CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE

BACKGROUND

NPM (New Public Management) made the state untouchable by labelling it ineffective in discharging activities. It argues for delivery of public services with a focus on performance measurement, efficiency, economy, and value for money, and plea for rolling back of state with privatization. But very soon, argument started that ‘Public Interest’ should not be overlooked. Therefore, the concept of governance followed by the concept of good governance, has come in.

By governance, we do not mean that all the so-called bread and butter issues on the NPM agenda have become irrelevant. Governance should not be interpreted as anti-NPM.

CONCEPT OF GOVERNANCE

Bidyut Chakravarty says, “Governance is nomenclature as public administration, however, it is a vague idea. Since 1990s, there has been deliberate debate among scholars happened to replace public administration with governance”.

Also, he observes, governance originated because of following factors:-

I. Socially by complaints about the inadequacy of public sector that failed to live up to political promises and public expectations.
II. Globally by increasing interdependence that poses challenges to existing governmental arrangement.
III. Academically by a shift from the static approach of the positive paradigm focusing on objectivity to post-positivism that stresses complexity, interconnections, and interactions.

GOVERNANCE VS GOVERNMENT

Governance is broader than government in scope. Governance includes both governmental institutions as well as informal non-governmental institutions whereby those persons and organizations within its purview move ahead, satisfy their needs, and fulfill their wants. It is not just about the organs of government, but is concerned more about the quality of the functioning of various governing organs.

GOVERNANCE ANSWERS TWO KEY QUESTIONS

Jamil Jreisat (2004) opines that governance refers to two of the most basic questions:

1. Who governs?
2. And how well?

The first question focuses on the issues of distribution of power and resources in the society. The second question is primarily concerned with ‘good government’ judged by such elements such as effective institutions, efficient methods of operation, and equitable policy outcomes.

TRADITIONAL VIEW ON GOVERNANCE: - Traditionally, governance was based on the premise that the government have always been entrusted with

a) The task of - formulating and implementing policy decisions, governing or managing,
b) And excessive reliance on bureaucratic forms of organizations, hierarchy, adherence to rules and regulations, notions of permanence and neutrality, and citizens have been treated as passive acceptors of goods and services.

MODERN VIEW ON GOVERNANCE: - But the current notion implies greater participation by the citizens in the affairs of the government to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of policy making and outcomes.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION VS GOVERNANCE

Bidyut chakravaty says, “public administration = a) structure, b) process, and c) purpose, whereas governance = a) structure, and b) Process. Governance is silent on the point of ‘purpose’. So, governance is not public administration.”

NPM VS GOVERNANCE

1. NPM focuses more on processes with a view to achieving efficiency and performance, while governance emphasizes on interaction amongst government, market forces, civil society organizations, cooperative endeavors in realizing desired outcomes. Both the approaches, however, aim at improving quality aspects.

2. NPM is narrow as focus on service delivery aspects only whereas governance aims at enhancing the quality of life.

3. NPM concerns to reform the State institution considering citizens as consumers of services who are to benefit mainly through economic and efficiency concerns. On the other hand, governance reforms assign a significant position to the citizens, their collective participation in decision making processes and so on.

4. NPM reforms focus on the achievement of the objectives of efficiency and economy and emphasis upon the dominance of individual over collective preferences, whereas governance is intended to reflect broader concerns over and above efficiency and economy. This includes:
   a. Establishing accountability between the State and people
   b. Treating people not merely as customers or consumers, but as citizens who have the right to hold their government accountable for their actions
   c. Protecting citizens’ rights, their voices, values and preferences Facilitating the participation of people in the governance processes Empowering people towards better development; and
   d. Ensuring responsiveness of public as well as private institutions to the people