

Changing perspective of politics and governance in India in 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Our civilizations are radically changing as we enter the twenty-first century, and there is hope for continued peace and prosperity on a worldwide scale. Along with a rising understanding of the limitations of that position, there is also an increasing awareness of the crucial role that public administration and the government plays in fostering economic and social transformation. According to universal consensus, the profound political, economic, and technological developments currently under way made twentieth-century bureaucracies obsolete. Therefore to escape the stigma of obsolescence, it is therefore important that our public agencies undergo transformation. Every nation, whether Western or Eastern, must implement significant administrative change because "Governance" is becoming increasingly important.

NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) is a policy think tank established on 1st January 2015 by the Government of India. "15-year Road map", "7- year vision, strategy and action plan" are some of its initiatives that India has designed to cater the 21st century's need of governance.

Many believe that they understand the "Development" but it can imply many different things to different individuals. It covers a wide range of potential outcomes as well as a wide range of ideological transgressions and personal agendas same as the case of governance. Each and every policy decision can't be translated into Governance. Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as saying that "Constant development is the law of life, and a man who always tries to maintain his dogmas in order to appear consistent drives himself into a false position."

KEY WORD- Governance , NITI Aayog , Development, Political Governance, Politics , Bureaucracy.

INTRODUCTION:

Bureaucracy and politics are fundamental elements of governance. Many people perceive bureaucracy as the main problem because citizens typically only engage with it during elections. While it's true that bureaucracy often fails to fulfill its duties, I believe the bigger issue lies in the political dimension of the bureaucracy-politics relationship. This issue has contributed to a decline in governance over the years, resulting in a lack of accountability, even among elected representatives. This decline is not isolated incidents but rather a systemic problem. Dysfunctional and corrupt behaviors of high-ranking officials have become normalized, tarnishing India's democratic and administrative system.

One critical concern is the proliferation of ministries and agencies at various government levels, both horizontally and vertically. This expansion was necessary to accommodate more ministers and state ministers, resulting in around sixty to seventy ministries in some states, and a similar situation at the federal level. Moreover, each ministry often houses overlapping departments with no clear chain of command.

Dominant political parties often prioritize unproductive debates and discussions over effective governance, leading to what can be termed "political governance," marked by discrimination. Opposition parties should raise social issues when the government fails to address them over an extended period. Unfortunately, in recent years, some opposition parties have overlooked critical social issues such as inflation, fuel prices, education, unemployment, poverty, COVID-19 management, and healthcare. Indian politics tends to revolve around divisive topics like caste, religion, culture, and language, making administrative decisions and opposition actions appear driven by political motives. This contentious politics threatens the ideal of a welfare state envisioned by India's freedom fighters.

In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned that former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had referred to the Planning Commission, led by Manmohan Singh at the time, as a "bunch of jokers." However, the creation of NITI Aayog offers the potential for substantial changes in India's governance landscape. NITI Aayog is introducing a higher level of accountability into the system. Previously, India had 12 Five-Year Plans, but evaluations often occurred long after the plan period had ended, resulting in a lack of real accountability.

India, with its rich history and diverse cultural heritage, has been a vibrant democracy since gaining independence in 1947. In the 21st century, the country has experienced substantial shifts in its political and governance landscape. The purpose of this research paper is to analyze these changes and provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving perspectives of politics and governance in India during this century.

OBJECTIVE

1. To understand the interdependence of politics and governance.
2. Figuring out and tracing the fault line of our governance mechanism and fixing it as per the need of the world of 21st century.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1-The Twenty-First Century Organization: (Benveniste, 1994)- The Twenty-First Century Organization offers fresh insights to help managers, planners, and policy makers in both government and business keep a competitive edge in an uncertain future--and design organizations and institutions that meet tomorrow's realities. The book reveals important trends that are shaping the way organizations are evolving and presents scenarios that these and other events may bring about in the future.

Drawing on his forty plus years of experience in analyzing and helping organizations plan for the future, Guy Benveniste offers a novel framework to help.

- Meet the challenge of increasing global competition for the new ideas needed to keep organizations innovative
- Use today's educated and professional labor pool more effectively
- Reduce the social consequences of constant organizational changes
- Understand the impact of women on organizational culture and their role in the organization of the future
- Recognize the consequences of radical innovations in communication and other information technologies
- Discover how private organizations can regulate themselves
- Enhance the lives of those within the organization.

Benveniste shows how public and private managers, planners, and anyone interested in the future can develop bold strategies, plans, and policies in order to navigate future environments.

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2-The Frontiers of Management (Drucker, 1986)- Every decision executives make today shapes the future of their organization - as well as that of the communities and society in which the organization operates. How to make choices that lead to the best possible future for all stakeholders? Look beyond the immediate crisis of the day - to the long-term implications of your decisions and actions. In the thirty-five essays comprising The Frontiers of Management, classic management thinker and teacher Peter Drucker offers advice. Each selection in this compelling collection is as fresh and relevant today as it was when written in the 1980s. With every essay, Drucker teaches by example- deftly demonstrating how to put current events in their larger historical context, how to pick the right people for a given task, how to think through an acquisition. The book provides not only durable examples of a great thinker's writing but a set of ever more urgently needed lessons on how business leaders today can understand the context of their own daily decisions - and make the wisest possible choices for the future.

3-The reengineered organization (Hammer and Champy, 1992)-- The most successful business book of the last decade, *Reengineering the Corporation* is the pioneering work on the most important topic in business today: achieving dramatic performance improvements. This book leads readers through the radical redesign of a company's processes, organization, and culture to achieve a quantum leap in performance.

Michael Hammer and James Champy have updated and revised their milestone work for the New Economy they helped to create—promising to help corporations save hundreds of millions of dollars more, raise their customer satisfaction still higher, and grow ever more nimble in the years to come.

4- Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector- David Osborne, Ted Gaebler (1993) - *Reinventing Government* is both a call to arms in the revolt against bureaucratic malaise and a guide to those who want to build something better. It shows that there is a third way: that the options are not simply liberal or conservative, but that our systems of governance can be fundamentally reframed; that a caring government can still function as efficiently and productively as the best-run businesses. Authors Osborne and Gaebler describe school districts that have used choice, empowerment, and competition to quadruple their students' performance; sanitation departments that have cut their costs in half and now beat the private sector in head-to-head competition; military commands that have slashed red tape, decentralized authority, and doubled the effectiveness of their troops.

5- Introduction to Normative Public Sector Theory- By (Richard W. Tresch, in Public Finance (Third Edition), 2015 - Public choice is the application of economic methods and behavioral assumptions to nonmarket collective choice institutions. There are six major questions that public choice has focused on: collective action, controlling Leviathan, delegation, democratic coherence, information problems, and rent-seeking. Public choice has important implications for institutional design, particularly under the assumption that political actors may be motivated by interests other than the public interest. Public choice has given rise to important areas of study in empirical behavioral economics, including experimental economics, and to the study of common pool resource management institutions.

6- Citizenship Behavior and the Spirit of New Managerialism- A Theoretical Framework and Challenge for Governance –(Robert T. Golembiewski) - This article develops an integrative understanding of the relationship between citizenship behavior in and around organizations and new public management (NPM). The authors argue that recent theory of NPM underestimates the economic, symbolic, and educational contribution of many voluntary actions, here termed citizenship behavior, to public organizations as well as to modern society. Relying on this argument, the authors develop a multidimensional model of citizenship behavior that can be applied in the public sector. The model deals with micro-citizenship, midi-citizenship, macro-citizenship, and metacitizenship. Citizenship is thus advocated as a vital construct for the formation of the new managerial spirit and at the same time as a major coming challenge for

governance. Finally, several responsibilities are elaborated for social players in fostering values of voluntarism and spontaneous involvement. These can promote a healthier public service, a more efficient bureaucracy, and richer life in prosperous modern communities.

7- Global Paradox, (Naisbitt, 1994)- It proclaimed the global phenomenon we are witnessing today: The Bigger the World Economy, the More Powerful It's Smallest Players right down to the individual.

John Naisbitt builds a powerful instrument of comprehension about the seemingly chaotic changes that appear to grip our world today. The paradox, as he sees it, is powered by the explosive developments in telecommunications which are the driving forces simultaneously creating a huge global economy and multiplying and empowering its parts. Anticipating what we know now about China, he shows that while central economic planning got China nowhere, China's individual entrepreneurs are swiftly moving in the direction of becoming one of the world's powerful economic players.

Research Methodology- This study used qualitative research methodologies to document various dimensions of governance. There are various empirical experiences mentioned which are observational rather than theoretical. How Politics have influences on governance and vice-versa and on the other hand observational as well as theoretical data have been used into this piece to articulate the state of governance in 21st century.

The Evolving Concept of Governance in India

Our current situation is striking in that economic renewal and positive growth impulses are now largely visible outside of the public sector, at the level of large businesses (for example, software companies), autonomous institutions (for example, IIMs or IITs), or individuals at the top of their professions in India and abroad. On the contrary side, we observe a noticeable decline at all levels in the governmental or public sector. This decline affects not only productivity and fiscal disempowerment, but also the delivery of essential public services in the areas of education, health, water, and transportation. In general, governance refers to the exercise of power or authority by an elected government for the good of its citizens while abiding by the law, national values, and inclusion. The most recent paradigm in the evolution of political systems, in contrast, is "political governance," when power or authority is primarily employed to advance the political objectives of the governing government. Even though India has been a sovereign nation for 75 years, we still lag behind other nations in terms of governance because persistent issues like caste disputes, riots, and prejudice continue to have a big influence on national policy.

As all of India's major political parties continue to actively participate in running the nation by giving priority to their political ideas, the term "governance" is currently used to refer to a new model called "political governance," in which each administrative decision is linked to a specific political goal.

Particularly since 1989, India's parliamentary democracy has undergone several major transformations, albeit their full significance is still not fully understood. The first of these is the advent of coalitions as a "normal" form of governance, which has resulted in governments

having a relatively short lifespan when they first take office. This would have significant behavioural implications for newly appointed ministers and our parliamentarians. The tendency for ministers to maximise the benefits of office and reduce accountability for performance becomes crucial if they anticipate holding office for a little period of time. Almost anything is acceptable, including switching allegiances in the event that a certain coalition of parties loses the majority. But after the year 2014 scenario has been changed at large scale. Electorate have given clear majority to Incumbent party in the hope of betterment consecutively in 2014 and 2019.

But inspite of all these anomalies India is trading towards glorious future. At the advent of the NITI Aayog Concept India has changed its pace and perspective in respect of planning and governance. The replacement of the Planning Commission by Niti Aayog would help change the emphasis from projects and programs to policy and institutions, from expenditure inputs to real outcomes through better governance, and from political disagreement over incremental allocations to new challenges and opportunities.

A Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office has been established by NITI Aayog to gather information on the effectiveness of several Ministries in real-time. The information is then used to establish accountability and enhance performance at the highest levels of policymaking. The real-time monitoring and evaluation of government activity based on performance and outcomes can significantly increase the effectiveness of governance.

NITI Aayog can be thought of as a funnel via which fresh ideas, whether they originate from business, academia, civil society, or foreign experts, pour into the system of government for implementation. Regular brainstorming meetings with participants from different companies and sectors take place. The National Medical Commission draught bill, which would replace the Medical Council of India, as well as initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, our approach to artificial intelligence and water conservation measures, and all of these were conceptualized by NITI Aayog and are currently being advanced by the relevant Ministries.

Technological Advancements: The 21st century has witnessed a sweeping transformation in India's political and governance landscape due to the widespread adoption of technology, specifically the proliferation of the internet and mobile phones. These technological advancements have had a profound impact on the way politics is conducted, citizens engage with the political process, and information is disseminated.

First and foremost, technology has democratized access to information and communication. The widespread availability of the internet and mobile phones has broken down traditional barriers, making information easily accessible to a larger segment of the population. Citizens now have the ability to access news, political developments, and policy discussions at their fingertips. This has significantly increased political awareness and participation, as people are more informed about the issues that affect them and their communities.

Moreover, technology has created new avenues for citizen engagement in the political process. Online forums, social media platforms, and digital petitioning systems have empowered citizens to voice their concerns, opinions, and demands. Grassroots movements and online activism have

gained momentum, allowing individuals to organize, advocate for change, and hold politicians and institutions accountable. This shift towards greater citizen engagement has the potential to foster a more participatory and responsive democracy.

Shifting Demographics: India's demographic landscape has undergone a significant transformation. The country's youthful population and increasing urbanization have had profound implications for politics and governance. Younger generations, often more educated and aware of global issues, have different political priorities and expectations than their predecessors. Urbanization has given rise to new challenges, such as infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, and the provision of basic services. As urban centers expand, the demand for responsive urban governance has become increasingly pressing.

Firstly, India's youthful population is a defining feature of its demographic landscape. The majority of the population consists of young people, often referred to as the "demographic dividend." These younger generations have grown up in an era of greater access to education and information, making them more educated and aware of global issues. As a result, they have different political priorities and expectations compared to previous generations. They are more likely to demand accountability, transparency, and responsiveness from political leaders and institutions. This generational shift in expectations has put pressure on political parties and governments to adapt their policies and governance models to cater to the evolving needs and aspirations of the youth.

Secondly, the process of urbanization in India has been accelerating in the 21st century. Millions of people are moving from rural areas to urban centers in search of better economic opportunities and improved living standards. This rapid urbanization has given rise to a range of challenges that require effective political and governance responses.

Infrastructure development is a pressing concern in urban areas. As cities expand, there is a growing need for reliable transportation, housing, sanitation, and utilities. The inadequacy of infrastructure in many cities can hinder economic growth and the overall quality of life for urban residents. Effective governance in this context involves strategic urban planning, investment in infrastructure, and sustainable development practices to accommodate the urban population.

Environmental sustainability is another key issue associated with urbanization. As cities grow, they exert significant pressure on natural resources and contribute to pollution and environmental degradation. Political leaders and governance institutions must address environmental challenges through policies that promote clean energy, waste management, and sustainable urban planning to ensure that urbanization is environmentally responsible.

Economic Liberalization: Economic reforms initiated in the early 1990s continued to shape India's political landscape in the 21st century. The sustained economic growth and expansion of the middle class have not only lifted millions out of poverty but also influenced political preferences. Citizens now expect their leaders to deliver not only on political promises but also on economic development. This has put pressure on politicians to adopt policies that stimulate economic growth and job creation.

One of the most notable consequences of economic liberalization has been sustained economic growth. India's economy has expanded at a significant rate, leading to higher GDP per capita and a reduction in poverty levels. The emergence of a burgeoning middle class has been a hallmark of this growth. This middle class, characterized by increased disposable income, greater consumerism, and improved living standards, has become a powerful force in Indian politics.

The rise of the middle class has influenced political preferences in several ways. First, citizens, including the middle class, now expect their political leaders to deliver not only on traditional political promises but also on economic development. There is a growing emphasis on economic stability, job creation, and wealth generation as key criteria for evaluating political performance. Political parties and leaders have recognized the significance of these issues and often incorporate economic development strategies into their election campaigns.

Identity Politics and Regionalism: The rise of identity politics, often rooted in caste, religion, and regional identities, has added complexity to the Indian political landscape. Political parties often use these identities to mobilize support, leading to fragmented and polarized politics. Regional parties have gained prominence, demanding greater autonomy and influence. While identity-based politics can empower marginalized groups, it also presents challenges in terms of fostering unity and inclusivity at the national level.

The rise of identity politics and regionalism has presented both opportunities and challenges for Indian democracy. Empowering marginalized communities and recognizing the diversity of the country's population are important steps towards social justice and inclusivity. However, striking a balance between identity-based politics and fostering national unity and cohesion remains a delicate task. Political leaders and parties must navigate this landscape carefully to ensure that the empowerment of specific groups does not come at the expense of broader social harmony and national unity. Finding common ground and building bridges between different identity groups is essential for a vibrant and inclusive Indian democracy in the 21st century.

Conclusion

NITI Aayog has identified 213 'low performing districts' and 500 'backward blocks' to scale up the aspirational district model (ADM). It made a strong pitch with states for the same at a recent meeting of chief secretaries. In June 15-17 meeting in 2022, chaired by the Prime Minister at Dharamsala, saw Niti Aayog make a strong pitch to expand the ambit of the aspirational districts programme to improve key social indicators in backward areas. It red flagged challenges to the mission such as frequent transfers of district officials and huge vacancies. While the programme was launched in 112 districts across 26 states and a Union Territory in 2018, the Centre has now identified double the number of districts and gone down to the block level. The prime minister, in fact, set the tone at the meeting asking for the posting of the best young officers to aspirational districts and asking states to extend the programme to block and city levels.

The Union government has been preparing since January when it asked all central ministries to identify 'low performing districts'. An inter-ministerial committee was set up to extend the exercise down to the block level and 500 of these have been identified for the scale up.

Fifteen ministries - from health, education, skill development, rural development & agriculture to telecom, MEITY and financial services - identified 213 'low performing' districts. Of these, 163 districts are said to be 'unique' given their specific constraints. The district-wise identification is sectoral in nature. While the Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries have identified 30 such districts, Department of North-East has identified 34 of them and jal shakti ministry identified another 20 that were deficient on certain key parameters. The education, skill development, rural development, agriculture, tribal affairs and women & child development ministries have shortlisted ten districts each.

The findings were shared by Niti Aayog at the meeting with chief secretaries which proposed to scale up the 'aspirational districts model of data based governance and ranking' to all districts and blocks. While health, nutrition and education would be the 'Key Performance Indicators', states have been asked to add on any other relevant criteria as well.

Niti Aayog has circulated a handbook to state governments on replicating the ADP template for improving under-developed blocks. The Centre also proposes to rank the performance of blocks every quarter.

Suggestion-

In context of monitoring and evaluation, we are still lagging behind because of our inefficient mechanism. That is why current state of our society's living standards and basic amenities are of less standard. Our goals have increased, and today we seek poverty eradication rather than its alleviation along with giving the due importance the governance in obtaining desired social results. Over the last decade, India has lifted a staggering 271 million out of multidimensional poverty. The country is also improving access to clean water, sanitation and affordable clean energy.

The people of India have high hopes for advancement and enhancement of governance, through their involvement. They need dynamic policy changes that can spark and encourage broad-scale transformation, as well as institutional reforms in governance.

With the understanding of the effects of changing economic, social, and political realities: The government should act as a "enabler" rather than a "provider of first and last resort," according to the administration paradigm that India requires. Reduced government involvement as a "participant" in the manufacturing and service industries is necessary. The government must instead concentrate on enabling legislation, policy development, and regulation.

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