Good or good enough governance in South Asia: constraints and possibilities

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by

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Introduction

Since the significance of good governance for development is now universally recognized, it stands at the core of governance and administrative reforms undertaken in developed as well as developing countries including transitional economies. At the 2005 UN World Summit, the world leaders agreed on the vitality of good governance for sustained development and eradication of poverty and hunger (UNDP, 2006). Accountability, transparency and participation are some of the central themes. However, good governance can mean different things to different countries and can have different implications when it is used as a guiding framework for policy and administrative reforms. Since each country or region has a different context of governance, it faces unique governance challenges. Therefore, it is important that the concept of good governance is understood in the context of each country and region to find indigenous and pragmatic solutions to its unique problems of governance within the framework of universally accepted values.

Since the paradigm of governance has basically evolved in developed countries with stable democratic political systems and competitive markets, the application of the concept of good governance to developing countries that are at different development stages may have unintended and serious consequences for the citizens especially poor. Prince Claus expressed the same concern for transferability of a development model to the Third World –in his case the Marshall Plan- in these words:

> *"The suggestion of a Marshall Plan for the Third World is unrealistic and misguiding. The situation in which Europe found itself at the end of the last World War cannot be compared with the very diverse circumstances of the developing countries today. A suggestion of this sort serves to raise expectations which can only lead to disappointment, frustration and disruption."*

It appears, however, that the issue of transferability of the notion of good governance to developing countries is not being adequately attended to, while formulating a reform agenda mostly backed by international donors, especially in the case of heavily indebted countries. The good governance agenda of international development agencies tends to be generic, imitative, and ambitious and it largely

fails to take account of the institutional and developmental context of developing countries. Developing countries are being asked to do everything which works in developed countries and consequently the good governance agenda in the developing world has grown long over the years. Recognizing this problem, Merilee Grindle (2004) has recently argued for *good enough* governance for poverty reduction and reform in developing countries. The concept of 'good enough governance', though still in its infancy, represents a strong case for contextualizing or indigenizing the notion of good governance in the developing world to set realistic and achievable reform objectives for each country.

South Asia is a region rich in culture and tradition and poor in governance and human development. Having been born, studied, worked, and lived in Pakistan, the second largest country of South Asia, I have selected this region to contextualize the notion of good governance. My talk is structured around four fundamental questions: What does good or good enough governance mean to the people of South Asia? How should the quality of governance be assessed in a region where the vast majority is poor and voice-less? What are the constraints on good governance in South Asian countries? What are the possibilities of good governance in this region? After addressing these questions, I would like to examine the possibility of South Asian model (s) of governance to capture and address the complexities and challenges of governance in this particular region. Let me say at the outset that while addressing these questions, it might be very difficult for me to set aside my emotions since I have personally seen, for very long, the sufferings of common people as a result of poor governance in Pakistan and indeed in South Asia.

Analytical Framework

My review of concept of good governance and its relevance to South Asian context is based on the following premises:

1.   Governance is a cultural phenomenon. Culture is defined as shared values of the people living in a country or region. Societal values govern the behavior of people in formal and informal institutions. The formal institutions and organizations that are formally created in public sector, private sector, and civil society reflect cultural values of the people.

2.   The values of formal institutions are of two kinds: 1) espoused values; and 2) values in action. Espoused values are values that are

manifested in formal rules, policies, and structure of formal institutions and organizations. Values in action are values that are actually reflected in behavior at institutional, organizational, and individual level.

3.   Incongruity between formal institutions and informal institutions may lead to divergence in espoused values and values in action resulting in a gap between structure and behavior, rules and implementation, promises and results, form and substance, and, goals and results.

4.   Governance, in its current usage, is a concept based on norms and values well grounded in democratic and bureaucratic traditions of western and developed societies where there is less or no incongruity between formal and informal institutions

  5.   While using good governance as a framework for administrative reforms in countries with incongruity between formal institutions and informal institutions, values such as accountability, transparency, and participation may easily be made part of espoused values by changing the rules but it will be difficult to translate these values into action.

From government to governance

Traditionally, the term 'governance' was understood as synonymous to government. However, in recent years, the term governance has acquired a new meaning. Governance now refers to new processes, methods, or ways of governing society (Jolly, 2002; Stoker, 1998; Rhodes 1996). Under the new mode of governance, government is one of the actors in the process of governance along with civil society and the private sector. This new mode of governance is an outcome of a paradigmatic shift in political thinking on the role of the state in society primarily influenced by neo-liberalism. The government under the emerging neo-liberal state has to steer, support, and guide as opposed to command and control, direct provision of public services, and to act as a stand alone institution of governance. The shift from government to governance started during the 1980s in the capitalist and industrially advanced countries; it later swept the developing world including South Asia, too.

To fully understand the shift from government to governance in developing countries, it is important to see the evolution of development thought after the Second World War. Since 1950,

development thinking has gone through four phases. The first phase of development began in 1950 and lasted till the later part of the 1960s. In this phase, Keynesian economics guided the development approach. It focused more on the transfer of capital and technical expertise to the Third World to enhance their pace of development. Development was understood at that time only in terms of economic growth. During this phase national development plans and projects were largely considered as tools for development transferred to developing countries through technical assistance from developed countries. Government and public sector institutions were expected to implement the development projects. There was a general belief that benefits of economic growth would trickle down to the poor.

The second period of development started in the late 1960s when failure of the development approach adopted in the first phase was recognized as it could not deliver the desired results. The international development community realized the limitations of a project approach and the failure of trickle down theory. This led to the adoption of a poverty reduction approach to development emphasizing investment in human capital through universal primary education, adult education, training, and capacity building with a focus on sector/programs.

The third phase in the history of international development, which started at the end of 1970s, is marked by neo-liberal dominance. In this phase, a major shift in development thinking took place characterized by privatization, smaller government, reduced public expenditure, export orientation and openness to private foreign investment. The prominent role of the market, the private sector and non-governmental organizations was recognized as imperative for development. Under the new development philosophy, government was no more the sole player in the process of development. Structural adjustment programs of the International Monetary Fund supported by the World Bank that emerged during this phase, aimed at reducing the size of government and involvement of the private sector. Non-governmental organizations emerged as potential partners in development. The strategic focus of development in this phase shifted to the policy level.

The fourth shift in development thinking took place in the 1990s when human development emerged as a strategy for development. Drawing heavily on the work of Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate of 1998, Dr Mahboobul Haq in the series of Human Development Reports of the United Nations Development Program defined development in terms of human development- a process of widening choices and enhancing

human capabilities. It was realized that politics and development are not dichotomous activities (HDC, 1999). These are rather integrated activities complementary to each other. Since politics is the arena where policy issues are discussed and debated and people constitute an integral force in political processes their participation in development is essential. This changed the focus of development thinking from policies to politics; in other words a gradual shift from government to governance took place during this phase of development thinking.

From good governance to good enough governance

The concern for good governance in developing countries, originally born out of donors' frustration with ineffective management of aid, coincided with the shift from government to governance in developed countries. Good governance gradually became a catch-all phrase incorporated in policy and administrative reforms of developing countries largely supported by international development agencies (UNDP, 2005, 1997; World Bank, 1992). Despite a lack of consensus on the definition of governance it has guided the reform agenda in many developing countries.

International development agencies have come up with various definitions of governance from their programs' standpoint whereas academics look at governance through their own disciplinary perspectives. While the ideological and theoretical basis of all these diverse views on governance is the same, these competing views differ in their approach. Some focus on the normative (Kaufmann and Paublo, 1999; HDC, 1999; World Bank, 1999) while others place emphasis on the descriptive aspects of governance (Hyden and Court, 2002; UNDP, 1997). To some process is more important while others take outcome as the yardstick to gauge the quality of governance. Some focus on rules while others are inclined to concentrate on implementation of rules. Perspectives on governance also range from micro to macro or partial to holistic due to their preferred level of analysis despite a visible convergence to a systemic and holistic view of governance (UNDP, 2006; World Bank, 1999; HDC, 1999). However, the notion of good governance, as it is being used in developing countries, draws basically on two distinct but overlapping views on governance originating from the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program.

The World Bank defines governance as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social

resources" (World Bank, 1992). It has identified three distinct aspects of governance: (1) the form of the political regime; (2) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and (3) the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions. Although the Bank identified political, administrative and economic aspects of governance, it did not include the political aspects in its policies until recently. The World Bank has its own methodology of assessing the quality of governance popularly known as Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). The six indicators used in the latest governance assessment are: (1) voice and accountability, (2) political stability, (3) government effectiveness, (4) regulatory quality (5) rule of law, and (6) control of corruption. These six dimensions cover the political, economic and, institutional aspects of governance. These indicators are normative and have a high association with democracy and economic development (Kaufmann and Kraay, 2007).

UNDP defines governance "as the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels" (UNDP, 1997). It comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences. This definition clearly identifies three governance arenas: political, economic, and administrative. Unlike the World Bank, UNDP focused on all three aspects of governance in its programs for developing countries. Drawing on UNDP's view of governance, two new definitions of governance have been developed: one by the Human Development Centre in Pakistan established by Late Dr. Mahbub ul Haq, 1999 and the other by Hyden and Court, 2000, under the World Governance Assessment Project at the United Nations University, Tokyo.

In its Human Development Reports UNDP's Human Development Centre (HDC) defined good governance from the standpoint of human development and it reformulated the concept of governance as humane governance encompassing three governance arenas: political, economic and civic. While political governance includes politics and administration, economic governance refers to a widening of economic opportunities, and civic governance refers to the involvement of people in governance through civil society. According to this definition, good humane governance is one which promotes human development. Humane governance is measured by the Human Governance Index, a composite measure of political, economic, and civic governance.

The second extension of UNDP's view of governance has appeared in the form of a working definition for the World Governance Assessment Project (WGA). Under this project, "governance refers to the formation and stewardship of the formal and informal rules that regulate the public realm, the arena in which state as well as economic and societal actors interact to make decisions" (Hyden and Court, 2002). Drawing on the system perspective on politics (Easton, 1965), Hyden and Court identified six dimensions of governance with six corresponding institutional arenas. While the governance dimensions are socializing, aggregating, executive, managerial, regulatory and, adjudicatory, the institutional arenas are civil society, political society, government, bureaucracy, economic society and judicial system. Good governance under this view of governance is how the governance is structured in a country, therefore, the focus is on the formal and informal rules in each governance arena. Under WGA quality of governance is being assessed on the basis of six universally accepted values - accountability, transparency, participation, decency, fairness, and efficiency- in each of the six governance arenas. The authors claim that this assessment approach provides a descriptive rather than normative tool for assessing the quality of governance in a country within its own institutional context.

Despite different interpretations of governance and methodological challenges to assess the quality of governance, there is a general consensus among researchers, policy makers and donors that governance does matter and indeed good governance is imperative for development and poverty reduction (UNDP, 2005; Hussain, 2004; Sobhan, 2004; Shepherd, 2000). However, it is being increasingly realized that the application of the concept of good governance to developing countries poses a challenge at the implementation level, mainly due to its ethnocentricity and its different official versions as held by diverse international agencies. Concepts such as decentralization, citizen engagement, lean public service, privatization, autonomy, public-private partnership may work well in developed countries but may not produce the same outcomes in developing countries where the majority of poor people look towards their government for fulfilling their basic needs. Even the experiences of one country may not be replicated to another country. There are many cases of failure due to misgovernance in South Asia. For example, the Social Action Program (SAP) in Pakistan could not produce desired results due to irregularities in staff recruitment, monitoring of absenteeism, and procurement of essential items in the education, health and population sectors.

Likewise, the privatization policy of Pakistan during the 1990s to retire national debt could not bear expected results as only 5.5 percent of the total privatization proceeds were utilized for payment of national debt (HDC, 1999). Similarly, in Bangladesh, various decentralization efforts to reform local government through devolution of power could not produce desired outcomes mainly due to the lack of political commitment, clientelist politics and influence of bureaucratic institutions (Sarker, 2006; 2003). According to the report of the International Crises Group (2004), political devolution initiatives for transferring administrative and financial powers in Pakistan to local governments in practice only undercut powers of established political parties and drained power away from the provinces while doing little to minimize corruption and enhance accountability at the local level (ICG, 2004).

The limitations of a generic notion of good governance as a guide for development are now being recognized (Grindle, 2004). Recently, Grindle (2004) has presented a strong case for good enough governance as a goal of good governance. She argued that a generic notion of good governance has generated an ambitious reform agenda without addressing basic questions such as what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, and how it needs to be done. Good enough governance is defined "as a condition of minimally acceptable level of government performance and civil society engagement that does not significantly hinder economic and political development and that permits poverty reduction initiatives to go forward" (Grindle, 2004, p.526).

Contrary to a generic notion of governance, the good enough governance concept allows researchers, policy makers and international agencies to determine a minimum acceptable level of good governance within the historical, institutional and, cultural context of each country. This is indeed a challenge at a conceptual, methodological, and practical level. The concept of good enough governance, though still in infancy, has the potential to replace idealistic governance agenda's with a realistic agenda, an ethnocentric notion of good governance with a universally applicable notion of good governance, and an unmanageable agenda with manageable agenda. However, before it gets on the agenda of international development agencies, a lot more research needs to be done at both a conceptual and a methodological level. Questions such as 'what is good enough governance for a specific country or region with a similar institutional context', 'where does it start from and where does it end', should be addressed to further refine the concept of good governance.

Human Development, Governance, and Culture in South Asia

South Asia consists of seven countries, viz. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, and Bhutan with a total population of 1,364.5 million, which is about 1/5 of the world population. The South Asian population is highly skewed in distribution. India alone has a population of nearly one billion while Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives have 148.2 million, 124.8 millions, 22.8 million, 18.4 million, 2 million, and 0.3 million people respectively. The population of South Asia is divided by religion, ethnicity, and languages. There are deep divisions among believers of the same religions on sectarian lines. The countries also vary in size. The smallest country is the Maldives with an area of 298 sq.km and the biggest country is India with an area of 3.3 million sq.km. There are wide variations in terms of living standards and levels of income in countries of this region with the highest in Sri Lanka and Maldives and the lowest in Bhutan and Nepal (HDC, 1999; Government of Nepal, 1999).

Beside all the different characteristics, "South Asian countries are quite similar in terms of the objectives, structure, functions, attitudes, and standards of governing bodies despite variations in forms of government. The colonial legacy of an administrative system characterized by centralization, formalism, secrecy, elitism, rigidity, and social isolation is common to all South Asian countries (Zafarullah, 2003). This is mainly because the modern system of administration and governance in South Asia had by and large evolved under British Colonial rule except Nepal. The post-colonial administrative system in all these countries was built upon pre-colonial administrative traditions such as fusion of administration and politics, absence of elected governing bodies, dominance of a paternalistic state over economic and production, trade and, commerce and the subordination of private capital and entrepreneurship to the state (Haque, 2001). With all these similarities and differences, South Asian countries fall among the lowest group of countries in terms of human development and quality of governance.

State of human development

The Human Development Centre uses the Human Development Index (HDI) to assess the level of human development in a country. The HDI comprises of three components: 1) life expectancy at birth; 2) educational attainment, comprising adult literacy and a combined

primary, secondary, and territory enrolment ratio; 3) and income. According to the latest HDI data published in the Human Development Report 2004, the South Asia region falls at the bottom in the group of countries with medium human development. Overall HDI value for South Asia is 0.599 with variations among countries ranging from the highest HDI 0.755 in Sri Lanka to the lowest HDI 0.527 in Nepal. The rank of each country in South Asia and the world in terms of its HDI is given in the table below:

Table: 1   Human Development Index for South Asia

Country	HDI Value		Rank in South Asia	Rank in the world	Rank in the world
	2004	1998			
Sri Lanka	0.755		1	93	84
Maldives	0.739		2	98	89
India	0.611		3	126	128
Pakistan	0.539		4	134	135
Bhutan	0.538		5	135	142
Bangladesh	0.530		6	137	146
Nepal	0.527		7	138	144

Source: Human Development Report 2004

The above table shows that South Asian countries have shown slight progress in human development since 1998. Despite slight improvement in HDI, the South Asian region lags behind many other regions of the world. Since human development and good governance go hand in hand, low human development in South Asia has serious implications for governance in the region.

State of Governance

South Asia is a region which is not only confronting a challenge of human development but also facing a crisis of governance. All the three governance assessment exercises mentioned earlier revealed a poor state of governance in the region:

1) The governance assessment conducted by the Dr Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre using the Humane Governance Index (HGI) calculated governance assessment for 58 developed as well as developing countries on which data was available. According to the data reported in its annual report in 1999, South Asia was one of the most poorly governed regions in the world with the lowest HGI value. Out of 58 countries, India was ranked at 42 while Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh were ranked at 52, 53, and 54 respectively. In this

assessment, Netherlands stood among the top five countries with highest value for HGI.

2) In 2002, under the World Government Assessment (WGA) Project, 16 countries were surveyed to assess their quality of governance in which only India and Pakistan were included from South Asia. This was a pilot testing of new governance indicators developed under WGA. On a 7 point scale, India scored 3.27 while Pakistan's average score was 2.17. Since the purpose of this assessment was only to test the new indicators for refinement, the results are indicative rather than conclusive. However, the findings of the survey were not different from the previous survey conducted by the Human Development Centre.

3) The Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) launched by the World Bank in September 2006 also revealed a poor quality of governance in South Asia. According to the World Governance Report 2006 the governance percentile of South Asia on six governance indicators is low ranging from 26 to 39 as shown below:

Table: 2	**Governance indicator**	**Governance percentile**
1. Voice and accountability		26
2. Political stability/no violence		26
3. Government effectiveness		37
4. Regulatory quality		36
5. Rule of law		39
6. Control of corruption		35

There are, however, disparities among countries on the above six dimensions of governance. Smaller countries, such as Bhutan and Maldives, have higher percentiles than the bigger countries India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Yet, generally, despite conceptual and methodological differences, challenges, and limitations associated with the above three assessment approaches, South Asia has consistently emerged as one of the poorly governed region in the world.

Governance and Culture

Culture is defined here as shared norms and values of people living in a society. Culture affects and is affected by the formal and informal institutions at all levels, macro and micro, organizational and individual, systemic and personal, structural and behavioral, national and local and, in all spheres of life, political, administrative, economic, and social. Thus, cultural values of a society, region, or country are

reflected in its institutional, organizational and individual behavior. Governance is a concept which relates to the performance of a nation state with regard to its interaction with society through its institutions (i.e. government, bureaucracy, and judiciary) and public servants. I have, therefore, chosen the construct of culture to review governance in South Asia. Governance is a concept which has evolved out of experiences of western and industrialized countries with managing their public affairs, which represents a paradigmatic shift from the old notion of government. Under the governance paradigm, the governments in western democracies are learning to work with new partners in both the private sector and civil society in governing the public affairs. It is obvious that the shift from government to governance is not limited to western countries; it is rather a global trend. However, implications of this shift will vary from country to country, and region to region depending on the institutional and cultural contexts in which governance is used as a policy and administrative framework for conducting public affairs (Ray, 1999; Campos and Nugent, 1999; Stoker, 1998).

As we saw, the concept of governance assumes democratic and bureaucratic norms and values such as rule of law, individualism, rationality, impersonality, equality, merit, justice, and participation. Western and developed countries have long history of using democracy and bureaucracy to ensure responsiveness and efficiency of their governments. Political and administrative institutions guided by democratic and bureaucratic norms have evolved in these countries through a natural course of history set by the French revolution and a scientific revolution. A shift from feudalism to capitalism, religion to science, agrarian to industrial society, aristocracy to democracy, traditional authority to legal and rational authority was part of an overall social transformation in these societies. Thus, political, administrative, economic, and social realms of public affairs remained aligned with each other in these countries. Bureaucratic norms transcended all organizations in the society including government and business and industry. Bureaucracy, despite its built-in capacity for dominance, has not hindered the development of other institutions as it happened in post-colonial societies. Government bureaucracies were consistently subjected to political control through democratically elected governing bodies, which was possible because of congruence between formal and informal institutions, espoused values and values in action, and consistency in bureaucratic norms and cultural norms.

On the contrary, a co-alignment of political, administrative, economic, and social realms as experienced by western countries has not been

the case in post-colonial societies before and after independence. Incongruence between bureaucracy and society, imbalanced institutional development, or overdevelopment of bureaucracy in post-colonial societies is well documented in the literature (Sarker, 2006; Zafarullah and Haque, 2003; Haque, 1997). It has been generally argued that the western model of bureaucracy transplanted in administrative systems of colonies was fully utilized to serve the colonial interests such as collection of revenue and maintenance of law and order. As a result, administrative systems of colonies were modernized while other institutions both in political and economic spheres remained underdeveloped since these were not a priority of colonial administration. Many developing countries, including those of South Asia, inherited their administrative system from their colonial past with this type of unbalanced institutional development, which perpetuated in the postcolonial period. Bureaucratic elitism and dominance or pre-eminence of state bureaucracy in the political and economic realm of society is attributed to an overdeveloped civil service vis-à-vis other institutions. It is also observed that despite its western origin, bureaucracy in developing countries deviated from its principles such as merit, impersonality, and rule of law. This was basically due to incongruence between bureaucratic values and cultural values. The experience of South Asian countries with democracy is not very different either. Instead of serving the people, politicians looked after themselves. Democracy has failed to deliver even in India, which is the largest democracy of the world. There is a wide gap between common people and the political elites (HDC, 1999). Instead of making bureaucracy responsive to the needs of the public, elected politicians used bureaucrats for their own political interests. In Pakistan civil servants were made insecure by withdrawal of constitutional protection of service during the Bhutto regime in 1973, which led to politicization of bureaucracy.

Will governance deliver what democracy and bureaucracy could not deliver in South Asia? This is the fundamental question that needs to be addressed while examining transferability of the concept of governance to South Asia. As mentioned earlier, governance is based on the assumption that bureaucratic and democratic norms of behavior are well entrenched in society's formal and informal institutions. This implies that formal institutions which are deliberately structured in political, administrative, economic and social sphere are all governed by democratic and bureaucratic norms such as rule of law, accountability, equality, rationality, competition, efficiency, and participation since these are also the cultural values. Governance, as a central theme in public affairs, calls for reallocation of governing power

between government, market, and civil society. With the notion of governance, boundaries between public and private, government and civil society are getting blurred. Command and control is being substituted with incentive-based tools of governance. Governance, it should be stressed once more, is based on universally accepted values such as participation, accountability, transparency, efficiency, decency, and fairness (Rhodes, 1996; Nunberg, 1997). These values are based on the notions of liberal democracy, free market, and bureaucracy that are not compatible with the cultural context of many developing countries including South Asian countries. Therefore, application of the concept of governance needs to be carefully applied and indigenized in the context of South Asia.

Indigenization does not mean rejection of the concept of good governance, it means developing a strategy and viable action plan for good governance suitable to the institutional context of South Asian countries. Before any such attempt is made, it is imperative that the cultural context of South Asia as a region and each country should be properly understood and described. The South Asian cultural context may best be characterized by authoritarianism, elitism, familism, paternalism, sectarianism, extremism, and feudalism. The reflections of these cultural values can be seen in political, administrative, economic, and social spheres at systemic, organizational, and individual levels. Neither government nor business or civil society is immune from the above cultural influences. For example, the effects of authoritarianism, familism, and elitism are not only limited to public sector organizations or bureaucracy but also transcend private and civil society organizations. Therefore, values embodied in the notion of good governance stand in conflict with the cultural values of South Asia which poses a great challenge for smooth and harmless transition from government to governance in the region. The political, administrative, and economic constraints to good governance in South Asia, that I am going to discuss now, all stem from this cultural context.

Constraints to good governance in South Asia

Rule of Law

The term refers to the extent rules are abided by and implemented to all citizens of a state on an equal basis. The rule of law is a basic tenet of the modern democratic state and a basic condition for good governance. Unfortunately, a weak tradition of the rule of law is a major impediment to good governance in South Asia. The rule of law

requires a fair political system including independent legislatures, a strong executive and a free judiciary that has yet to evolve in South Asia. In the wake of such a fair system rules mean different things to different people and so does their implementation. Equality before the law and one law for everyone is a norm not very well appreciated in this part of the world (Islam, 2004). One can get away with violation of law ranging from traffic violation to murder through money, social networks, and family connections. Mistrust between police and people, is a major obstruction to the rule of law. The police is often used as an instrument against opponents, feudal lords, and other elites, even by politicians. Violation of rules is a fact of daily life and can be seen on streets, in public offices, and even among the law-makers themselves. The attack on the Supreme Court by parliamentarians in Pakistan in 1998 is a shocking and glaring example of disrespect to the rule of law (Hussain, 2004). Similarly, the findings of a survey to assess governance in India reported public dissatisfaction with the Indian bureaucracy and justice system. Apparently, a weak system of accountability coupled with political interference has deteriorated meritocracy; and equality of law exists merely in theory while in practice only those with money can buy justice (Court, 2001). In Bangladesh, the rule of law was pointed at as one of the major hurdles in the way of governance reforms due to which an enormous increase was found in unlawful killings and political murders (Sobhan, 2004; Shelley, 2004). Similar situations persist in Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives.

Poverty

Poverty is a major obstacle to good governance in South Asia. According to the Human development Report of 1999 nearly half of the population in the region suffers from poverty with little or no access to adequate food, clean water, sanitation, health, education, and employment. The report reveals that in South Asia one in two people is illiterate, one in five does not have access to clean water, over three in five do not have sanitation facilities and one in five children is malnourished, and four out of five suffer access to financial resources. The average income of the richest 10 percent is nearly 6 times the average income of the poorest 10 percent which means that there is big gulf between the rich and the poor. The poverty profile of South Asia shows that both in terms of income and opportunities poverty has increased in the entire region with an exception for India, showing slight progress in terms of poverty reduction (HDC, 1999). A gender and inter-regional analysis of South Asia highlights more acute forms of poverty denying women, minorities and some rural states equal

access to opportunities. Cultural norms in South Asia further put women at a disadvantageous position and they receive a differential treatment than men when it comes to gender development and empowerment. The 1997 Human Development Report found the region lowest on both gender GDI and GEM (Gender Development and Gender Empowerment Indices). Due to gender streaming and a sharp role division the question "who does what?" is mainly decided on the basis of gender while women's concerns receive inadequate attention in governance (Jabeen, 2000; HDC, 1997). Poverty creates distrust of people in the governance mechanism and the poor exclude themselves from the political and social processes, which further restricts their participation and representation in governance

Corruption and Nepotism

Corruption defined as unfair use of public resources for personal gains is viewed as a major hindrance towards good governance in South Asia. Irrespective of the various forms of corruption it is pervasive at individual, organizational, and state levels. The most common forms of corruption at the individual level include bribery, fraud, nepotism, undue influence and misuse of public funds and utilities to name a few. At the organizational and state level kickbacks, speed money, illegal industrial licensing and contracts, tax evasion, money laundering and abuse of power are the most pervasive forms of corruption in South Asia. Sarker (2006) pointed to the interconnected web of exchanges among political elites, bureaucracy and business elites in abuse of political powers and misuse of public resources in Bangladesh. While the business community offers political support to politicians they in return receive illegal, formal and informal political and economic concessions in the form of subsidies and tax evasion.
Corruption in one way or the other is a universal phenomenon but its extent and forms may vary across countries (UNDP, 2005; World Bank, 1999). The unique aspect of corruption in the context of South Asia is that it is more rampant at the state level and its magnitude has increased over the years despite various anti corruption measures (Zafarullah and Akhter, 2001; Khan, 2000, UNDP, 1999). Empirical evidence suggests that in Bangladesh most of the state enterprises were sold to private parties on throw away prices under market reforms using the patron-clientage relationship (Azmat and Coghill, 2005; Chowdhury, 2002). In India, paying bribes for obtaining legal or illegal, formal or informal licenses and certificates is a common phenomenon. The findings of a survey on governance in India quoted comments of an Indian elite that, "right from birth to death nothing happens without bribery and corruption. People can neither live nor die

with dignity" (Court, 2001). The Bofors scandal in India involved two former Prime Ministers in corruption (HDC, 1999). According to the Human Development Report 1999 the magnitude of corruption exceeded Rs. 100 billion in a year in Pakistan where public financial institutions provided huge loans to political leaders, industrialists and friends who later declared defaulter. Also, the famous Swiss money scandal involved one of Pakistan's former Prime Ministers and her husband (Islam, 2004; 2001). In Sri Lanka, due to lower salaries of civil servants only those who are willing to accept bribes join the civil service.

Nepotism in politics, public organizations, private sector, and civil society organizations is a common occurrence in South Asia. Family, and sectarian, ethnic, and regional connections are often the bases for appointments while principles of merit and equality of opportunity are being ignored. The devastating effects of entrenched corruption and nepotism in the South Asian region can be seen in every fabric of social life in the form of rising poverty, reduced efficiency, setting wrong priorities, social isolation, disorder and distrust between the governing bodies and the general public contributing to the vicious cycle of poor governance (Islam, 2001; Khan, 2000). The lack of control of corruption in South Asia, therefore, has serious implications for implementing the concept of good governance in the region.

Divided Society

Society in South Asian countries is deeply divided on the basis of ethnicity, religion, caste, class and gender. These divisions transcend state, civil society and private sector and pose a serious challenge for good governance. Fueled by extremism these divisions have produced a culture of violence and terrorism in the region. Political, sectarian, ethnic and communal violence in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka often makes headlines in international media. Poor and defenceless people are victims of violence most of the time. According to the data exhibited in the Human Development Report 1999, 500,000 people lost their lives in Hindu-Muslim riots at the time of Indo-Pak partition, 55,000 people were killed in Siri Lanka in the civil war with LTTE while more than one million people were displaced. In India, Jammun and Kashmir and North East atrocities took more than 83,000 lives since 1995. In Pakistan large scale Shia-Sunni sectarian violence claimed more than 4000 lives since 1995. Thousands of innocent lives are threatened everyday due to the rising street violence in South Asia.

Discrimination in employment on the basis of sect, socio-economic background, gender, and ethnicity is also grounded in these sharp social divisions. Even constitutional democracy and secularism in India has failed to mediate these divisions. Ethnic minority groups are not only excluded from the political process; they even become victims of political violence. In Pakistan for instance, region-based divisions are deeply rooted and reflected in all positions of power in the form of provincial quota in politics and civil service. Similarly, in India class based divisions are so adherent that bringing North and South and upper and lower casts together in development has become a major challenge. Religious militants despite using religion as a binding force often employ it for creating fragmentation and seclusion which ultimately result in violence. A gender based analysis of the region points to the patriarchal nature of gender relations with women in general, finding less representation and little participation in all economic, social and political activities. Any coalition on the basis of above divisions is bound to lead to conflicts, violence, undue influence, exclusion, mistrust and ultimately poor governance.

Militarism

South Asia is a highly militarized, volatile and vulnerable region of the world. A substantial part of the scarce resources, which should otherwise be spent on economic development, is allocated to military expenditure. Both India and Pakistan, two large countries of the region, are nuclear powers that continually spend on building nuclear weapons to maintain deterrence for each other. India took the lead in building nuclear weapons and Pakistan chased India in this non-conventional arms race. India demonstrated its nuclear capability in 1998 with three nuclear tests in one week and in fifteen days Pakistan countered with six nuclear blasts. In 1997 Pakistan announced to reduce its military spending by 10 percent but immediately after nuclear tests when India increased its military budget by 14 percent Pakistan did the same. Moreover, regular armed forces South Asian countries also maintain costly paramilitary forces and heavily spend on purchase of military weapons and hi-tech military hardware from abroad, which further adds to security costs. Militarism in South Asia is a hard but complex reality. Since independence, India and Pakistan have fought three wars, one immediately after independence in 1947, the second one in 1965, and the third in 1971, which led to the creation of Bangladesh out of Pakistan. Kashmir, a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, is a continuous source of hostilities between these two nuclear powers. People of these countries on both sides are finally the victim of this well demonstrated and flashed

militarism in the region. Besides the negative impact of militarism on economic development, it has seriously affected the state capacity of both India and Pakistan to address the issues behind governance such as poverty and the rule of law.

Capacity of state and non-state institutions

The quality of governance in a country depends on the capacity of the state, the private sector and civil society organizations. In developing countries including those of South Asia, that capacity of state and non-state actors is a constraint to good governance.

The state's capacity to perform effectively its role in governance includes a capacity for policy formulation and coordination; monitoring and evaluation; performance management and accountability for results; budget and expenditure management; a capability to innovate; and transparency, accountability and possibilities of fighting corruption. Thus, state capacity goes beyond public administration and management and includes all state institutions like parliament, the executive, and the judiciary. In South Asia that capacity of state institutions and public organizations is constrained by a number of factors that include weak management and a weak control system, corruption and nepotism, low wages and incentives, and politicization of the bureaucracy and the judiciary.

Wages in the public sector are not comparable with those in the private sector. Over the last few decades, due to inflation, salaries of public servants have drastically gone down. For example, in Bangladesh, salaries of top civil servants are seven times lower than in the private sector. In Pakistan public sector salaries are 60% lower than in the private sector even excluding non-wage benefits. In India entry level salaries of civil servants are less than two thirds of comparable wages in the private sector and this differential increases at higher levels (HDC, 1999). The lower salaries of civil servants diminish their motivation, inhibit efficiency, decline effectiveness and encourage corruption. These problems are not only limited to the bureaucracy; inefficiency and lack of discipline are also a problem in parliament, the cabinet, and the judiciary. Parliamentary proceedings are poorly attended since there is no mechanism for internal accountability in parliaments. Access to justice is also a problem due to incapacity of courts to handle increased caseloads resulting form population increase in South Asian countries (Khan, 1998). According to the findings of the Human Development Report of 1999 there are about 24 cases pending in courts for every one thousand cases and

there are about ten judges for every million people in South Asia (HDC, 1999).

Capacity is also an issue in the case of non-state partners in governance, civil society and the private sector. Civil society in South Asia is small and fragmented, while facing financial constraints. Civil society organizations are also constrained by weak management and control systems. Transparency and accountability which civil society organizations demand from government is rarely practiced by these organizations. Similar problems are faced by the private sector which is small in size besides being non-competitive.

Good governance demands new managerial skills from both state and non-state actors to perform effectively as partners in governance. Traditional boundaries between the public and private sector are increasingly getting blurred today. The new tools of governance such as public-private partnership, contracting out, decentralization and devolution assume good management in public, private, and civil society organizations beyond traditional management skills. Networking, contract management, mobilization, negotiations, and regulation are the new management skills required by the civil servants accustomed to command and control. They are now assumed to fully understand the dynamics of the private sector as well as civil society. Similarly, the private sector and civil society need to know how the government works and they should fully understand the complexity and sensitivity of public goods besides being responsive. These governance skills are not only scarce in South Asia, but they have not yet been recognized as a capacity issue.

Good governance also requires good local knowledge, both explicit and tacit. The capacity to produce local knowledge through research is also a constraint to good governance in South Asia. One of the major reasons for the concept-reality gap and the implementation deficit highlighted in the development literature is heavy reliance of developing countries on international agencies and international precepts in policy-making and reform initiatives such as good governance. Generic policy prescriptions by the international lending institutions such as the World Bank are injected into policies and reform programs of loan recipient countries often without having a complete understanding of the local contingencies. The countries in South Asia do not yet possess a capacity to produce local knowledge through research to be utilized in policy-making. Among South Asian countries India performs slightly better in terms of indigenous research

since it had established research institutions and universities much earlier.

Possibilities for Good Governance in South Asia

Despite the above constraints that portray a dismal picture of governance in South Asia, there are hopes, aspirations, and possibilities for good governance. State and society in this region have not given up their quest for good governance which they regard as vital for their future. Several reform initiatives of South Asian countries in the wake of globalization and emerging communication technologies testify to the region's commitment to improve governance.

The rule of law is recognized as a major governance issue by governments. Police and judicial reforms have received new impetus. In Pakistan for example, under devolution, a long-standing issue in the rule of law has been addressed by separating the judiciary from the executive at district level. Investigation has been separated from prosecution under police's structural reforms. Similarly, in India, Bangladesh and Nepal, special attention has been given to improve law and order while justifying their recent governance reforms (Cheema, 2005; Chowdhury, 2001; Desai, 2000).

Corruption is also on top of the reform agenda in many countries. Accountability and transparency ascended in the countries as a result of internal and external pressure. Media, NGOs and international agencies have created a new level of awareness and sensitivity to this epidemic evil. Core reforms in economic, political and administrative arenas have also been introduced in the form of civil service, education, social sector, public-private partnership and gender reforms. For example, Bangladesh has introduced reforms in government audit to bring transparency in the audit system while India is putting more emphasis on training of civil servants to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. In Pakistan, through a Devolution of Power Plan System 2001 political reforms have been introduced for transferring administrative and financial powers to local governments. The Indian state Kerala also presents a good example of community and state partnership in the effective implementation of poverty alleviation programs at the local government level.

There is an increasing concern in the region for resolution of outstanding disputes between India and Pakistan and to increase regional economic cooperation. The latest example is the visit of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan to India for bilateral peace talks one day

after a train blast on a Pakistani train in India in which over 60 Pakistanis died. There are great challenges to peace in the region but at least a process has begun to create a conducive environment for the peace process. People-to-people contact between these two nuclear rivals, bilateral peace talks, and other confidence building measures have raised hopes for peace in the region.

The countries of the region have realized that immense human capital goes wasted as a result of women not fully participating in the economic, political, and administrative arena. Gender empowerment is an important component of economic, political, and administrative reforms in many countries of South Asia. Reservation of 33 percent of seats for women at national, provincial and, local government level in Pakistan is one such example of gender reform initiatives in the region.

Realizing that governments alone cannot do everything, the role of civil society organizations has also expanded in the region over time. Philanthropy, self-help, self-development and common pool resources have long been recognized as traditional and religious values in the collectivist countries of South Asia (Hofstede, 1980). In Pakistan, dynamic individuals such as, Akhtar Hameed Khan, Abdul Star Edhi, Imran Khan, and organizations such as Citizen's Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), Shell Pakistan and Agha Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) represent some of the positive examples to address needs of the common people. Similarly, in Bangladesh, Grameen Bank through its wide network of non-governmental organizations set a remarkable example of empowering the poor through its micro-credit policies and in India, the village of Sukhomajri near Chandigarh is widely hailed for its efforts in micro-watershed development and environmental sustainability. In Sri Lanka and Nepal also various successful civil society initiatives have been adopted to promote community collaboration in governance (HDC, 1999).

Revolution in information technology and globalization has considerably reduced the geographical boundaries among countries. Access to information through internet, radio, TV and media is growing in South Asia. There is now ample opportunity of having debate on policy issues and critically examine governmental policies and programs even in the so-called authoritarian regime of Pakistan. Public perception about civic governance and human rights is changing as a result of advancement in information technology. The situation demands regional cooperation and competition to meet the competitive challenges of the 21st century. South Asian countries need to learn from each other's experiences and also from what is going on

in other parts of the world instead of following a linear path. For example, how Bangalore in India has become the second largest software market world over, how Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is catering to the micro credit needs of the poor, how Pakistan channelizes its efforts towards indigenous philanthropy and many more success efforts and experiences that can be shared for mutual development. The number of universities in the region has also increased manifold. Universities in the region are actively engaged in establishing linkages with foreign universities for mutual learning. The growing trend towards higher education in the region increases the likelihood of local knowledge through research and knowledge-sharing at the regional level.

Towards a South Asian model or models of governance

Based on my analysis of governance and its context in South Asia I strongly believe that there is a dire need for developing an indigenous model or models of governance to adequately capture the realities of governance in South Asia and to find pragmatic solutions to the challenges of good governance. Now I would like to deliberate on this in order to provide a road map to developing such indigenous model(s).

Let me reiterate that the concept of governance while assuming democratic and good government, competitive markets, a capable and responsive civil society, and well-entrenched norms of bureaucratic behavior in the society, redefines the role of state in society vis-à-vis the private sector and civil society. In the governance paradigm government, the private sector, and civil society are viewed as major partners guided by the norms and values encapsulated in the notions of democracy, bureaucracy, corporate social responsibility, and civic responsibility. Efficiency, accountability, transparency, fairness, decency and participation are values taken for granted in developed countries that have experienced a gradual shift from government to governance for managing public affairs. These values are accepted and appreciated both at formal and informal level, in government as well as in private sector, in political as well as in economic and civil society.

The concept of governance has evolved in an institutional and cultural context where constitution and law of land is respected, dissent is tolerated not punished, and where human rights are respected not violated. These societies have not reached to this stage of their social, political and human development over night, they have experienced all what South Asia is going through now be it feudalism, nepotism,

slavery, fundamentalism, or violence. No developed country can claim to be 100% free from corruption, human right abuses, poverty, violence, and nepotism. However, these are not constraints on good governance in developed countries unlike the South Asia. Therefore, the questions such as what is good governance, how governance should be measured, what should be the sequence of governance reforms, how to ensure effective implementation of any reform measure, needs to be addressed in the context of South Asia and indeed in the context of each country in the region. These questions need to be addressed at theoretical, methodological, policy, and administrative level. Let me now address the above questions one by one to draw contours of South Asian model(s) of governance.

Good governance in South Asia may be viewed as a structure and process of governance that promote humane development. This implies that provision of basic services, the rule of law and protection of human rights are the priority areas of governance. Given the weak institutional norms, efficient and effective management at all levels and in all organizations in private and civil society organizations is vital for an efficient functioning of government and other governance partners. A management system with internal accountability in government, the private sector and civil society organizations constitutes the basics of any good governance agenda. Unless these organizations have strong control systems, they cannot contribute effectively to good governance. In the absence of strong internal control mechanisms based on rules and proper incentive structures at all levels, the new paradigm of good governance will only shift power from government to the private sector and civil society but the poor will not be the real beneficiaries of the shift from government to governance. Therefore, organizational development should be a central theme of good governance.

There are lessons we can learn from experiences of South Asia with democracy and bureaucracy. Due to massive inequalities in society and a small middle class, both bureaucracy and democracy strengthened traditional elites and created new elites. Inequalities in society are also reflected in the market and civil society. Elitism exists not only in the public sector but is also seen in the realm of non-state actors. So what is the way out? Internal and external accountability in conjunction with sound competition policy and strong regulation across the board through efficient and effective management systems and transparency in decision-making is the answer. The good governance paradigm's sole focus on government is problematic in the South Asian context. Capacity for good governance is an issue not only for the

state; the private sector and civil society suffer with the same problem. Thus, while the region is going through a transition from government to governance, it is extremely important how good governance is pursued in South Asia.

In view of the above, the concept of humane governance (HDC, 1999) coupled with good enough governance (Grindle, 2004) as discussed earlier has direct relevance to South Asia. Thus, good governance is good political, good economic, and good civic governance which promotes human development. The goal of good humane governance in each country of South Asia should be good enough humane governance. The rule of law, provision of basic services, and poverty reduction with the participation of the private sector and civil society should be taken on priority basis. However, government still has to play a major and leading role in human development.

Good enough human governance in South Asian countries may be assessed through hard core, performance oriented and tangible indicators. All institutions and organizations involved in governance must be assessed periodically including parliament, cabinet, judiciary, private sector and civil society.

Implementation of policies is a major problem in South Asian countries. It is less related to capacity but more to political will at institutional and organizational levels. Donors should be tough on implementation. We should not forget that effective implementation begins from the formulation and design stage of policy, program, or project; if it is based on wrong theories or concepts poor implementation is the obvious result. It also becomes a problem if the implementation strategy is not built in the planning of a project or policy. It is important that South Asian countries should learn from each other by sharing successes and failures in order to improve implementation.

To set the reform agenda using good enough governance as a goal, each country needs to be looked at where it stands in terms of its development, economic as well as democratic. For example, India has successfully maintained civilian control over the military whereas Pakistan has experienced just the opposite. Therefore, in Pakistan, instead of pursuing a revolutionary agenda for democratic development, a reasonable and viable strategy has to be worked out for a power shift from the military to democratically elected institutions to avoid any serious consequences. The latter is exactly what happened in 1999 in Pakistan. The elected Prime Minister pursued an

ambitious agenda for bringing the military under civilian control, which led to a military take-over. I am not in any way justifying military take-overs in Pakistan, but arguing for political wisdom to be exercised in a country where democratic institutions are not yet fully mature while the army is well entrenched in politics for historical and strategic reasons. On the economic front, privatization policy is another case of failure due to pursuing it on ideological grounds without any awareness of the political economy of the country. There is a general consensus in Pakistan that privatization has failed to deliver as promised but vested interests benefited from the sale of profitable state-owned enterprises to the extent that the Supreme Court of Pakistan had to intervene by stopping sale of Pakistan Steel Mill. As a result the whole policy is now under revision (Daily Dawn, 2006).

Last but not the least, countries in South Asia cannot have good governance purely on the basis of borrowed models and ideas without adapting them to their own institutional contexts while looking into their short and long term national interests. It can happen only if the role of donors is redefined, local knowledge is created through research, and policies and reform agenda are debated. Results will be slow but sustainable and promising. In this respect, research collaboration among academics and researchers in the region is the need of the hour as a first step towards to this direction. It is good that each country should learn from experiences of other countries; however, there is no substitute for local knowledge, critical discourse, and citizen participation in the process of governance as advocated by Prince Claus:

"Development in the true sense of the word is impossible without some form of democracy which gives the people some say in the process. It is a question of enabling people to direct their energies within their own cultural context to bring about change, in the belief that it is in their own interest. I am not using democracy here in the formal western sense but in its more basic meaning of 'by the people for the people"

Conclusion

To conclude, I have assessed the relevance of the concept of good governance to the context of South Asia and I have argued that in view of constraints on good governance in this region, it has to be indigenized. The concept of governance, reformulated by a South Asian scholar Dr Mahbub ul Haq as humane governance, in conjunction with the concept of good enough governance proposed by Grindle

appears to be more relevant as it takes into account the ground realities of South Asia. In today's academic session I have outlined broad contours of South Asian model (s) of good enough humane governance. I believe this lecture will set a modest beginning towards developing a full scale South Asian model of governance, and indeed specific models for each country of South Asia. My effort to this direction will continue during my stay in Netherlands.

Words of gratitude

Rector Magnificus,

At the end of this academic session I would like to thank Utrecht University in general and Professor W.H. Gispen in particular for the honor bestowed on me in this appointment. My special thanks are due to the Curatorium of the Prince Claus Chair for their nomination. I am grateful to the enlightened Princess Maxima of the Netherlands for her intellectual passion that she demonstrated in explaining to me the contributions of Prince Claus of the Netherlands. I feel profoundly honored that she rendered trust in me to continue the intellectual dream and passionate call of Prince Claus legacy, I wish to dedicate this address to him.

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Thank you!

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