

## Leadership and Good Governance

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### Abstract

*Social order necessitated the emergence of leadership and governance as a basic component of human life. Leadership is a process that requires people to accept a person as their leader, characterized by influence between the leaders and the followers and occurs in a given context to accomplish shared goals. Governance implies the interaction between formal institutions and people, among the people themselves and the manner in which decisions are made and implemented in an environmental setting. Good governance entails creating an environment that is inclusive, sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people and effective to the many challenges it encounters. Leadership is instrumental in the course of enhancing the life of the people and realizing the goals of good governance. It is the ability to influence others to achieve objectives, protects and ensures the highest quality of life while providing the much needed direction for good governance. This paper is descriptive in nature and based on secondary sources. It addresses the essential qualities for effective leadership and assesses its role in good governance by focusing on the nine characteristics of good governance as stated by the 1997 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy. The paper concludes that effective leadership sets the tone and standards of good governance, irrespective of the type of government in prevalence.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, effective leadership, good governance, UNDP

### I. Introduction

Leadership and good governance are central in the ever changing complex world. Ever since man started living in groups-organized and unorganized, leadership and good governance have existed. However, it is only in the last few decades that much attention has been paid to the two concepts. The unprecedented historic situations towards

the end of the twentieth century has demonstrated renewed interest in leadership and good governance for they serve as a pivot on which the socio-political and economic structures rest. They are the essential and critical ingredients of a group in helping to navigate future challenges.

All groups or organisations need leadership to help the members reach a

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set destination. The success of a group depends to a great extent on the leadership. History has repeatedly shown that the differences between success and failure in groups are largely attributed to leadership. It has a tremendous influence on human performance as also the output of the organization. To Thomas Gordan, (Gordan, 2001) leadership either makes or breaks a group and that the attitudes and behaviour of leadership strongly influence the group's performance as also the amount of satisfaction enjoyed by group members. He further elaborates that leadership does not automatically receive acceptance and respect of the members but that it has to be earned. Therefore, to have a positive impact on the members, leadership needs to learn and incorporate specific skills and methods.

It is often said that the prosperity of a group or organisation depends on effective leadership and good governance. When leadership fails to muster the collective will of the members towards policies and plans, mis-governance or bad governance is said to prevail. This often leads to unsatisfactory development and misplacement of goals. In order to adapt to multi-faceted challenges, leadership and good governance are important at all levels of governance. This paper highlights the instrumental role of effective leadership in realising the goals of good governance by focusing on the nine characteristics of good governance as stated by the 1997 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy.

## **II. Review of Literature**

A brief survey and review of literature is presented to give an idea on the study.

Leadership can be understood as the act of setting or clarifying goals for a group, and mobilizing the energies of members of that group to pursue those goals (Keohane, 2010). It is about influencing others to achieve goals. Good governance entails creating an environment that is inclusive, sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people and effective to the many challenges it encounters. Leadership is fundamental if good governance is to be achieved and development and progress is to be maintained in any country (Nicholas-Omoregbe *et.al*, 2016). Leadership is about making people happy through experiencing good governance and ensuring that the right people get the right job with good processes and leadership being accountable to the people (Matshabaphala, 2015). In order to realize the goals of good governance, it is imperative that leadership exhibits qualities and skills to anticipate and be responsible to the needs and development challenges. The existence of good leadership attributes is an important factor in creating good governance (Irawanto *et.al*, 2016).

## **II. Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) To understand the concept of leadership and good governance
- 2) To examine the relation between leadership and good governance

### **III. Methodology**

The paper is descriptive in nature and is based on secondary data collected from sources, such as books, newspapers, journals, magazines and internet.

### **IV. Limitations**

The paper is limited to the assessment of effective leadership in realizing the goals of good governance as stated by the 1997 UNDP policy. Thus, it does not enquire into any particular organization or effort taken by a country or leadership.

### **V. Results and Discussions**

#### **(a) Leadership**

The concept of leadership is as old as civilizations; yet, its popularity increased only during the early part of the twentieth century. The numerous theories as well as styles of leadership have contributed much to the development of the concept. The focus of leadership has varied in traits, behaviour, influence, role relationships, interaction patterns, occupations and context. Thus, leadership is not constant but dynamic in nature.

The literature on leadership provides that initially leadership was equated as a personal quality. In the post-Second World War, leadership was linked with the process of influence upon others when Stodgill (1950) defined leadership as “the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts towards goal setting and goal achievement” (Silva, 2016). Another dimension to this view was made when Kotter (1988) added that leadership is “the process of moving a

group (or groups) in some direction through mostly non-coercive means” (Silva, 2016). However, this was challenged by Kollerman when she insisted that leadership may also be seen as the power to force members to do something that they would never have done otherwise (Volckmann, 2012). Hitler, Stalin and others could be cited as examples of leaders who used force. In the 1990s, the importance of followers was highlighted when Bass (1990) argued that leadership is an interactive process that involves both the followers and the leader (Silva, 2016). Prior to the new millennium, Warren Bennis and others visualized leadership as a ‘visionary’ with the abilities to translate vision into reality (Silva, 2016). Kellerman further adds that besides the leader and the follower, another ingredient equally important in the leadership process is the context (Volckmann, 2012). This holds true for leadership is not the same as in the past few years or in different countries, even if they are said to be democratic.

Leadership is a complex phenomenon that involves not only the leader but also the followers and the context it occurs. It is a process and not merely a personal quality characterized by interactive influence between the leader and the followers. It includes the personal traits, context as well as the acceptance and accomplishment of shared goals. The traditional belief that power and dominance is associated with leadership does not hold much truth today for the key to leadership is the discovery of shared

purpose and the interaction between motives and values. (Burns, 1978).

There is a plethora of definitions on leadership; however, for the purpose of this paper leadership is defined as the ability to influence a group of people or organization towards realizing stated objectives for greater good. It is an interactive influence between the leaders and the followers in a given context with common objectives for achieving the desired end. Leadership is about working with and guiding people to sustain themselves and bring positive changes that will help all concern to improve their functioning. It is about facilitating members to proceed in the uncertain environment and help adapt to current trends. Effective leadership is required in order to achieve greater heights and the goals of good governance.

*Qualities of Effective Leadership* – It is human tendency to have negative thoughts and feelings towards leaders. When things do not go as plan, the blame is often on the leadership who are scrutinized and criticized. At the same time, everyone can aspire and become a leader; however, it is only a few with exceptional qualities that eventually become effective and successful. It is these qualities that set them apart from the average and make them shine during troubled water. Literature provides that a team is identified by the leadership skills and qualities prevalent. A performing team will have an effective leadership that will exhibit certain qualities. The skills and

qualities needed for effective leadership may vary from person to person depending on his or her *styles, traits, behaviour, personality, context* and *expertise* required. These qualities can be both innate and learned through the process of growth. The leadership qualities that are relevant in fostering good governance, *inter alia*, are skills, attributes, experience, and achievement.

1) *Skills* – Leadership skills are essential component to make decisions, setting mission and goals, allocating resources to achieve the goals of organization. Effective leadership requires the ability to delegate, inspire and communicate effectively. Problem solving, strategic planning, anticipating the future and adaptability are also required of an effective leadership. These become more apparent in the increasing and complex ever changing world.

2) *Attributes* - Effective leadership adheres to high ethical standards and treat everyone with trust, respect and dignity. Values are as important as results to an effective leadership. The ability to commit in helping accomplish the goals and thereby building trust and respect is another attribute desired. The skill of leadership to inspire to generate original and innovative ideas helps motivate and increase satisfaction. An effective leadership needs to exercise and use creative mind to tackle many challenges. Confidence is another essential attribute of effective leadership which creates and garners support from others. The ability

to accept the strength and weaknesses and tailor them in a valuable manner helps create confident leadership. At the same time, an effective leadership needs to demonstrate both professional and leadership competencies to face challenges.

3) *Experience* – Experiences either break or shape a person. Using experiences rather than being used by sets an effective leadership apart from the mediocre (Bennis, 2003). An effective leadership learns by experience in a purposeful and strategic manner. The knowledge of the past experience helps to navigate present experiences as well as discover new insights for the future.

4) *Achievement* – An effective leadership is usually an achiever because of the focus on results. Situations are viewed as challenges to be solved as promptly as possible. Opportunities are discovered by leadership and pursued while acknowledging feedback so that positive changes can be affected. A visionary zeal and ability to set directions, inspire and energise others to go the extra mile makes for an effective leadership.

Effective leadership can help create conducive environment whereby people are motivated to affect positive changes in the face of uncertainties. It focuses on the people, purposes and goals of the organization and provides direction through fostering a shared understanding.

#### **(b) Good Governance**

Etymologically, the word ‘governance’ is derived from the Greek

verb *kubernan*, which means to steer a ship—the sense in which it was used in Plato’s *Republic*. From this was derived the Latin verb *gubernare* which, in turn, was the source of the French *gouverner*, and thence the English words ‘government’ and ‘governance.’ Over the past decades, governance has been given numerous meanings and the concept has been used in several contexts. Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development (World Bank, 1992). It is the process of decision making and its implementation (UNESCAP, 2010). It also includes the exercise of power or authority to manage a country’s resources and affairs (UNDP, 1997). Governance is the government’s ability to make and enforce rules and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not (Fukuyama, 2013). Elaborating further, he points out that there are at least four broad approaches to evaluating the quality of governance: procedural measures, input measures, output measures and measures of bureaucratic autonomy and good governance becomes visible when the quality and process of governance serves not only the general public but the marginalized and leads to sustainable development and change.

Writings of philosophers, political thinkers and administrators down the ages have demonstrated that various aspects of good governance have been debated time and again. However, it was only when the

World Bank's 1989 Report on *Sub-Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* related problems of development as a 'crisis of governance' that good governance received much impetus. Over the years, the concept has been used by different people and groups to mean different things: it is subjective and its interpretation differs from person, process and context, among a few. Broadly, there are two interpretations – managerial and systematic. According to the managerial interpretation, adoption of new tools by existing formal authorities must be the core concern of good governance. The systematic interpretation believes that good governance is primarily a search for new practices, new types of relationships, cooperation, and self governing networks that can radically affect existing organizations, institutions and processes (Mander and Asif, 2004).

Good governance, for the World Bank, is synonymous with sound development management (World Bank, 1992). According to the World Bank, good governance entails sound public sector management (efficiency, effectiveness, and economy), accountability, exchange and free flow of information (transparency), and a legal framework for development (justice, respect for human rights and liberty) (World Bank, 1994). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) states that governance can be good if efforts are made to minimize corruption, the views of minorities are

taken into account, and the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making while being responsive to the present and future needs of society (UNESCAP, 2010). Governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises mechanisms, processes, and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercises their legal rights, meet their legal obligations, and mediate their differences (UNDP, 2010). Good governance is associated with the state's capacity to provide basic public goods and services (Fukuyama, 2016).

Good governance describes the high water mark for arriving at a decision which is transparent, accountable, equitable, participatory, economical, efficient, effective, sensitive and responsive to the needs of the people. It must be able to cope with the emerging challenges through established laws and measures.

### **(c) Leadership and Good Governance**

The discourse on good governance has led to the important role of leadership. Without an effective and efficient leader, a group cannot move forward. The leader has to be consistently aware of the parameters of governance set by the group and steer towards the accomplishment of the stated objectives. The role of the leadership is not limited to carrying out the best choice of options but working within the limited resources and making the best of them. Towards realizing the

goals of good governance an effective leadership with avowed commitment is crucial.

The UNDP's definition of good governance is set out in a 1997 UNDP policy document entitled "Governance for Sustainable Human Development." The document states that governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It is explained that governance has three dimensions: economic, political and administrative. Economic governance includes the decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy. Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation. Encompassing all three, good governance defines the processes and structures that guide political and socio-economic relationships (UNDP, 1997 cited in International Fund for Agricultural Development Document, 1999).

Good governance comprises the existence of effective mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP, 1997 cited in International Fund for Agricultural Development Document, 1999). The UNDP enunciated a set of core good governance principles that are grouped

under five themes viz., legitimacy and voice, direction, performance, accountability and fairness. These have been further classified into nine UNDP supporting principles. The focus of this paper is to assess effective leadership in realizing the goals of good governance through the UNDP principles.

**1) *Participation*** – Participation implies that all members of society have a voice or are in a position to influence decision-making and governance. (UNDP, 1997). All men and women should have a voice in decision making, either directly or indirectly on issues of interest to them. This entails the presence of freedom of speech and association as well as the capacity to participate constructively. Participation is the foundation of good governance because it ensures inclusion of all members. Good governance can be realized only if the leader is open to share ideas. An effective leadership is actively involved at all levels of governance and encourages all members to effectively participate to build communication, cooperation and to find solutions to problems. This not only gives a sense of belongingness but foster a spirit of *camaraderie* which is vital for good governance to prevail. At the same time, leadership must keep stakeholders informed of all developments and provide access to information, institutions etc. Accessibility provides the platform to participate in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies. Participation helps educate,

builds trust and enhance performance quality thus paving the path to good governance. In the absence of participation, grievances and social disorder can prevail leading to mis-governance.

2) **Rule of Law** – Rule of law is an important ingredient of good governance. It refers to established legal framework that ‘should be fair and enforced impartially, particularly the laws on human rights’ (UNDP, 1997). Human association cannot progress much without the presence of leadership and rule of law. In the governance process there should be well defined set of laws that binds all. Good governance entails fairness, equality before law, respect for human rights, life and personal properties, just and equitable treatment for all. An effective leadership applies laws equally to all concern - the ruled and the rulers, equal protection of laws and human rights as well as equal punishment under law.

3) **Transparency** – This concept is built on the free flow of information. Processes, institutions and information should be directly accessible to those concerned, and enough information should be provided to render them understandable and monitorable (UNDP, 1997). The key to transparency is giving others in the organization the information and the ability to influence by offering ideas and demonstrating responsibility. Good governance envisages transparency in decision making, implementation and easy availability of relevant information. An

effective leadership is proactive in sharing about the values, vision, approach and future. Transparency aids in efficiency, builds trust, foster teamwork which are essential for leadership to bring about good governance.

4) **Responsive** – The relationship between leadership and members is an important requisite of good governance. Good governance envisages that personnel, institutions and process must serve and be responsive to members within the timeframe provided (UNDP, 1997). Towards this an effective leadership experiment, delegates, empower and focus on problem solving. Effective leadership proactively generate solutions, ensure greater inclusiveness and is responsive to popular demands to achieve good governance.

5) **Consensus orientation** – Good governance requires that a broad consensus on differing interests should be considered in order to reach a broad consensus. Good governance mediates differing interests to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the group and where possible on policies and procedures (UNDP, 1997). It is very difficult to reach a consensus because of the diverse interests of people. However, if leadership makes effort and overcome the difficulties the consensus will yield magnificent results and usher in good governance. An effective leadership provides platform for consultation to understand the varied interests of the stakeholders. After



weighing the alternatives a broad consensus is arrived at in the interest of the stakeholders. This builds support, fosters trust, encourages collaboration leading to better and informed decisions.

**6) Equity-** Equity implies that all men and women should have equal opportunity to maintain or improve their well being (UNDP,1997). Good governance ensures that opportunities are given to the fullest to all members to participate in the fruits of development. It does not discriminate on grounds of caste, creed, sex etc. Leadership can have a substantial impact on how disadvantaged groups are viewed. They must be assured that they have a role to play and are not excluded from the mainstream. An effective leadership tends to be sensitive to the needs of the people and provide opportunities to all groups to live a life of dignity and maintain, enhance and improve the general well being of all stakeholders.

**7) Effectiveness and efficiency –** Processes and institutions should produce results that meet needs while making the best use of resources (UNDP, 1997). The goal of good governance is to provide economical, efficient and effective services to all stakeholders. Leadership is responsible in providing a systematic path to achieve the goals. The change in the world environment and its increasing complexities require an effective leadership with a foresight to see that the process and institutions produce results that meet needs and is sustainable while optimizing on the scarce resources. An

effective leadership has the ability to accomplish goals efficiently and effectively.

**8) Accountability –** Good governance envisage leadership that is responsible and accountable for every acts and decision. Accountability refers to holding persons with authority liable for their actions. Decision-makers in the government, private sector and civil society organizations should be accountable to public as well as institutional stakeholders (UNDP, 1997). Accountability requires clear specification of tasks to be performed, procedures to be followed, time frame and the finances available for performing them. It also involves taking risks for success and failures. Leaders, very often, take credit for effective result but pass the buck when efforts do not yield required result. An effective leadership enquires into all possible resources and alternative action, makes decision and acknowledges responsibility for decisions, actions and is answerable for positive and negative consequences. The levels of accountability differ and depend on the organization concerned and whether the decision to ensure accountability is internal or external. However, through maintaining accountability, leadership fosters trust, which helps to improve the overall performance and commitment thereby usher in good governance.

**9) Strategic vision-** – It involves developing concrete vision and implementing that vision to success. Leaders and the public should have a

broad and long-term perspective on good governance and human development, together with a sense of what is needed for such development (UNDP, 1997). Good governance requires effective leadership with strategic vision, purpose, direction and the ability to inspire and lead with the implicit understanding of possibilities and constraints that are inherent in the cultural history of population. Effective leadership keep organizations focused, make tough decisions and execute strategy always aiming for clearly defined outcomes and performances. An effective leadership distributes responsibility, is transparent, create channels for innovative thinking, tap on experiences and explore ways of fostering more strategic environment through understanding the historical, social and cultural complexities in order to achieve the goals of good governance.

Effective leadership with the ability to be responsive, effective and efficient, inclusive and build consensus, set strategic vision, accept responsibility and accountability, promote rule of law and integrity, allow free flow of information and effective participation, unites people in shared objectives, delivering trust and values and is capable of steering towards good governance.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The proceeding discussion reveals that leadership plays an important role in good governance and this is more evident for countries that are in the process of development. Optimistic goals are set and pursued with strategic vision and planning. Through actions and personal influence leadership is a resource of good governance. However, all leadership does not end up with the best cake. Instead there are dramatic differences in the end product. The socio-cultural, psychological, economic and political impact and differences create certain constraints for leadership. It is vital; therefore, that leadership has the essential qualities to build and sustain good governance. Leadership to be effective requires, inter alia, skills, attributes, experience and achievement. Effective leadership is instrumental in affecting valuable changes, establishing and setting the tone and standards of good governance. Briefly, the role of effective leadership is to facilitate the management of public resources, goods and services and act with competence, integrity and transparency to adapt, control and affect change to foster good governance. In meeting the needs of members without compromising those of future generations effective leadership is crucial in designing pathways to the future, achieving goals and in delivering quality and reliable service.

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