Good Governance in India- Myth and Reality

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Abstract:

In this article, an effort has been made to disclose the true nature of good governance in the Indian context by refuting the myths and speculations about it. The main objective is to understand the pros and cons of good governance and its reality in the Indian context. In addition to this, a thorough discussion has been made about the changes and challenges that good governance is facing in the present time from populist politics, and to examine to what extent such changes and challenges transform its meaning and dimensions. The content analysis method is used for this purpose. The main findings of this article are that the prospects of good governance in India remain dependent on the will of political leaders, the zeal and enthusiasm of the Indian people, the scope of democratic governance, the range of constitutionality to direct the power of e-governance to establish a just social order, the capacity to convert social power to political power or vice versa to manage a stable political order, and the adjustment power between different political roles and their various social goals to manage social responsibility and raise political consciousness. In India, the goodness of good governance is highly attributed to the notion of a technocratic view. It may exclude the common people from the ambit of administration by facilitating the role of white-collar bureaucrats, thus potentially undermining the true nature of good governance.

Keywords: good governance, myth, reality, populist politics

Introduction: In the present discourse of the political world, good governance has become a buzzword not only for political leaders but also for academicians, administrators, and policymakers who are devotedly engaged in categorically defining the features that make governance good and sustainable in nature. Governance, as it is pointed out, is basically associated with the capacity of government (Thomas, 2012) aimed at fulfilling the basic needs and objectives to sustain power and maintain stability in the present political order. It is governance that creates an equilibrium between demand input and programme output by changing the strength and capacity of the government (both in structural as well as procedural terms) so that it can meet the demands effectively and discard all unusual vagaries that do not match its present roles and goals. Governance is basically goal-oriented in nature. It is such a parameter with which one can assess how effectively a government can perform its duty and to what extent it becomes a successful narrator of its mission.

But when the word "good" becomes the prefix of governance, the very meaning of the word changes rapidly. It connotes a different range of activities along with specific dimensions that justify the mission and ambitions of the government in a rational way. It is said that governance becomes good when (1) it is operated in a democratic way by ensuring people's participation in every sphere of public space, promoting an environment of free discussion to ease the tension between rulers and ruled, protecting people's voices in every sphere of action, assuring their role in the public sphere, and managing to solve the conflict between public and private interests to become more effective and efficient in the eyes of the people; (2) it manages to protect equality in every sphere of life; (3) it becomes responsive to public demand; (4) it

reflects justice and fairness in its actions; (5) rationality becomes the core value under which decision-making activities are to be regulated; and (6) responsibility becomes the prime goal for the dutiful conduct of the government's job (Powley & Anderlini, 2004).

Such a passionate definition of good governance makes it popular among the leaders of all democratic countries. Democratic rulers take this measure to consolidate their political power by extending their support base, which is an essential prerequisite for sustaining their rule in a democratic manner. Good governance not only develops a healthy interaction between rulers and ruled, but it also adds some flexibility to their relationship to make it more stable and connective. Good governance acts as a connecting link between the people and their space in the organization (of government), hence justifying the passion for decentralization in an effective way. It literally helps rulers make democracy more meaningful by enhancing the power of the people and placing them at the center of the democratic rule.

India, being the largest democracy in the world, initiated good governance as part of its democratic venture. From the very beginning, when Indian rulers set their minds to change the direction of their rule towards a new goal (good governance), they had little knowledge about the impact of such changes on the existing process of governability and on the basic pattern of functional aspects activated in the name of governance. Because of its foreign origins, good governance never became a good substitute for the indigenous form of governance. Despite the lack of commonality, a number of constructive efforts were introduced to meet the demand for structural inadequacy, and a range of need-based actions was taken up to produce good results. Though the secret ambition of national leaders to use good governance as a tool for controlling power over the democratic order partially affected the scheme, the diversion that was expected to happen in the structural ambit of good governance was never seen in a prominent way. Probably, it was the inability of national leaders to manage the sources of public power that could have enabled them to fulfil their secret mission by diluting the core principles of public life and moral constitutional goals. The lack of a mechanism to articulate their interest in terms of good governance is another reason why rulers could not materialize their plan.

In the present context, the structural orientation of good governance, as seen in its indigenous form, has been highly influenced by populist politics. Sources of primordial loyalties like caste, religion, communal identity, race, and ethnic entities also have some influence on the very process of good governance (Jayal, 2006); even more often, it becomes a threat to the interaction processes that naturally occur between government and governance, people and their representatives, various structural elements of the existing administrative framework, and the structural and functional notions and impressions of governance, etc., which in most cases manifest the core values of good governance. In this backdrop, it is important to reveal whether good governance, as it is suggested, strengthens the root of Indian democracy or reduces it to an instrument of control in the hands of dominant power.

In this article, an effort has been made to disclose the true nature of good governance in the Indian context by refuting the myths and speculations about it. The main objective is to understand the pros and cons of good governance and its reality in the Indian context. In addition to this, a thorough discussion has been made about the changes and challenges that good governance is facing from the present populist context and to examine to what extent such changes and challenges transform its meaning and dimensions. The content analysis method is used for this purpose.

II. Good governance in Indian context

In ancient India, as stated in the 'Arthashastra', the famous book of that time written by one of the stalwarts of Indian political thought, Kautilya, good governance was credited by the then ruler Chandragupta for establishing a welfare state (Choudhary, 2021) to ensure common goods. Therefore, it is said that good governance has its roots from the very beginning when ancient Indian civilization started its journey. At that time, it was symbolized by the common good and embodied in terms of sovereign power.

In the mediaeval period, a slight change took place in the meaning of good governance. Mediaeval thinkers of Indian political thought used it in a managerial sense to justify the grounds on which omnipotent rulers could maintain their rule and establish political stability by coordinating various contradictory political interests. A range of actions was taken for this purpose, i.e., freeing non-Muslim people from paying religious tax, accommodating Hindu rulers in the centralized state structure, promoting welfarist activities of the state to secure common goods, and enhancing unity between rulers and other government functionaries to manage state affairs in an effective way, etc. (Khan, 2019). Such an operative form of governance expanded it beyond the formal ambit of government.

During the British period, the progress towards good governance abruptly came to a halt. British rulers, though they did not even spell this term in their century-long rule, were basically engaged in perpetuating their rule by using management skills. With the use of these skills, they directed people (native Indians), power (colonial power), and products towards a new goal — the politicization of Indian society along the lines of colonial perception. The objectification of subjects allowed colonial rulers to minimize the gap between colonial and social aspects of political power. Political modernization took place to build a social polity without political liberty. Essential goals of the political regime were expressed in terms of governance without credibility, programmes without potentiality, and politics without accountability. Such management skills might be called misgovernance, far removed from reaching the objectives of good governance. Whatever encouraged British rulers to move forward with a planned scheme of reform to accelerate the speed of so-called modernization in this country and impose imported political values upon native Indians to incorporate them into the colonial power structure could not meet the demand for good governance. Similarly, the 'common good' version could not postulate the ends of colonial rulers and was henceforth rejected by them.

Immediately after Independence, Indian state runners encountered a number of reactionary forces that pressurized them to initiate a good number of reforms to maintain law and order and political stability. However, the ends (liberty, equality, and fraternity) to which the Indian federation is supposed to direct itself in order to set up a just, socialist, democratic republic — one of the prime conditions of good governance — have not been attained for a long time. Colonial hangover predominantly diverted the causal effects of power relations, as dominant interests gradually changed their position and a number of new interests came within the ambit of power. The emerging forces of political power destroyed the very regime of political democracy that was somehow attributed to the indigenous form of good governance (Scott, 2005).

A group of thinkers stated that the diverse range of actions to coordinate different conflicting interests of electoral politics ruthlessly ruined the internal balance of various power blocks

(Dahl, 1956; Sartori, 1997; Lijphart, 1999), thus conversely affecting the positive growth of good governance. Different perspectives of power, as suggested by another group of writers, confidently altered this approach. They thought that democratic growth ensures the root causes of good governance, which partially lie in the free expression of democratic will and diversity in work and thought (Sen, 1999; Robinson & Acemoglu, 2012). Other groups of political thinkers focused on the notional effects of democracy, which, according to them, seriously dictate the pattern of political thought and, at the same time, attract a group of heterogeneous political interests by manipulating political goals (Moe, 1988; Schmitter & Brouwer, 1999), thus suppressing the rationality of good governance efforts in the public sphere.

In the course of time, the situation changed rapidly. Being a pluralist country, India contributed a distinct pattern of democratic setup in which each and every Indian, irrespective of their class, creed, religion, region, gender, or language, enjoys their freedom and exercises their rights and power freely and passionately. The multicultural value orientation of life makes them more focused on their role and responsibility towards their community. Political tolerance, communal harmony, and social justice are the key words that guide their lives and connect them with the soul of the Indian nation.

After being freed from colonial domination, the Constitution became the connecting link between the people and the state. It planned to endorse good sustainable governance with a federal essence that consolidated the support base of Indian democracy. In this phase, various interpretations of the meaning of good governance were developed, ranging from a means to an end, from a process to a pattern, and from a plan to a function.

In the 90s, the concept of good governance gradually began to change as its orientation shifted towards a new direction, which was mostly Western in nature. Therefore, in place of republican democratic values, the free market economy and related values shaped the ambit of good governance (Barro, 1996). As a consequence, its notions and visions, roles and goals, and responsibilities and accountability also changed, shifting their focus to facilitate market goals over the principles of welfarist statism. The functional setup or structural dimensions of good governance, as proposed in the Indian Constitution, also came under serious threat due to the influence of the free market economy.

In this context, it is important to reveal whether such changes and challenges shadowed the true nature of good governance and reduced it to a myth. In this connection, it is also important to determine how much reality exists in the present version of good governance and to what extent such realities contradict the myths.

The model of good governance, as prescribed and promoted by the World Bank, is a part of its structural adjustment programme, imported by the Indian rulers after becoming victims of the debt crisis (Sharma, 2007). This very model, though its adoption was executed under economic compulsion and was supposed to bring some positive changes in the direction and dimension of governance, could not provide the desired outcomes and, within a short time, lost its credibility among Indians.

It is another question whether it was introduced with the aim of bringing Indian people under the purview of the free market economy and restructuring the roles and goals of governance accordingly, but the core issues that might be the alma mater in bringing good governance into action in the Indian context could not work for several reasons. Firstly, the very model, with

its Western origins, could not fit into the structural setup of Indian society; failing to align with the social goals and instincts of the Indian people, it could not manage to produce the desired results, as claimed by its founders (Leftwitch, 1993). Secondly, structural inadequacy became a major obstacle to the effective manifestation of good governance in India. Thirdly, a lack of procedural reform could be another reason that made it more difficult in the Indian context. Fourthly, fussy initiatives on the part of the government could not bring it into effect in a real sense. Fifthly, the connecting links between government and governance were not mature enough to pursue the effective implementation of good governance. Sixthly, the gap between the theoretical framework and practical outcomes became a permanent barrier to promoting good governance in India.

Whatever was proposed by the World Bank in the name of good governance could neither fulfil the needs of the Indian people nor manage to perform as per the desires of Indian rulers. Instead, it produced some myths that shadowed the reality of good governance. These myths are mainly generated from the gaps between missions and visions, roles and goals, potentiality and credibility, persuasion and sanctions, regulations and responsibility.

First and foremost, among these myths that undermined the reality of good governance is the word itself. Good is such an ambiguous term that it has no standard definition, nor is there any measuring scale to determine how much goodness is required to qualify as good governance. Though good as a word carries some moral connotations, the nature of moral obligation varies from society to society and from time to time. Therefore, it is difficult to capture its essence within a single theoretical framework. The World Bank, as it defined the term in its technical sense, which is mostly economic in nature, could not realize its irrelevance in a country like India, which is spiritually enriched and holds different views about the term, viewing it as purely moral in its essence.

Another myth that misleads the conceptual inquiry of good governance originates from the meaning of governance as offered by the World Bank. Governance, in its good sense, as prescribed by the World Bank, refers to a process through which any government can effectively administer its economic, administrative, and political resources for the welfare of its people (Safkaur, Afiah, Poulus & Dahlan, 2019). Therefore, governance, as prescribed in the view of the World Bank, is merely a way through which developmental goals can be achieved with the help of public resources. It refers to the better management of power, people, and economic resources with the aim of successfully applying the core principles of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness for better results.

But in the Indian context, such a definition of governance, as conceptualized in the phrase good governance by the World Bank personnel, failed to address the broad spectrum on the basis of which good governance can flourish. It misconstrued the way of thought that can reveal the reality of good governance in the Indian experience. In this country, good governance is not something merely used to fulfil developmental goals but is also the means to justify the reasons on the basis of which such goals have been formulated. It is a means of effective management not only of public resources but also of social resources, which are essential in the manifestation of power relations (Ackerman, 2005).

It is also attributed to the sources of political legitimacy, thereby maintaining an effective linkage between rulers and the ruled. It has a clear goal of unifying India into a single nation

by overcoming internal feuds and disharmony, thereby marking a significant difference from the misleading conception of the World Bank. However, in reality, myths have overshadowed the true essence of good governance in India, thereby failing to achieve the desired success.

Thirdly, myths persist in their implicational values, which, directed by the narratives of Western liberalism, denounced the role of the Indian version of the common good (Dharma), one of the primary conditions for the successful implementation of good governance, as experienced in ancient Indian society. The core values of individuality, as pronounced in the principles of laissez-faire individualism and the free market economy, constitute the main components of what good governance is credited for (Botchway, 2000). Hence, the expedience of the laxity of the common good is entirely excluded from this model.

One can say that good governance, in the view of the World Bank, becomes a one-dimensional model in which power, resources, and prestige flow from one individual to another. Therefore, whatever is common in society in terms of interests, goals, and goods could not be achieved properly through the use of this model. Though such deviations from its older Indian version and the limitations of the new edition cannot be readily traced, as they are concealed by the so-called supporters of good governance through the use of the myths of individualism, this process has displaced communitarian values, which are the main binding force of Indian society.

Fourthly, the participatory nature of good governance, as presented by the World Bank personnel, also becomes a myth in the Indian context. In a country like India, where a large number of people live with numerous identities based on class, caste, religion, region, language, gender, ethnicity, and so on, it is difficult to accommodate each and every identity in the core decision-making body. Similarly, it is equally difficult to assign a role for each of them in the decision implementation processes. Being excluded from making their own debut as a group (class, caste, religion, region, gender, ethnicity) sometimes triggers their anger.

In this context, they either reject whatever is offered to them in the name of civility or protest against such a dubious system with a reactionary overtone. It is needless to say that the contributors to good governance fail to manage the situation, as whatever network they provide for effective communication, coordination, and contribution does not work because of its individualistic nature.

Fifthly, the process of work, which is said to be efficient, effective, and cost-beneficial in nature, is not practicable in reality. The myth of administrative efficiency or effectiveness barely fulfils the needs of people-centric administration. Similarly, it fails to ensure the responsibility of rulers towards those they represent. Political groupism, bureaucratization of administration, power plays, and the criminalization of politics have become the glaring truths within the ambit of governance (Singh, 2008). Failing to mitigate these problems with genuine will, good governance could not achieve the administrative excellence proclaimed in the name of efficient, effective, and cost-beneficial administration.

Sixthly, the myth that "good governance benefits all" has also attracted the attention of a number of administrative thinkers and policymakers who have contributed to it. However, the focal point they have missed in their work is how much benefit reaches whom, especially in a society like India, which is inherently discriminatory in nature. The equity theory they proposed in their work could not adequately manage the whole situation due to its limitations in choosing

between individual goals and community goals, both of which are crucial in the management of public affairs.

Seventhly, the idea of good governance is fully entangled with the myth of equality based on the central theme of the rule of law, which commits equal opportunity for all. But the great irony is that such opportunities could not reach every section of individuals living in Indian society. In reality, it silently imposes certain qualifications to achieve those opportunities. It is evident from the past that those who have no power in terms of political influence or economic resources have lost the battle.

Finally, it is said that the role and goal of democratization, as promoted and projected by the theorists of good governance, is not free from mystic override. Democracy becomes a fairy tale in the hands of the supporters of good governance. On the one hand, it accommodates a large number of people in the democratic process, but without informing them of the basic rules of democracy. Therefore, the riddle of democracy is summed up with the question of change and challenge. Change, in the sense that as more conscious people come within the ambit of democracy, it will become more flourishing and enriched, and challenge, in the sense that it is difficult to handle unconscious people and prevent them from doing any mischief that could be fatal for democracy. Therefore, the reality of people's participation through the democratization process, as narrated by the administrators of good governance, never becomes true, as it fails to increase the consciousness level among people before putting them into the structural ambit of democracy.

III. **Good governance in the Age of Populist Politics**

In contemporary India, amidst the populist controversy, good governance begins to change its colour. The dimension and direction of good governance also change rapidly, and a new outlook has been set to obtain its future goals. The algorithm that predominantly ruled over the dimension of populist politics also changes the vision and version of good governance in accordance with its needs. Such deviation from what it is originally meant for challenges its very orientation; its organizational structure comes under a serious threat and gradually loses its credibility, with which a legitimacy crisis begins to take shape, raising a serious question over the very existence of good governance.

Populist politics divides people into two groups and lets them engage in a bitter fight with each other (Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove, 2014) by playing the card of discrimination over the questions of power, prestige, and possession, and assumes that the concentration of power and resources in the hands of a single group of people causes misery for others.

Populist thinkers have produced some sort of mistrust about the existing democratic system. Therefore, whatever tools have been used by the rulers to protect their class interests in terms of democratic power by redefining the rules and regulations of the power game are summarily rejected by them. Good governance is no exception to this. The challenges that have been faced by good governance over the last few years are mainly heterogeneous in nature. Most of these challenges originate from the rhetorical reincarnation of populist democracy and accelerate the demand for a popular regime to restore the interests of the people.

Good governance, as it is contextualized, also protects and preserves the interests of people in terms of the common good. Those who make good governance more fertile and facilitate its

interests in terms of common welfare never denigrate the term 'people' by curbing its meaning. One of the major conditions for the effective functioning of good governance is to involve people as a whole so that the parlance of the common good can work. But the administrators of populist politics curb the dimension of the term (people) and limit it to the meaning of a group of people who are the majority in number and deprived in nature (Panizza, 2005). Such a definition excludes a small group of people from the ambit of democracy who are entitled to most of the benefits and power of a democratic polity or have nothing to do with populist values, and this exclusion poses a serious threat to the effective functioning of good governance. With this exclusion, certain groups of people become marginalized, creating inequality and undermining the inclusiveness essential for democratic legitimacy. This imbalance can lead to social unrest, weakened trust in governance, and ineffective policymaking.

Most populist rulers believe in the role of common people and mobilize them for state power (Urbinati, 2019), which enables them to assert their rights and enhance their capacity to change and challenge whatever comes their way. But in such a scheme, no initiative has been taken to create coordination between the two rival groups fighting for the achievement of mutually opposing interests. Needless to say, in such a situation, good governance can't work. The mutual hostility of different interest groups, along with unleashed violence and atrocities, limits its scope and functionality required for successful implementation. Therefore, its utility comes under a significant threat within the populist regime.

Populist rulers aim to establish justice by discarding one group's interests for the sake of others. It promotes and protects the interests of common people who were hitherto excluded and deprived by others, at the cost of the interests of a small group that has concentrated all benefits in their hands (Cohen, 2019). Therefore, in committing justice for one group of people, it deprives others and limits their scope in terms of power and resources. This poses a significant challenge to the functioning of good governance, as good governance never prescribes discarding anyone's interests from its ambit. Justice, as defined by the advocates of good governance, never discriminates against anyone from receiving their due. It leaves scope for everyone to achieve the goal of justice. Just distribution aligns with the principles of equality, fairness, and morality. Therefore, whatever is suggested for a just social order should comply with these principles. Since populist politicians never value these principles in their pursuit of justice, the goodness of good governance has been challenged by populists.

Populists challenge the presumptions on which good governance manifests its rules and regulations. For example, it is widely accepted by the theoreticians of good governance that the ruling skill of rulers is the first and foremost criterion for a stable government. However, this is fully discarded by the politicians of populist politics, as they place common people at the center of power without examining their knowledge and skills (Mounk, 2018), thereby opening up the scope for all to be placed at the center of power irrespective of their previous experience and skill. In this way, a new power class has emerged, for whom skill has nothing to do with power. Due to their lack of prudence and good faith, the democratic system loses its credibility and effectiveness—prime conditions for the effective functioning of good governance.

Similarly, accountability in good governance, which in most cases flows in a top-down direction—from people's representatives to their electorate and from bureaucrats to the

people's representatives or someone they deem fit for any job—is abruptly changed in a populist regime, as it denies any role to the middleman, thereby cutting down their involvement in democratic affairs (Urbinati, 2019). Such an initiative becomes fatal for good governance, as in many cases it has to depend on those persons or institutions that are, by nature, closely connected with the role of good governance. By making them inactive, populist rulers curtail the role of good governance.

Populist leaders promote and project a significant number of populist schemes, which increase the cost of government and compromise its efficiency (Bauer & Becker, 2020), thereby challenging the goals set by good governance in terms of economy and efficiency. For example, in India, to gain popularity among their subjects, leaders of the ruling party in populist politics declare various welfare schemes, which increase the cost of government. Sometimes a single scheme is introduced under different names by two different levels of government. This also challenges the cost-benefit approach of good governance. The misuse and abuse of money and power further undermine the goal of efficiency, thereby weakening the constructive power of good governance.

The networks provided by good governance to administer the relationship between rulers and the ruled also come under serious stress under the influence of populist politics. For example, it is said that good governance promotes the role of media, NGOs, and other social organizations to manage the core principles of the interrelation between rulers and the ruled, with the aim of checking the omnipotent attitude of rulers and making them more responsible to their people. However, in populist politics, such roles of the media and other organizations are not recognized as essential for democracy (Fawzi, 2020). Populist leaders never believe there is a need to have their affairs checked or to be made conscious of their roles by others. Such a dominant attitude creates a significant problem for the implementation of good governance.

The concept of responsible government, one of the core principles of good governance, also faces a serious challenge from populist leaders as they try to concentrate all power in the hands of parliament at the cost of other devices (Muller, 2017). This seriously affects the functioning of the other arms of government, which have the potential to check the extravagances of populist rulers by maintaining a balance of power between various functional devices of government. Therefore, it counters the project of good governance with all of its ambitious outlook.

In this context, it is important to examine whether such challenges bring any change to the ambit of good governance. It is true that, from a theoretical aspect, no remarkable changes have been observed in the last few years. In India, with the outbreak of populist politics, a good number of initiatives have been taken to promote welfare activities in order to mobilize popular support in favour of the rulers, but such initiatives could not lay the backdrop on which good governance can flourish. For example, the slogan of Digital India can increase competency in the activities of government by operating e-governance effectively, and to some extent, it fulfils the goal of fairness in governmental activities as desired. However, it doesn't mean that good governance exists in India.

Similarly, whatever schemes and functions have been taken under the gamut of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' definitely help women to build their capacity and empower them in every sphere

of life, but it should not be counted as an example of good governance, but rather a drive toward it.

Since in India there is a huge gap between what is happening in reality and how it is presented to the public, the probability of generating myths about the nature and future of good governance increases a hundred times higher than in other countries. If most Indians wrongly identify the above-mentioned functions as manifestations of good governance, then it will become a clamour for them.

Good governance will never become a reality for India as long as the needs of the rulers and the ruled do not align. As long as capacity and possibility do not meet each other, good governance will never become a subject of achievement. People should think about what they opt for and what is achieved by them.

A recent survey report reveals that, regarding the freedom of the press index, India's rank slipped nineteen places lower than its previous rank (The Hindu, 2023), which is not a good sign for India in pursuance of its efforts toward good governance. Though a large number of welfare schemes have been adopted by the populist rulers of this country, they could not protect the steady downfall of the job market during the Covid period, which definitely squeezed equal opportunities for all. The growth rate became lower, and corruption, mistrust, misrule, bureaucratization, and disharmony began to spread in various parts of the country. In this situation, it is difficult to achieve the sanctity of good governance in its pure form.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to note that India has the potential to overcome the barriers that stand in its way to achieving good governance. It is evident from the past that, on numerous occasions, the Indian government has faced difficulties in managing its affairs, but due to its own ability to set up effective governance in terms of management, it successfully overcame crises that posed a threat to its very existence. In the year 1947, after gaining freedom from colonial rule at the cost of the separation of states along communal lines, communal violence engulfed various parts of the country. The then state rulers successfully dominated the situation by using their skills, which might not be mentioned in the so-called model of good governance prescribed by the World Bank, but they helped the people of this country get rid of the communal riots. Similarly, the crisis in governability during the years of war, in 1967 (with China) and 1971 (with Pakistan), and its immediate aftermath, the debt crisis in the 1990s, and the worldwide economic crisis in 2008 were also faced by Indian rulers, who successfully ran their administration by defeating whatever came their way with their knowledge, skill, and patience.

In every case, whatever steps have been taken by the then state rulers to successfully run the government with the optimal use of governance are not enough evidence for what is called good governance in the Indian context. One may argue that good governance is a standard fixed by the World Bank for the effective exercise of power to meet the development goals of a country. The illusion started with this point of view, which is more market-centric in nature. The first and foremost duty of a government should be to ensure the sovereignty of the state, protect its freedom, and promote the national interest of the country. Development happens only when all three criteria are fulfilled by the government. Since the Indian government meets all these criteria, even in critical situations, one can say that it has all the favourable conditions

for the pursuance of good governance. So, whatever myth is produced by the World Bank in the name of good governance could be easily neglected if one concentrates on its indigenous counterpart.

It is the credit of Indian rulers to avoid the omnipotent power of individualistic overtone articulated by the World Bank executives in their model of good governance. Good governance in its Western form never prescribed any way through which a multicultural, multi-ethnic country like India can successfully coordinate between various conflicting interests to achieve stability and integrity, which are essential for good governance. It is the credit of Indian state rulers who summarily rejected the essence of exclusive individualism and promoted communitarian values, more compatible with Indian culture, with their own setup of governance. It can be argued that, in comparison with the Western model, the Indian model of good governance is more acceptable as it demonstrates its credentials in protecting and promoting social harmony in a pluralistic society with more than 140 million people, by deconstructing the individual myth of its foreign counterparts.

In recent years, populist intervention in every sphere of governance has limited the meaning and scope of good governance. Populist rulers use it to serve their own interests. Though they have achieved some of its other parameters in the Western sense, they have failed to link it to the model used by the Indian rulers from the very beginning to protect and promote the interests of this country as well as its people. Above all, whatever they are trying to contribute in the name of popular culture has failed to address the cultural disintegration among different groups of people living in this country. Instead, it has produced inconsistency among different cultural groups, thereby promoting instability in Indian society.

Now the time has come to check all these heinous tendencies and promote the essence of good governance without myths. As long as the present rulers cannot realize the essence of good governance or do not consider the goodness underpinned in it, and common people are not able to follow the line of thought produced by the populist rulers in dealing with the institutions of good governance, myths will be produced on a large scale, undermining the reality of good governance.

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