

Islamiyat-4.

Q.No.1.

FEATURES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN ISLAM.

INTRODUCTION:

Good governance refers to an approach adopted by a government to create a system based on social justice and peace. It is characterized by welfare of people and guarantees for the protection of human rights and civil liberties. In Islam, good governance is based on divine injunctions. Holy Quran describes good governance as the law of justice, a just and principled order and compliance of rights and responsibilities in society. The Holy Quran declares:

"[And they are] those who, if We give them authority in the land, establish prayer and give zakah and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong."

(Al-Hajj)

In Surah Al-Maidah, it further declares:

"You who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of people prevent you from being just. Be; that is nearer to the righteousness."

(Al-Maidah)

The Islamic perspective of good governance is qualitative and not mechanical. Major features of good governance can be described in seven fundamentals i.e. mutual consultation, leadership, accountability, transparency, justice, equality and promoting good and preventing evil.

FEATURES OF ISLAMIC GOOD GOVERNANCE

The government and society formed by the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and first four caliphs of Islam, had all the features of good governance defined by Islam to be As-Shura, khalifah, Hisbah, transparency, Adl, equality and Al-Amr Bil Maruf wa Nahi al-Munkar.

1. Concept of Mutual Consultation (As-Shura)

As-shura is one of the most important constitutional principles in the Islamic law. It is so important that a surah (chapter) is named after it in Holy Quran named "Shura". It indicates how important the concept of mutual consultation is in all the affairs of Muslims life. The principle of shura must lead the whole system of Islamic state from its beginning to the selection of the khalifa of the state and all those in key positions as well as its communications, so it should be carried out directly or indirectly over selected or nominated councils. Surah An-Nisa of Holy Quran mentions

"You, who believe, be custodians of justice (and) witness for Allah, even though against yourselves or your parents or your relatives whether a man is rich or poor. Allah is the greatest well wisher than you. So follow not the behest of lust, lest you swerve from justice"
(An Nisa)

Even the prophet (S.A.W), although he was the receiver of direct guidance from Allah Almighty was commanded. Allah says.

"Consult them in affairs. Then when you have to take a decision to put trust in Allah. Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)".

(Al-Imran)

Following this advice and lead, Khalifa Umer admonished that, "There is no Khalifa without consultation."

2. Leadership (Khalifah)

Khalifah is an Arabic word meaning successor. When Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) passed away, Hazrat Abu Bakr (R.A) succeeded to his spiritual, administrative purposes as the successor. Bernard Lewis, the prominent historian of Islam, observes.

"Abu Bakr was given the title of Khalifa or 'Deputy' (of the prophet) and his election marks the appointment of

great historical institution of Caliphate. His voter can have no idea of the later purposes and growth of the office. At the time, they made no effort to define his duties or powers. The only slate of his selection was maintenance of the inheritance of the prophet."

In Holy Quran, the institution of khilafat as a reward for collective virtue - He mentions -

"Allah has promised to those among you who believe and act rightly, that He will surely make them successors in the earth, as He made successors from among those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their religion, which He has chosen for them; and that He will surely grant them security and peace in place of fear."

(Al-Nur)

Allah's sovereignty extends over the universe, the final ideal of public in Islam is a universal federation or association of independent states, related together for maintenance, freedom of integrity, for the maintenance of peace and for cooperation in promoting human welfare throughout the world - while A khalifa is bounded by the rules of Allah and with mutual consultation of his representatives takes decisions of the

state and govern the state according to the laws of divine Allah.

3- Accountability (Hisab)

In the Holy Quran the word "hisab" is repeated more than 8 times in different verses. Hisab or account is the root of accounting and the references in the Holy Quran are to to account in its generic sense, relating to one's responsibility to "account" to Allah on all matters relating to the human effort for which every Muslim is "accountable". Regarding accountability, the belief of Muslims is that they will be judged for whatever they do in this world in the hereafter. In Islam, it is the duty of each Muslim to fulfill the wills of Allah to seek his pleasure and the promised prizes in life after death. Holy Quran mentioned the importance of accountability to a person's life as

"...to the hearing and the sight and the heart - of each of these will be asked."

(Bani-Isra'el)

Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W) said, as reported by Abdullah (R.A).

"Every one of you is a guardian and accountable for his charge. Thus the Khalifa is the custodian of people, and

He is responsible for them. A man is the guardian of his household, and he is accountable for them, and a woman is in charge of the household and children, and she is accountable for them; and a servant is the guardian of his master's property, every one of you is accountable for his subjects."

(Bukhari)

In the view of corporate governance practices, as far as Islam is concerned, the country directors, management etc should perform their professional duties with the objective of fulfilling the needs of the public and to Allah as well.

4. Transparency in Good Governance:

In Surah Al-Baqrah, Allah has divulged the concept of transparency in the following words

"O you who believe! When you deal with each other in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period, reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties...."

(2: 282)

This verse states that every transaction must be written to avoid injustice. Applying the

concept of transparency, governments should also disclose information regarding its strategy, actions, contribution to the community and the use of resources and protection of environment. Transparency is the necessity for openness in all public affairs. Transparency allows the Committee to gather information that may be unsafe to expose misuses and defend their benefits. According to J. R. Aye in transparency entails that "citizens have the right to information. A transparent government is that which offers a chance for citizens to find out the proofs first hand, without the material being changed or presented through a misrepresented mirror"

In core, transparency is basically concerned with the open and established system of government, the extermination of corruption and institutionalization of a system that is fair, just and based on the rule of law.

5. Justice (Ad):

In islam, justice means placing things in their rightful place. It also means giving others equal treatment. In islam, justice is also an honest quality and feature of human personality. Justice in islamic governmental system, including social justice, which means that government should arrange to meet and to

please the needs of all people as they are citizens of country- 'Whereas Economic justice is aimed at the equitable supply of lifestyle and checks the awareness of wealth in few hands.

The Holy Quran, considers justice to be the highest virtue. It is a basic objective of Islam to the degree that it stands next in order of importance to believe in Allah's existence exclusive right to be worshipped (Tauheed), and the truth of Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W). Allah declares in the Quran:

"Allah demands justice and fair dealings."

(Al-Nahal)

In Surah Al-Maidah, Allah also mentions that all believers must be bearers of justice. He mentioned:

"O you who believe! be upright for Allah, and (be) bearers of witness of with justice"

(Al-Maidah)

Therefore, one may achieve that justice is a responsibility of Islam and unfairness in dealings is forbidden.

6. Concept of Equality in Islamic Governance

The Quranic standard of justice exceed thoughts of race, religion, color and faith and as Muslims we are ordered to be equal to everyone as no one holds

superior position than other solely on basis of his/her color, caste, race, religion, language etc. In Holy Quran Allah declares:

"O who you believe! Stand out firmly for justice as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents and your relatives or whether it is against the rich or the poor."

(Al-Nisa)

In this verse, Allah commands Muslims to treat justly and equally everyone be it their parents, relatives or rich or poor. In short, equality must prevail in justice. According to another verse of Holy Quran mentions that the hatred towards anyone should not come between your decision about him. The principle of equality is so important that in last sermon, Holy Prophet (PBUH) stressed upon it. It is also important constitutional principle upon which the contemporary system rests. This means that equality contained in individual communities is equal on rights, responsibility and public duties that will be enjoyed by all without discrimination.

7. Amr Bil Maruf Wa Nahi Al-Munkar:

Amongst the greatest responsibilities of Amr bil maruf (ordering for acknowledged virtues) and Nahi anil munkar (forbidding from sin). Allah mentioned in Quran.

"And there should be a group amongst you who invite toward good, order for acknowledged virtues, forbid from sin and these it is that are the successful ones"

(Al-Imran)

The expression of "Amr-bil maruf wa nahi an al munkar" is a very important one and is associated with Jihad, that is, doing one's highest to understand an aim. Jihad is not essentially war fought on the battlefield ~~for~~ rather it has a very wide meaning and states in striving for the cause of Allah Almighty to promote goodness and evil. The Amr bil maruf wa nahi-ab-al-munkar is an important duty of individual as well as state to promote good governance.

CONCLUSION:

Good governance in Islam consists of divine injunctions of equality, transparency, accountability, justice and consultation and a good Islamic state must possess all of these features. It is the duty of state official to ensure that state ^{provides} ~~has~~ equal justice to all the citizens and to ensure transparency in the state affairs and held accountable. The officials for their actions, only then a true Islamic society will prevail.