

Research Article

Good Governance: Rural Development Perspectives in Nepal

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the interplay between good governance and rural development perspectives in Nepal. Good governance is a critical factor in promoting sustainable development and addressing the socioeconomic disparities prevalent in rural areas. The study explores the various dimensions of good governance and its impact on rural development in Nepal. The research draws on a comprehensive analysis of existing literature, government policies, and empirical data to provide insights into the relationship between good governance and rural development. It discusses the importance of transparency, accountability, participation, and responsiveness in governance practices and their potential implications for rural development outcomes. It delves into infrastructure development, agricultural programs, education, healthcare, and community empowerment as key elements of the government's approach. The challenges and constraints faced in implementing good governance practices in the rural context are also discussed. The findings highlight the significance of effective governance in promoting rural development and suggest areas for improvement in policy and implementation. The article concludes by providing recommendations for enhancing good governance practices in Nepal, such as strengthening institutional frameworks, promoting citizen engagement, and addressing corruption.

Keywords: good governance, corruption, government, rural development

Introduction

In recent years, development literature has used the words "governance" and "good governance" more frequently. A rising number of people now believe that poor governance is one of the underlying causes of all evil in our societies. Major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly stipulating that reforms that promote "good governance" be implemented before providing aid or loans (UN, 2007). Moreover, "Governance" is not a brand-new idea. As old as human civilization itself. Simply expressed, "governance" refers to the decision-making process as well as the method by which decisions are carried out (or not carried out). Corporate governance, international governance, national governance, and local governance are some of the contexts in which governance can be applied. (UN, 2007).

Furthermore, defined that way, there are eight key traits of excellent governance. It adheres to the rule of law and is participative, consensus-oriented, responsible, transparent, responsive, effective, and efficient. It ensures that corruption is kept to a minimum, minorities' opinions are taken into consideration, and the voices of the most vulnerable members of society are heard during the decision-making process. It also responds to the requirements of society, both now and in the future (UN, 2007). The connection of governance is directly indicated with transparency (UN, 2007) mentioned that it should be clear that good governance is an ideal that is difficult to achieve in its totality. Very few countries and societies have come close to achieving good governance in its totality. However, to ensure sustainable human development, actions must be taken to work towards this ideal to make it a reality.

The administration of the development process, which involves both the public and commercial sectors, is directly addressed by the idea of governance. It includes how the public sector functions and what it is capable of doing, as

well as the laws and institutions that establish the framework for how both public and private businesses should be run. This includes holding both parties accountable for their economic and financial performance and establishing regulatory frameworks for businesses, corporations, and partnerships. Therefore, governance broadly speaking refers to the institutional environment in which individuals engage with one another and with government authorities (ADB, 1995). This is important that, in the context of Nepal, the major issues raised on governance-related, which is the binding constraints of the overall development process. This paper analyzes the conceptual approach to governance and its elements and rural development perspectives. Nepal is a country which seeks for rapid development though it has budget gap (Mishra and Aithal, 2021) dreams to attain smart and sustainable development (Mishra and Aithal, 2022; Pokharel et al, 2021).

Statement of the Problems

Rural development in Nepal is a complex phenomenon that involves various dimensions, including agriculture, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. However, the country has historically faced challenges such as geographic barriers, social inequalities, and weak institutional capacities, which have hindered rural development efforts (Acharya, 2008).

In recent years, there have been initiatives to strengthen governance mechanisms and promote inclusive rural development (Mishra, 2020). Good governance is considered a catalyst for rural development in Nepal. It enhances the effectiveness of public institutions, promotes citizen participation, and ensures the equitable distribution of resources and services (Kafle, 2022). Effective governance practices, such as decentralization, participatory planning, and accountable decision-making, can empower rural communities, improve service delivery, and foster sustainable development

outcomes (Robert Chambers ,1983). This urges a need of analysis on good governance and rural development.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine and analyze the relationship between good governance and rural development along with initiatives and strategies followed by challenges and constraints in implementing good governance practices in Nepal.

By accomplishing these objectives, the study intends to contribute to the understanding of the role of good governance in rural development and provide actionable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, and researchers interested in advancing sustainable development and reducing rural-urban disparities in Nepal.

Methodology

This study is done by outsourcing secondary published information by relative agencies. The information is a collection of published journal articles, books, and contemporary statistical information. Based on the information and statistics, analysis, and comparison with the updated data with world indicator. In the same way, compare and description of tabulated data of Transparency International, world bank and other related data and information.

The researchers conduct a comprehensive review of existing literature on good governance and rural development in Nepal. This involves studying academic papers, reports, policy documents, and other relevant sources to understand the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, key debates, and previous research findings in the field.

The study may involve a comparative analysis of different governance practices and their implications for rural development. Comparisons with other countries or regions facing similar challenges may also be made to provide broader perspectives. Based on

the findings and analysis, the study presents recommendations for enhancing good governance practices in rural Nepal. These recommendations are derived from a synthesis of the research findings, best practices from other contexts, and consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The concept of Good Governance

Good governance is an agenda for market, country, and rural development, it is defined in the 1992 report entitled "Governance and Development", the World Bank set out its definition of good governance. This term is defined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (IFAD,1999), In the same a policy paper called "Governance: Sound Development Management", the ADB outlined its policy on this topic. Good governance is defined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development" (IFAD,1999). And even with these more specific definitions, there is still room for a wide range of empirical measurements of different aspects of effective governance (World Bank, 2007).

A predictable, transparent, and intelligent policy, along with a bureaucracy infused with a professional attitude and an executive branch of government accountable for its deeds, were defined as the essence of effective governance. All of these components are found in a healthy civil society that engages in public affairs and in which everyone upholds the law. The World Bank made a clear difference between the political and economic aspects of governance while researching the topic. Since promoting sustainable development is part of the World Bank's mandate (IFAD,1999). About good governance, the development process and the effectiveness of development assistance, and thus merited a specific inclusion in the institution's performance assessment methodology (IFAD,1999). In a similar vein,

effective governance calls for direct community and group involvement in the development of programs and initiatives as well as the ability for civil society to engage in the formulation of development policies. (IFAD,1999).

To enhance service delivery, states are responsible for offering a variety of services to their residents, including social welfare, health, and education. The provision of these services is necessary for the protection of human rights, including the right to housing, health, education, and food. Public services must be provided, accessible, and sensitive to cultural differences in order to preserve the rights of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged persons. Good governance contributes to achieving this aim by seeing people as contributors to economic and social growth rather than just as recipients (UN, 2007). Additionally, defeating corruption could be characterized as preventing the abuse of power for one's own benefit. Corrupt governance limits the public's opportunities to participate, violates the public's right to know about government activities and procedures, and jeopardizes the right to political participation. In contrast, good governance is the exercise of power through political and institutional processes that are transparent, accountable, and support public participation. Therefore, corruption reduces the transparency of how state institutions operate, makes it more difficult for public officials to be held accountable, and allows for the impunity of human rights breaches (UN, 2007).

Nepal and Governance

In Nepal, various measures for excellent administration are provided by the constitution and other legislation. Similar to this, the Supreme Court of Nepal has ruled on the issue of good governance numerous times. I don't hesitate to research this fact despite Nepal's absence of good governance in reality, separate good governance legislation, constitutional requirements, and other statutory measures. Numerous issues with governance and good governance exist

in Nepal, but they are only handled by judicial rulings and the legislature. Judicial decisions and legislation are meaningless without implementation and societal impact. Therefore, Nepal must redesign its current government to meet the internationally acknowledged norms for good governance (Lamichhane, 2021). Producers also drew attention to a provision in the anti-corruption law.

In a similar vein, the World Bank Risk and Resilience Assessment Nepal, 2019 warned that due to elite capture, political favouritism, and other forms of corruption, Nepal runs the risk of having a corrupt political system, making it challenging to provide technical assistance to fight corruption as it spreads and becomes a more pervasive problem (ADB, 2019). Even while other development partners have already contributed technical support to Nepalese anti-corruption organizations, only UNDP has such intentions. Donors and partners have established an Integrity and Accountability Working Group to better coordinate the anticorruption agenda and engage in cooperative policy discussions with the government on putting anticorruption measures into place (ADB, 2019).

The clarification of moreover (ADB, 2019) There are a lot of factors that contribute to the possibility of corruption in Nepal's governance. Some of the institutional systems and procedures that encourage corrupt behavior have already been discussed under the topics of difficulties and dangers, especially those related to PFM and procurement.

Poor internal controls and a PFM system make resource mismanagement easier. Inadequate and ineffective supervision and monitoring by all parties involved leads to low quality outputs for the same costs, noncompliance, and instances of resource exploitation and collaboration that go unnoticed and unpunished. Ineffective, uneven, and opaque procurement systems help to facilitate coordination between bidders and purchasing organizations. According to the World Bank, expanding PFM and procurement processes will lower the risks associated with these systems (ADB, 2019).

Table 1: Worldwide governance indicator Nepal

Years	Indicators					
	Voice and Accountability	Political Stability No Violence	Government Effectiveness	Regulatory Quality	Rule of Law	Control of Corruption
2000	42.79	13.76	38.97	31.28	42.57	30.96
2002	24.88	4.76	38.27	33.16	38.12	43.94
2003	22.39	4.52	35.71	40.31	32.67	40.40
2004	17.31	2.91	23.15	31.03	27.27	20.98
2005	14.42	1.94	22.55	33.33	24.40	24.39
2006	23.08	4.35	19.51	32.35	31.58	28.78
2007	30.77	4.83	26.70	29.61	33.97	22.82
2008	32.21	6.73	21.36	29.61	28.37	21.84
2009	33.65	7.58	17.70	25.84	21.33	25.84
2010	33.65	7.58	20.10	25.36	18.01	27.62
2011	32.39	8.06	18.01	25.12	21.13	23.22
2012	28.17	8.53	17.54	23.70	28.17	22.75
2013	30.52	14.69	17.54	22.75	28.64	28.44
2014	33.00	21.43	18.27	22.12	30.29	33.17
2015	32.02	14.29	12.98	24.52	29.81	32.21
2016	37.93	17.14	19.71	23.56	21.15	22.12
2017	39.41	25.71	18.75	25.96	28.37	23.56
2018	39.61	26.42	16.83	23.56	33.65	27.40
2019	39.61	28.77	14.90	24.52	31.73	27.40
2020	42.03	41.51	15.87	24.52	34.13	29.81

Source: <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/>

Early in 2000, the World Bank published the governance indicator for Nepal. The global governance indicator for Nepal during the past 20 years is displayed in the table above. Six metrics are used by the World Bank: voice and accountability, political stability without violence, effectiveness of governance, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. By the year 2020, when there will be plenty of time, voice and accountability will still be growing. All other indicators will likewise be the same.

Corruption and Nepal

Norad (2011) argues that in patron-client systems, trades between elites are commonly

employed to reach political agreements with parties or groups that would otherwise be a threat to the system's political stability. By coopting them, they prevent group action that might change the status quo. Furthermore, where patron-client ties are established in the democratic system, impartiality and equality will not be protected. This is utterly at odds with how power is normally used, which is to be driven by reciprocal social connections, and is thus arguably incompatible with any aspirations of creating the rule of law. We begin with a fundamental topic of clientelism before looking at several unofficial institutions in Nepal.

The Transparency International (TI) Corruption Perception Index, which annually provided corruption rankings, used additional indicators in a manner similar to this. The Transparency International (TI) corruption perception index (CPI) report is shown in the table below. The CPI is a composite index that ranks nations according on how much corruption is thought to exist in each one. The results of the CPI for the years 2008 through 2020 are displayed in the data table below. The CIP level will increase until 2016, drop until 2019, then increase once more in 2020. The CPI score will typically increase till 2020.

Table :2 Corruption perception index

Year	No of country	Rank of Nepal	CPI Score
2008	180	121	2.7
2010	178	146	2.2
2012	176	139	27
2014	175	126	29
2015	168	130	27
2016	176	131	29
2017	180	122	31
2018	180	124	31
2019	180	113	34
2020	180	117	33

Source : Transparency International. (2021)

Nepal has made it clear that it would not tolerate corruption. Corruption and all of its various offshoots, including bribery, fraud, and money laundering, are prohibited by state legal restrictions. The Prevention of Corruption Act of 2002, the CIAA Act of 1992, and the associated regulations provide the legal framework for anticorruption. These statutes outline penalties for more than a dozen various types of corrupt acts, including imprisonment or monetary fines (ADB, 2019). The CIAA is the highest constitutional body that investigates government corruption, it should be highlighted. To handle corruption cases, the Special Court was established. The CIAA refers corruption

charges to the Special Court for appropriate punishments after conducting an investigation. The National Vigilance Center was established in 2003, and its main responsibility is to carry out technical audits of projects to make sure they comply with legal and technical standards and to fight corruption. The OAG is a legal entity with a responsibility for auditing (ADB, 2019).

In Nepal, there are three levels of courts: district courts, high courts at the provincial level, and a supreme court at the federal level. The supreme court also has a bench that hears cases involving constitutional disputes, such as those involving federalism. The special court is a distinct bench of the judiciary with the authority to handle corruption cases quickly and effectively (ADB, 2019). After Pakistan and Afghanistan, Nepal is the third most corrupt nation (Karki, 2021). It is claimed and demonstrated by comparison that Pakistan and Afghanistan are Pakistan's and Afghanistan's respective standings in South Asia. Pakistan is listed in position 124 and Afghanistan is in position 165.

According to (Transparency International, 2021), Nepal is ranked 117th out of 180 nations, which is a significant indication of Nepal's pervasive corruption. The Nepalese Prevention of Corruption Act of 2002, which was based on the notion that corruption is an unlawful mingling of public and private interests, seems to cover the core international criteria to which Nepal is a signatory (ADB, 2019). In a similar vein, the Risk Complain Portal (2020) claims that corruption exists throughout all spheres of Nepali society, including the judiciary, police, public sector, customs administration, etc.

In Nepal, a variety of significant governance problems have been present. After 10 years of brutal conflict between 1996 and 2006, the country is characterized by a political environment marked by unpredictability, widespread impunity, a lack of the rule of law, and insufficient accountability at the local level. Nearly everyone who was consulted for this study concurred that Nepal is currently experiencing political instability and is showing multiple symptoms of being in a fragile state.5 Fragile states must first establish a secure

political and security environment in order to be able to offer fundamental services to all of their residents, especially the poor (Noard, 2011).

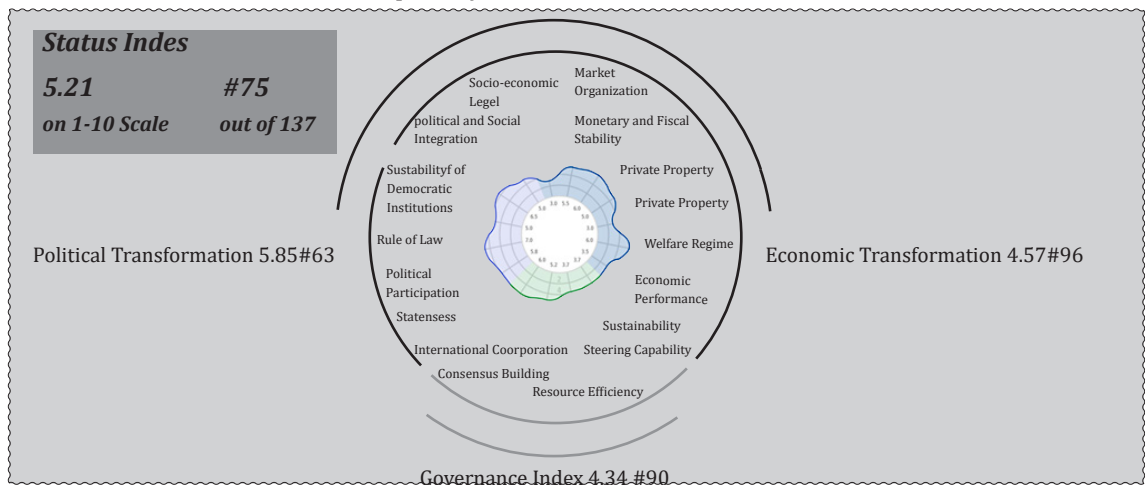
The Good Governance Act of 2008's preamble states that it is essential to establish legal guidelines for good governance in order to make public administration in the nation pro-people, accountable, transparent, inclusive, and participatory and to make its outcomes widely available. The Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act, 2064 (2006) was created by law to implement the core principles of good governance, including the rule of law, corruption-free and smart (or seamless) administration, financial discipline, and effective management of public resources. The Commission for the Enquiry of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) was established for Nepali government on the basis of this act.

Governance and Rural Development Nepal

It might be difficult to maintain Nepal without rural development. To improve the overall socio-economic situation of rural people, we must modify the trickle-down model of development, in use since 1956, for the sake of comprehension. We must truly try to advance society via decentralized and transdisciplinary techniques (Acharya, 2017). The author reiterated that without dedicated development efforts through high-level political consensus based on the concentration of poverty with

diverse characters in the different areas, it will be very difficult to break the cycle of poverty. The disparities in access to opportunities for education, social security, health care, and infrastructure development among the diverse populations are the main causes of Nepal's underdevelopment and ongoing national problems (Acharya, 2017).

In Nepal, which has long received government development assistance, a huge number of national and foreign NGOs support governance, frequently at the expense of the state's long-term strength. The relatively open venues for civic participation that have existed in Nepal, particularly since the end of the monarchy, have led to the emergence of local civil society movements. Many types of engagement center on local loyalties and identities rather than national ones. The sheer number and variety of civil society organizations operating across the country, even in the most remote and undeveloped areas, is astounding. As a reflection of the historical and ongoing diversity, some of these local associations may eventually turn into national groups or movements, while others may stay local. Nepal is a country where dialects that are mutually incomprehensible are occasionally spoken on opposing sides of a valley due to Nepalis living in these different locations having minimal connection with one another. This has an impact on political, social, and economic life. (BIT, 2020).



Figure, Nepal Country report, 2020

Source : (BIT, 2020), <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/NPL>

According to (BIT, 2020), the Pahari-Madhesi cleavage and the nation's instability were exacerbated by the government's handling of protests in the Terai over the new constitution; however, the fact that free and fair elections were held at the national and local levels appears to have contributed to a temporary political resolution of these particular issues. Minority ethnolinguistic groups are yet angry because there are still some. Conflicts between political party leaders and members of different social groups who have rallied around identity-based platforms still represent a danger to stable, peaceful administration, even though there is less overt violence now than there was between 1990 and 2010. Similarly, federalism in particular should assist Nepal's new institutional structure in managing these risks better than its prior institutions could; nevertheless, only time will tell if it is truly up to the task (BIT, 2020). Even if Nepal's political and economic transformation has advanced, the nation's governance has come under scrutiny (BIT, 2020). If corruption continues to remain an issue as it has in the past, it appears unlikely that Nepal's government would be able to improve infrastructure and education. If decision-makers are successful in reducing corruption and devoting government resources to both of these aims, history will likely consider the 2015 constitution and the 2017 elections as a true turning point in the country's political and economic history.

Decentralization is one of the governance processes for rural development, and in describing that (UNCDF, 2010), the implementation (UDCDF, 2010) described some processes as: i) better LG compliance with legal and statutory requirements; ii) improved planning and public financial management at the local level; iii) greater attention to, and improved performance in, cross-cutting areas like gender mainstream. A number of countries are now using developed Local Government Performance-Based Grant Systems (PBGSS) for fiscal decentralization (UNCDF, 2010).

Conclusion

The study reveals that the Nepalese government has implemented various initiatives and strategies to foster rural development, including infrastructure development, agricultural programs, education, healthcare, and community empowerment. These efforts have shown promising results in improving the quality of life and reducing socio-economic disparities in rural communities.

However, the study also identifies several challenges and constraints in implementing good governance practices in the rural context. Issues such as limited resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and corruption hinder the full realization of good governance principles in rural areas, thereby affecting the overall effectiveness of development interventions.

The corruption and the status of Nepal shown by Transparency International is a very poor condition which is defined as low-level governance of Nepal. Meanwhile, the government of Nepal formulated the apex body Commission for the Investment of Abuse of Authority and formulated necessary rules and regulations. Seems to be a check balance of three organs of state. However, due to the political situation of Nepal, nobody is obviably for a destination. In the same way, discussed on the rural development perspectives in the study shall be vulnerable conditions. Because the CIAA might not be able to succeed in the reduction of corruption. Without transparency, we cannot assume good governance and rural development is not possible without the gap situation. Some donor agencies are formulating the rule PBGS but in the context of Nepal, the system is of minor value.

Limitation of the Study

The unique socio-economic, political, and cultural context of Nepal may limit the generalizability of the study's findings.

Rural development is influenced by a multitude of factors beyond the scope of this study,

including macroeconomic policies, natural disasters, political stability, and external aid. These factors may have an indirect impact on the study's findings and should be considered when interpreting the results. Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the role of good governance in rural development in Nepal and serves as a foundation for further research in the field. It contributes to the existing literature and offers practical recommendations for policymakers and development practitioners working towards inclusive and sustainable rural development.

Disclaimer

I declare that research paper is prepared based on contemporary rules without any conflict of interest. All the information and records sponsored in this writing work have been done according to the APA rules.

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