of increase in the prices of essential commodities and agricultural inputs, crisis for workers in weaving and fisheries sectors and retrenchment of industrial workers". Thus this was economic context in which various political parties had to respond to meet the rising expectations of various sections of society.

In relation to electoral gains the TDP gained from its promises on reducing the prices of PDS rice from Rs.3-50 paise to Rs.2/-, subsidy on power to agriculture and total prohibition on arrack and liquor in the state. While after assuming power, the maintenance of economic balance has been weakened. The debate triggered by the government over the state's dire financial situation has largely revolved around the need to do away with welfare programmes. Evidently, new kinds of financial management policies are required in this position, which also needs a quick decision-maker. In this context, the toppling of NTR by his son -in- law



Chandrababu Naidu has been characterised as the need of economic situation in the state. As observed by Balagopal, "this (the toppling of NTR) has represented the social urge to industrialization and economic development, which demands efficient and quick-acting governance, where NTR is perceived by a substantial segment of Andhra Pradesh elite as having failed".

Conclusion Remarks:

The present government in Andhra Pradesh also has great belief in increasing the living standards of people through the achievement of growth in economy. This is evident from the 'Vision- 2020' document, which is the plan of action for the development of state in industry, agriculture and services sectors in the coming years. It laid emphasis on the need for achievement of rapid economic growth in order to create human development. It is evident in saying that for the achievement of high quality of life, the state will have to embark on a vigorous effort to create economic growth.

Development, particularly social development, will require the creation of economic opportunity, mainly through the growth in the economy. The effort for realisation of this growth must be through the development of domestic agriculture sector, since most of the populations are living on this. The government of Andhra Pradesh is not clear about this when it wanted to create and promote investment in world class infrastructure- power, roads, communications, transport and manufacturing industry. Since the resources of government are far beyond the investments on this scale, it pointed out the need to attract the large-scale private investment. On the other side, Partnership with the state gave national legitimacy and necessary political protection to foreign capital and international developmental agencies. The government has targets to reduce the importance of agrarian sector in terms of large employer to the rural masses. It is evident in the comparisons by the government between India, U.S.A and Malaysia which says that "65% of the population lived on agriculture in India while only 3% did so in the United States and only 8% in Malaysia. We should reduce the population depending on agriculture.

The source of this pace of neo-liberal rhetoric comes also from the fragmented and weak opposition. It resulted in the way the important bills are passing in Legislative Assembly, like bypassing of trade union laws and negligence of voice of small opposition in number. The total opposition has been suspended from the Legislative Assembly during the passing of Bills regarding privatisation of APSEB and loans from the World Bank. From the above, we can understand that, though there may be some benefits through Janmabhoomi programme for targeted sections of people. But, the claims for the realisation of values of Janmabhoomi such as, people's participation, good governance, accountability and transparency are not made on the basis of government commitment to provide social justice and good life to all. It does not intended to raise the living standards of people through



distributing the basic resources like land, water, and political power to the deprived sections of society.

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