

## **New Standards & Indicators of Effective Public Administration**

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**Abstract:** What the welfare state demands today is not the simple governance of law and order which always revolve around mere bookish regulatory procedures, over-formalization of duties, over centralization of authority, bribe ridden red tapism and constrained to the so called obtuse archaic doctrine of 'procedure established by law'. Today, the sensitivities of 21<sup>st</sup> century society needs more better updated version of governances which could be more productive, effective, efficient, consensus oriented, performance oriented, time bound, responsive, inclusive and wholly transparent with pin point accountability mechanism. All these paradigms should further be checked through the 'audit of client satisfaction' only. Which should be the utmost goal of an administration, be it private or public. Meanwhile we are having various standards of measuring effective governance like assessment of crime rates, health status, allocation of resources, poverty, educational attainment etc. but still we lack those measuring rods of governance which can point out the much value laden concerns like "Trust, satisfaction and happiness of citizens". Therby, it puts an ineviatble additional empahsiis on states to raise their standards of effective governace

to transform plain government into an 'ethical government'.

**Keywords:** Governance, Transform, Standards, Indicators, Reforms, Ethical Government.

**Introduction:** Today, we need to develop more in the field of ethics where integrity, honesty, uprightness, impartiality and accountability lays the foundations of new standards to measure much more comprehensive concepts like 'effective governance'. Now various pertinent questions arise here, as why do we need effective governance? What are the exigencies of time and change which are forcing us to reform our institutionalized governing structures? And are we enough competent to implement them? So to answer these questions, here lies the need of effective governance; as the population swells manifold and the management resources to sustain are less, public demands quick solutions and the administration needs to be more reactive and reformatory than ever before with progressive updates in hand.

**What standards should be there to follow any government system to increase its effectiveness?**

- This innovative concept of ‘NUDGE UNIT’ can be the biggest administrative panacea for all problems from secretarial to grass root level. It was first tested by Britain to improve government policies and services while having minimum of expenditure and friction.
- **Now to open up more of about nudge unit, what is a Nudge?**

At a very basic policy formulation level, if policy design is the map and outcomes are the destination, then nudges are the guide posts or let's say road signs that guide you towards the most suitable and best route. These guide posts check extra expenditure, extra time and energy input while implementation of any policy. Success of policy and failure has its dependence on their public acceptability and this makes the whole concept of nudge units more relevant and important. Nudges help in understanding of the impact of scheme intervention on social, economic, cultural & educational level. These are the Behavioral guide posts of interventions, which by directions have that potential to increase the efficacy of social policies. Today government looks onto only brighter sides of developmental policies while forgetting the much darker failures. These failures are more in the form of ‘social failures’ rather than market or state failure. As the state hardly leaves any loophole while framing policy, still the failures come from the feedback

mechanism of public, still the purpose of government defeats when we access the overall implementation. Here comes the nudges into limelight to shatter the darkness of policy implementation steps. Nudge units will try to bring behavioral changes in public choice while implementation of a policy and recommends policy corrections to help make performance more effective. Nudge Unit, is a ‘stolen concept’ of behavioral economics and psychology into public administration. Behavioral-economics targets the cause and effect relationship between human perceptions, decisions, actions and biases to realize the finest choice of actions. ‘Nudging’ here refers to changing the decision-making environment in the context of contradictions, biases and ‘irrational’ behavior that decision-makers often show.

**Now the next step is how to formulate these road signs which demands expertise at two levels.**

**First being:** Understanding of the behavior of consumers as why they would choose less optimum routes. (Considering the cognitive biases)

**Second being:** Designing of signs in such ways that can lead users to choose better routes (attaching interventions/ nudges)

This way a government can design various incentives in order to channelize individual behavior in a particular direction to actualize its policy goals. Behavioral science has opened a new chapter in favor of public



administration. It has shown that human choice is a very complicated affair based on cognitive biases, and for government it becomes very necessary to understand the public behavior systematically before framing any policy. The most well-intentioned social interventions fail because of the ground realities that policymakers in New Delhi often fail to grasp. So a systematic step following step strategy is needed to implement policy rather than going for a one big shot, all the way through.

### **Why a Nudge unit is required in India?**

Various governments have been making honest efforts toward upliftment and empowerment of vulnerable sections of society through enhancing social and economic infrastructure of the country. Various major initiatives have been seen in educational sector, healthcare sector, hygiene sector etc. still, the government is not getting enough effective output. Still there is lackluster performance either due to the poor policy implementation, malice of corruption or the narrow understanding of social attitudes. Today governments are failing in understanding proper social attitudes and behavioral aspects of policy designs. For example; Toilets are being built at great expense but are not used by public. People still prefer open defecation and government fails to perceive why? More and more cases of tuberculosis are coming, because patients do not complete prescribed course of drugs provided by government. Parents are not following

government directives and do not immunize children even when it does not cost them. Measures of safety alongside roads are there still rash driving kills thousands of people every year. The advantages of family planning is well acknowledged, still there is no rational use of contraceptives and sterilization mechanisms initiated by government. This brings insights as how behavioral loopholes lead to public policy failures. So there arises a need of behavioral public policy wherein behavioral research is added into public policy. India's diversity also needs such softer key elements in policy making to align the interests of different political ideologies, cultural practices and ethnic communities. Such a level of diversity can easily alters the objectives of any policy where government fails to differentiate between rich and poor, urban-rural and makes an umbrella policy "once and for all". A nudge unit here, can help the government in understanding the "social cost of economic projects" through digging in human behavior or social realities.

To have better quality of bureaucracy, the "right size of bureaucracy" should be given proper thought. As bureaucracy at the top remains bleak and over burdened which is mostly ineffective in checking ground reality whereas bureaucracy at the lower tiers is overcrowded which is mostly dipped in red tapism and excessive formalism?



- Many of succeeding private enterprises are investing huge amounts in research and development using various ethno methodological , empirical studies of societies to better work with, but the government sectors seems languishing is R&D sector. A take for granted approach has been taken here by the government as risk factor as of private sector is less dominant .This needs to be changed and R&D should be taken on priority basis to improve the overall effectiveness of governance.
  - Proper and ‘systematic Training of competent manpower’ could also prove a major standard for an effective governance .Where merit based open and fair recruitment is to be followed and timely training is provided to modify employees to adapt according to the needs of an evolving society .India being developing nation where every social institution is unstable, moving and adjusting towards the developed countries needs more of such a futuristic investment action like training.
  - The sectors and ‘possibilities to sue government ‘should also be defined and regulated properly, the suability of government today is misused and played with many manipulative repressive tactics
- .Burden has come over Judiciary, which has been choked of cases where the major litigant is the government itself .This misconstrued culture of suability degrades the standards of an effective model of governance.
- ‘working hours’ for an analysis of input –output approach, should also be properly streamlined as in many government departments there are no hard & fast rule of exact working hours or tenure system like in police and higher ranks of bureaucracy. This demoralizes the employee and restricts quality public services.
  - Yet another major hurdle in government dealing is ‘Lack of speed, late response from government frustrates various public initiatives and further erodes confidence and trust of common citizenry. The era of digitalization and mass communication has increased the expectations of people for speedy delivery of services .So the government to be effective, it has to be steadfastly speedy and vigilant.
  - Indian governance system is far behind in implementing proper ‘ratings based feedback ‘mechanism. This will help in comparability of time and space



- .Today people are not enough empowered and aware to report and audit public dealings. This creates an imbalanced structure of governance and no proper input-output analysis can be visualized. Government to be effective should collect timely feedback of its services and should try to publicize it. Needless to say it will help in shaping more effective policies and develop more inclusiveness.
- “Inter operability of departmental working” has necessitated the need for faster Communication .Any government to work effectively should have fluent channels of communication. It also helps in collaboration among organizational levels, which becomes a key factor for conflict resolution and better mutual understanding.
  - The one common problem among all developing countries is the problem of “inefficient and poor infrastructure” which affects their governance the most .It is the base on which relies many other developmental aspects of public system.
  - “Decentralization of powers” is also a good standard to check the effectiveness of governance .To almost every democratic society ,people feel empowered only when sufficient powers are given to them to act as a sovereign force .Also a fertile ground of a free ,fair and just society needs a decentralized political structure to survive.
  - So much there is to improve in the “grievance redressal mechanism” with speedy undertaking of cases, proper representation to victims, fair and just trials and proper public display of result reports.
  - It is often seems that the “ balance of power distribution” among three pillars of a democratic society i.e. legislature, executive and judiciary is imperfect where each tries to intrude, overreach other’s powers. Ultimately common citizen has to bear the overall cost of this corollary which remains in a perpetual state of confusion.
  - Another major standard to enhance the effectiveness of any governance system is through the “citizen’s charter”. Through this People get to know in advance how things are going to happen and in what ways. Though it is one of the best progressive step to effective governance still it lacks timely updates, less public awareness, poor design and lazy assessment of procedures on display.



- “Right to Information act” also enthused the overall accountability of governing bodies. It is having an huge impact in creating transparency and rule bound working .RTI has effectively opened up the ever secretive official doors for public scrutiny .Thereby reducing the corrupt and mischievous discretionary acts of public authorities .One major loophole to fill which can strengthen the right to information act ,is to bring political parties under its ambit .
- “Simplification of service delivery procedures” is also a much sought need of stakeholders. People today demand prompt service delivery with minimum friction.
- Need to “shift from government to E-government” which can minimize time wastage, improve accuracy, proper record management and on the go accessibility of services .We can further Use technology like cloud computing and “big data” which can digitally gather and process very huge amount of data to analyze. Since information is vital for policy and decision making process.
- Government should always “prioritize Bottom up approach rather than top down”, governance should as far as possible be citizen centric. More the chance of participation of lower rungs in policy making better will be outcomes. Sometimes it has been observed that states are unwilling to accept or try to amend forced centre-imposed policy.
- Putting ‘in-place’ anti corruption units can relay help the menace of prevalent dishonest practices as and Strengthening of existing but not so well implemented agencies like Lokpal and Lokayuktas is the need of hour, these institutions were there to check the exigencies of higher echelons of bureaucracy and political class because in India people see bureaucrats as ‘head’ of nation while politicians as ‘heart’ of nation. Talking of Lokpal and Lokayuktas, we cannot see a uniform and robust mechanism of their proceedings. Their powers and sphere of influence is restricted by this or that way. Also, in many of states they have not even being enacted.
- Promotion should be given to “barefoot bureaucracy” which motivates Bureaucrats to act as first among equals, thereby bridging the gap between elite and commoners globally, government services are under



immense pressure to improve performance. While many institutional reforms have been tried, barefoot bureaucracy has been consistently neglected. Barefoot bureaucracy engages citizens to bring changes at the bottom and enables them to become part of the system itself.

### Indicators of an effective governance system :

- A society in which “free and fair elections” are held with proper and just political participation .A society where electoral self determination is practiced can certainly be called as an exemplary of effective governance.
- Government which can “guarantee basic fundamental rights” like the right to life, liberty and freedom, right to happiness etc.
- Government which “promotes gender equality”, which promotes gender balance in primary secondary education, makes enough space for women’s participation in labor force, protects women against violence and provides equal representation in parliament.
- Government which can guarantee “social protection to its labor class”, this marginalized class always lives in an atmosphere of apprehension.

Government should try to minimize the feelings of insecurity arising out of capitalist mode of business structures.

- Government which is providing “equal opportunities for weaker sections” like scheduled caste, schedule tribes or even any minor religious sect.
- Government which provide “equity of public resource use”, overall a country is blessed with various natural or manmade resources. For example distribution of electricity, all weather roads, drinking water, and healthcare services etc. The equal accessibility of those resources is the key to effective governance.
- One best way to judge our government working is through foreign direct investment profile. How well we attracts foreign investments, tells the overall health of our system.

**Conclusion :** Needless to say that in a resource limited Nation like ours; optimum utilization is the only way to sustenance. The first innovative standard which wins the race among various above prescribed canons is the "Behavioral Economic Nudge Units". These units will definitely pave a way for a sustainable future because the success of any policy is determined by its successful implementation only. And for successful



implementation, a deeper analysis into the behavioral social issues is needed. Plus a basic level of awareness among people is needed to understand their rights and opportunities towards society and state. This is where a behavioral economics unit plays and contribute significantly and helps states in formulating “ citizen centric reforms’ ‘which will surely going to add a new edge of sharpness in governance effectively. This is an idea which can do wonders when everyone is convinced and believes in it.

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