

Measuring Governance at Grass Root Level

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Abstract

The constitutional amendment in 1992 has entrusted local self-governing departments with the task of rural development. This system facilitates the emergence of governance at local level. Governance refers to the political and administrative authority which is responsible for the development of the society. It is the process of decision-making and its implementation by political leaders who are in the system. A clear understanding about the barometers of governance is very essential for improving the process and thereby ensuring development. This paper tries to identify the various factors that contribute to governance at grass root level.

Keywords: Governance, Political Leadership, Elected Women Representatives, Equity, Accountability and Efficiency, Effectiveness, Transparency

Introduction

Development in the rural area is possible by devolution of resource and authority to Panchayat Raj bodies. These bodies play a key role in mobilisations of resources to public and leads to democratic decentralisation. The system facilitates the emergence of governance at local level.

Governance refers to the political and administrative authority which is responsible for the upliftment of the society. It is the process of decision-making and its implementation. Governance comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Good governance has eight major characteristics, viz. participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable

and inclusive, and follows the rule of law (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (n.d.)). These factors assure that officials are accountable and corrupt free. It also ensures that the voices of all strata of society are included in decision-making. Bad governance leads to lot of issues in the society. Many international financial institutions are providing aids and loans on ensuring that the good governance initiatives are undertaken in the area.

The constitutional amendment in 1992 also provided the way for women representatives to LSG. The amendment provided 33% reservation for women, which enhanced the participation of women in governance. This paper is an attempt to find out the factors that could measure governance at local self-governing bodies from the perspective of an elected women representative. Identifying these factors will help to improve governance at LSG level. This will encourages efficient utilisation of resources and strengthen the process of development. Effective governance can improve management, resulting to proper implementation of the policies, better service delivery, and, ultimately, better outcomes.

Methodology

Exploratory research was carried out in the first phase of the research. It is done to have a fundamental acquaintance in the area of political leadership, governance. Local bodies were visited and focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with officials to understand the basic structure of governance. Focus group discussion was also organised with few academicians and political leaders to fine tune the traits for political leadership. Political leaders belonging to different ideologies were included to get unbiased information.

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Governance was measured using Local governance barometer developed by Impact Alliance (PACT, IDASA, SNV) (2005). Good governance denotes to an efficient system of governance in which all the issues of society are well addressed, and sustainable growth is possible. The overall objective of the LGB is to describe, analyse and understand local governance situations, to develop the capacity of local actors to promote and sustain good governance and improved service delivery UNDP (n.d.). The Local Governance Barometer (LGB) was developed in 2005-06 to describe, analyse, and understand local governance situation sub-criteria grouped under five main criteria of good governance: effectiveness, transparency and rule of law, accountability, participation, and equity, then these specific indicators are to be adapted to specific local contexts.

A pilot study was conducted using the framed questionnaire with a sample of 30 respondents. The collected data from 30 respondents were studied in detail and the variances in the response were analysed. Some necessary changes were incorporated to the questionnaire after the pilot study for increasing the easiness of filling. Reliability analysis using the classical Cronbach alpha model was attempted for the collected data. Reliability concerns to the extent to which measurement of phenomena provides stable and consistent results (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). Cronbach alpha values for various constructs of political leadership are contextual intelligence 0.857, political skill 0.653, organising capacity 0.881, ethical vision 0.856, and art of political communication 0.821. When the reliability statistics of local governance barometer was calculated values obtained are effectiveness 0.883, accountability 0.708, transparency 0.708, equity 0.874, participation and civic engagement 0.861. Since all these values are above 0.6, the data can be considered reliable.

The population of the study was defined as the elected women representatives of local self-governing bodies. Since it is very vast, the sample frame was set to include elected women representatives of municipality who have completed 1 year of service. The size of the population under study is 1139 as obtained from the local self-governing department. To estimate the sample size from the finite population, the confidence interval was fixed at 95% with a 10% margin of error. The sample size was calculated to be 89. However, the researcher collected 120 data. The sampling procedure adopted was multistage random sampling. Districts of Kerala

were divided into three different zones and total sample size was proportionally divided into these three zones. Random sampling was used to select the district. From the selected district, again random sampling was used to select the municipality. The detailed list of elected women representatives from each district of Kerala was obtained from local self-governance department website. Elected women representatives used to meet twice a month for attending the council meeting, this opportunity were used by the researcher to meet them and collected the data. Care was taken to ensure that respondents filled the questionnaire during free time, so that accurate data was obtained for the purpose of the study.

Analysis and Discussion

The most classic effort to define governance in terms of procedures was Max Weber's famous characterisation of modern bureaucracy in *Economy and Society*. Weber's conditions depict that bureaucrats are personally free and subject to authority only within a defined area. They are organised into a clearly defined hierarchy of offices, each office has a defined sphere of competence, offices are filled by free contractual relationship, candidates selected on basis of technical qualifications, bureaucrats are remunerated by fixed salaries, the office treated as the sole occupation of the incumbent, the office constitutes a career, there is a separation between ownership and management, officials subject to strict discipline and control (Weber, 1978). Thus, he proposed the procedural way of measuring governance. Another way of measuring governance is by the capacity of the system to implement decisions. It includes the capacity to implement the rule of law among the citizens. Good procedures and strong capacity are not ends in themselves. A third measure of governance is from the view of output procedures. This accounts to the benefits that the society is receiving as a result of the governance procedure.

Thus, it is clear that governance is a very broad term could be measured using various aspects. This study is an attempt to extract out the factors contributing to good governance. Factors contributing to governance were subjected to factor analysis to identify those proponent factors that are suitable to local self-governance level. Factor analysis is a method of data reduction which is done by identifying the underlying unobservable variables that are reflected in the observed variables. There are many different methods that can be used to conduct a factor analysis (such as

principal axis factor, maximum likelihood, generalised least squares, unweighted least squares). There are also many different types of rotations that can be done after the initial extraction of factors, including orthogonal rotations, such as varimax and equimax, which impose the restriction that the factors cannot be correlated, and oblique rotations, such as promax, which allow the factors to be correlated with one another.

Researcher had used principal component analysis with varimax rotations for this study. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was conducted and a value of 0.89 was obtained (Table 1). Kaiser (1974) recommended 0.5 as minimum (barely accepted) value for KMO test, values between 0.7 to 0.8 acceptable, and values above 0.9 are excellent for performing factor analysis. This gives the confidence for researcher to perform factor analysis on the data.

Bartlett’s Test of sphericity is used to test the null hypothesis that the original correlation matrix is an identity matrix. An identity matrix is the one in which all of the diagonal elements are one and all off diagonal elements are zero. A significant test tells us that the R-matrix is not an identity matrix; therefore, there are some relationships between the variables that are included in the analysis so that research can attempt factor analysis with the data. Here Bartlett’s test is highly significant ($p < .001$) with the data, indicating the researcher can attempt factor analysis with confidence (Table 1).

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett’s Test

<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</i>		.897
Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5073.583
	Df	210
	Sig.	.000

Communalities table shows how much variance in each of the original variables is explained by the extracted factors. Higher communalities are desirable. When the communality for a variable is less than 0.5, it is a candidate for exclusion from the analysis because the factor solution contains less than half of the variance in the original variable, and the explanatory power of that variable might be better represented by the individual variable. Table 2 shows the communalities table obtained when governance factors were subjected to factor analysis.

Table 2: Communalities

	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Extraction</i>
I have a strong vision about the functioning of municipality	1	.848
I am responsible for all my actions	1	.857
I have definite plans for developing the area which I represent	1	.649
I am able to provide decisions on time.	1	.530
I always take decisions impartially	1	.502
I always used to solve the problems of people with minimum possible time	1	.654
I used to find a long term solution rather than a quick fix	1	.669
Everyone in the society have equal opportunity for work	1	.688
Everyone in the society have equal access to health and education	1	.776
I used to initiate activities that promote gender equality.	1	.701
I always work as per guidelines and manuals	1	.620
I emphasis on displaying citizen charter	1	.939
Citizen charter is displayed and periodically updated.	1	.931
I am able to carry out development activities to all strata of society	1	.588
I believe in adopting cost efficient plans.	1	.664
I am able to meet all the expectations of people in my area.	1	.688
I strictly adhere to code of conduct	1	.603
I used to take periodic checks at my decisions and correct if required.	1	.625
Parliamentary approach is followed in solving all issues	1	.666
There is a proper platform for general public to raise their voice	1	.641
I used to ensure women participation in ward meetings	1	.609
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 3 shows the total variance explained by the extracted out factors. First component explains 25.99% the variance and the second component explains 18.13% of variance. The scree plot (Fig. 1) shows that there is a

clear distinction between the components. All the factors of governance together explain 68.799% of variation in governance. Thus governance could be improved by 68% by enhancing these four components.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Component Total	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings			
	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	
Dimension	1	9.52	45.327	45.327	9.519	45.327	45.327	5.458	25.992	25.992
	2	2.01	9.581	54.908	2.012	9.581	54.908	3.807	18.130	44.121
	3	1.69	8.084	62.992	1.698	8.084	62.992	3.156	15.029	59.150
	4	1.21	5.807	68.799	1.219	5.807	68.799	2.026	9.649	68.799
	5	.983	4.680	73.479						
	6	.844	4.021	77.501						
	7	.738	3.512	81.013						
	8	.530	2.525	83.538						
	9	.477	2.274	85.811						
	10	.455	2.167	87.979						
	11	.401	1.908	89.887						
	12	.335	1.596	91.482						
	13	.320	1.524	93.007						
	14	.308	1.464	94.471						
	15	.277	1.319	95.790						
	16	.236	1.125	96.915						
	17	.201	.958	97.873						
	18	.187	.889	98.763						
	19	.164	.779	99.542						
	20	.084	.399	99.941						
	21	.012	.059	100.00						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

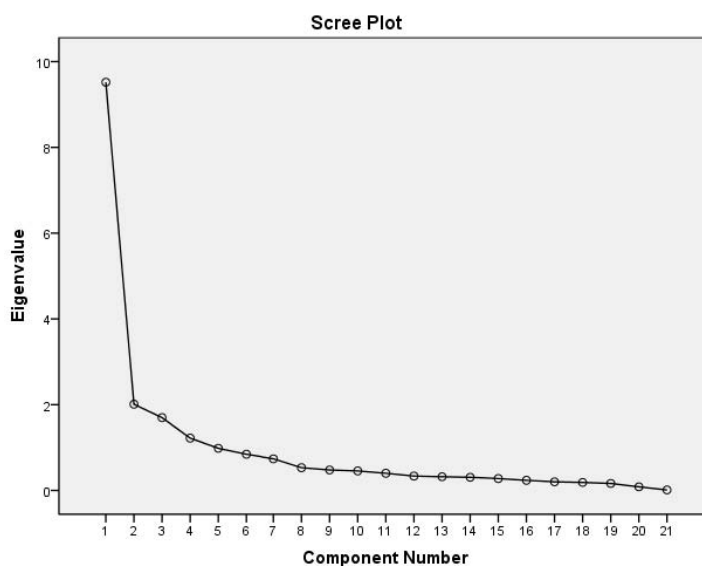


Fig. 1: Scree Plot

The rotated component matrix shows the factor loadings for each variable. The idea of rotation is to reduce the number components on which the variables under investigation have high loadings. Many statements which were not relevant to LSG level were removed after factor analysis. The result provided four components to explain the variation in governance.

Equity is the first component which indicates that everyone in the society is having equal access to all the facilities offered by LSG department. LSG departments directly interact with the people and are responsible for implementation of various projects which improves their quality of life. These projects need to be beneficial to everyone in the society not just specific to one group alone. Equity should also be ensured in providing employment opportunity to people. The existence of relevant procedures and structures to ensure citizens participation also ensures equity.

Accountability and efficiency is the second component extracted out. Accountability is another criterion which

measures governance. Elected representatives need to be responsible for the decisions they take. Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe which caters to the efficiency aspect. Efficiency aspect also includes providing long term solutions to issues rather than going for quick fix methods.

Effectiveness denotes meeting all the expectations of people in the area. Elected women representatives also shoulder the responsibility of understanding the requirements of the people and solving those.

Next component is transparency ensures that the decision-making is done as per the rules and regulations. Transparency also denotes that all the information is clearly displayed in the citizen charter and it is periodically updated. When governance is done in a transparent manner, information is available and provided to the public in understandable forms and media.

Table 4: Extracted Components

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Everyone in the society have equal access to health and education	.748			
There is a proper platform for general public to raise their voice	.729			
I used to initiate activities that promote gender equality.	.714			
Everyone in the society have equal opportunity for work	.693			
I always work as per guidelines and manuals	.662			
I always take decisions impartially	.635			
I used to ensure women participation in ward meetings	.629			
Parliamentary approach is followed in solving all issues	.615			
I used to take periodic checks at my decisions and correct if required.	.614			
I am able to provide decisions on time.				
I am responsible for all my actions		.859		
I have a strong vision about the functioning of municipality		.852		
I always used to solve the problems of people with minimum possible time		.688		
I used to find a long term solution rather than a quick fix		.675		
I have definite plans for developing the area which I represent		.548		
I believe in adopting cost efficient plans.			.795	
I am able to meet all the expectations of people in my area.			.753	
I strictly adhere to code of conduct			.627	
I am able to carry out development activities to all strata of society			.553	
I emphasis on displaying citizen charter				.967
Citizen charter is displayed and periodically updated.				.961
Extraction Method: PCA Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.				
a. Rotation converged in 13 iterations.				

Conclusion

Governance refers to the political and administrative authority that can bring in development to an area. With the strengthening of Panchayati Raj system, the governance at LSG has become crucial. Improvement in governance is possible only when one is able to clearly attribute the factors that contribute to governance. Elected women representatives represent a new class of political leaders. They could deliver good governance only when the factors contributing to it are clearly identified. The study extracted out four factors, equity, accountability and efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency which can explain governance. The system of local self-governance could be improved when these factors are given due consideration.

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