

Impact of globalization on good governance: An analysis on Local government in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Globalization and Good governance both are important issues in the modern time. This study has been conducted to provide the understanding of globalization impact on good governance at the local government in Bangladesh. Based on secondary sources, the study findings suggest that present local government structure is not suitable for coping globalization opportunities that helps to ensure good governance. Local governance will be more strong through the component of good governance. Globalization spreads technology and local government activities can be more transparent with the help of technology. The study also discusses the challenging issues which create obstacles in ensuring good governance in local government.

Index terms: Globalization, Governance, Good Governance, Local government, Local Government in Bangladesh.

I. Introduction

Now a days “Globalization” is a popular term in our daily life. Globalization reduces the state boundary. Though globalization evolved as a economic and business term but now it is an unavoidable matter and influences all the sectors of a country. Without being influenced by internal and external forces, no single state can formulate and execute policies. Most of the developing countries, such as Bangladesh faced pressure from external forces for reforming its socio-political institutions and external forces giving instructions for managing different aid conditions [1]. Bangladesh is a third world country and global interdependency and interconnection affect Bangladesh. Improving the governance quality is a essential pre-condition for developing Bangladesh. Decentralizing local government is a positive step for improving governance system. At present, good governance issue is an important issue. Multilateral organizations and donors are giving importance to that policies that ensure good governance. Globalization is influencing local people in various ways. Local government understand local people’s problems better. As a result, local government works as promoters of development of a country. So, the impact of globalization on good governance in local government is an important issue. The aim of this study is to find out the impact of globalization on good governance of local government in Bangladesh (in this study local government means upazilla and union parishad).

II. Study Methods

The aim of the paper is to discuss the impact of globalization on good governance in local government. The research followed secondary sources such as : related articles, books, journals, newsletters, annual reports of different organizations. Data from different websites have been used in this study.

III. Studies and Findings

A. Conceptual Framework

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Globalization

People all over the world can interact and transact with one another through the benefit of globalization. According to Cerny (1999:188) globalization is “the convergence of economics and politics across borders into single dominant model, a variant of liberal capitalism aligned with neo-liberal politics” or “the intersection of different forms of both convergence and divergence [2]. Giddens (2003) defines globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” [3]. Some scholars define -movement of people, language, ideas, and products around the world as globalization [4].

Governance

According to World Bank (1992) Governance is “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” [5].

Landell-Mills and Serageldin (1991) define the concept ‘governance’ as ‘the use of political authority and exercise of control over a society and the management of resources for social and economic development’ [6]

Good Governance

According to Etoungue Manguella: “Good governance implies presence of rule of law, safeguard of human rights, and existence of honest and efficient government, accountability, transparency, predictability and openness” [7]

According to United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific—“Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society” [8].

Local Government

According to Duane Lockard “Local government as a public organization is authorized to decide and administer a limited range of public policies within a relatively small territory, which is a sub-division of a regional or national government. Local government is at the bottom of a pyramid of government institutions, with the national government at the top and intermediate Governments (of states, regions, provinces) occupying the middle rung. Normally, local government has general jurisdiction and is not confined to the performance of one specific function or service [9].

Local government in Bangladesh

Bangladesh became independent in 1971. Generally local government is embodied locally. In Bengal there had always been local government historically. But the structure of local government bodies was changed time to time [10]. Bangladesh is a democratic country and it has two tiers of government system : national and local government. Bangladesh constitution enshrined local government in chapter three . There are three types of Local Government in Bangladesh. These are: rural, urban and hill districts. City corporations and town pourshavas are included in urban authorities and zilla parishad, upazilla parishad, union parishad are included in rural authorities [11].

B. Good governance at local government in Bangladesh

Good governance is an important issue in Bangladesh constitution and Bangladesh constitution provides all necessary elements for ensuring good governance in Bangladesh but Bangladesh government cannot promote fully appropriate policies, surroundings, institutions, capability and good governance practice [12]. Good governance in local government is essential for ensuring good governance in all over the country. Ensuring good governance in local government is also important for institutionalizing democracy and people's welfare [13]. "Local Government is the yard stick of Good Governance" (Begum, Khan and Ahmed: 1998 quoted from Islam, F ;& Haque, M.A).The principles of good governance such as : people's participation, consensus orientation, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equitability, inclusiveness practicing are absent in local government. Practicing of rule of law is also absent in local government system in Bangladesh. There are no measures starting at local government bodies for ensuring good governance [14].

Mezbah-ul-Azam Sowdagar in the article "Challenges of Local Governance : A study on new upazila Administration in Bangladesh" identifies some challenges for ensuring good governance at local government in Bangladesh .These are-

Intervention

Relationship of central and local government system in Bangladesh is always authoritative. Member of parliament interfere local planning at the respective area but local people can understand local problems properly. As a result, the planning for local government will not bring any effective result for good local governance.

Corruption

Corruption is one of the major causes that hindrances good governance in local level. Due to poverty, many local people get involved in corruption. Central government allocated resources for local development but personnel of local government could not show their honesty and integrity in the time of resource allotment and local people cannot involved themselves in development implementation stages. As a consequence, corruption occurred in local level and it created hindrances in ensuring good governance.

Accountability and Transparency

The accountability and transparency are two essential tools for ensuring good governance in local government of Bangladesh. But these mechanisms are very poor and traditional in local government system of Bangladesh.

Lack of peoples participation in planning and decision making

Local political leaders and economic elites intervene in planning and decision making process. They create hindrances in people's active participation. Lack of people's participation in planning and decision making process do not ensure good governance. [15]

Pranab Kumar Panday & Md.Golam Rabbani in the article "Good Governance at the Grass-roots : Evidence from Union Parishads in Bangladesh" discuss some issues which are related to good governance in union parishad. These are

Bangladesh local governance condition is not favorable for ensuring good governance. Bangladesh government incorporates various provisions such as ward shava ,open budget, citizen charter and right to information in the Local Government Act (union parishad)2009, for ensuring good governance at local level in Bangladesh.

People's participation

According to the constitution of Bangladesh, people can participate at all levels of governance but people's participation opportunity is not sufficient in decision making process. At the local level, information dissemination rate is very low, accountability and transparency in every work and decision process is negligible. Though Local Government Act 2009 (up Act 2009) incorporate the provision of ward shava ,open budget, but no residents of the union parishad give positive opinion in this regard .

Accountability and Transparency

Transparency and accountability rate are very low in local government. Lack of standing committees, lack of council to monitor union parishad activities, poor commitment of representatives, lack of communication, lack of information sharing among NGOs', government officials and stakeholders are the main reasons for this [16]

On the above discussion it is clear that good governance is not ensured in local government.

Impact of globalization on good governance in local government

Governance process and public policy are directly influenced by the global institution in Bangladesh. Dependence on other states and organizations is increasing day by day through the process of globalization in Bangladesh. Bangladesh receives various external suggestions and conditions in the time of changing its governance structure and it also influences local government [17]. In modern world, globalization and local governance both are the reality. The most important fact in life at the modern age is globalization. Globalization impacts on local government by creating new opportunities to democracy, governance and developing process. Globalization obscures challenges and local government merges global opportunities with local interests for capacitating themselves with these challenges. Different types of opportunities and challenges arising from globalization is adopted by the local government through “negotiations, joint agreements, exchanges of knowledge, experiences, technical knowledge and ideas with donors, aid agencies, international NGO’s and development partners”. External and local actor’s interaction is very helpful for global and local development process. But the existing structure of local government in Bangladesh is not suitable for making any linkage with the global development actors. Present local government structure fails to ensure any direction to cope with globalization opportunities [18]. Though Local Government Act 2009 (UP and Upazila Act 2009) incorporates the provision of using advanced technology, right to Information Act, ward shava, open budget for people’s participation which help to ensure good governance at local government. The basis of globalization is strong technology. Globalization expanded technological communication and it influenced local government but it could not ensure good governance fully.

IV Conclusions

Good governance is an essential pre-condition for developing the local government as well as the whole country. Impact of globalization on good governance in local government is also important. Bangladesh is a democratic and developing country, here globalization influences us in many ways. Globalization influences us both positively and also negatively. It creates opportunities and also challenges. Local government in Bangladesh cannot take globalization’s advantages due to its structure and governing practices. If suitable local government structure can be ensured then local government will be able to take globalization opportunities which helps to ensure good governance in local government.

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