Good Governance in Oromia: Challenges and Strategies (Major Cities in Arsi and East Shewa zone in focus, Ethiopia)

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to identify the level of good governance with respect to its founding pillar elements in Oromia Arsi and East shewa zone selected urban cities. The key elements of good governance considered in the study were accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, control of corruption, operational effectiveness and efficiency, equity building and inclusive, and consensus orientation,. The study followed a survey and focus group discussion. The data were collected from four selected cities i.e. Adama, Asella, Batu, and Shashemenne. Analyses were based on primary data generated through structured questionnaire for each key elements of good governance. Focus group discussion was also conducted with selected informant groups. Descriptive analyses were specified to identify the current practice of good governance. The focus group discussion data were subject to thematic analyses and triangulated with the findings from survey analyses. The pillars of good governance such as: accountability, participation, responsiveness, responsibility, efficiency and effectiveness, equity and consensus orientation, elements observed at low level within the selected city administration. Top priority problems were identified for respective cities. Fraud with respect to land administration and project authorization are among the top source of corruption. The study proposed pre-symptom actions and after symptom actions to curb corruption and establish good governance within the city administration.

Keywords: Good governance • Mitigating strategies • Effective good governancer

Introduction

The "good governance agenda" is becoming an emerging priority in Ethiopia. The Government has officially recognized that there has been a remarkable level of achievement in the area of economic development. However, the journey to good governance is still in its challenging phase. Even though there is a degree of unevenness and important differences across and within municipalities, the lack of good governance is evident in most aspects of the service delivery systems. The problem of good governance affects the whole economic, social and political system. Even the successes achieved in economic development may not be sustainable unless supported by good governance. It is well appreciated that a sufficient threshold of good governance is one of the most critical factors required to sustain gains, to grow system capacity, to witness and benchmark priority strategic goals and to mobilize the potentials within communities and in society, in general [1]. The relative absence of good governance affects all citizens but most severely impacts on the lower socio-economic segments of the society; those who are most venerable and not capable of getting services by any other means.

The Transparency International Annual Corruption Perception Index has consistently rated Ethiopia as one of the most corrupt–nations in the world. The recent strikes made in different part of Oromia are a good indication for absence of good governance in the region. As a result, there is an urgent and immediate need to formulate region wide and specific strategies that involve all stakeholders (i.e., political and bureaucratic leadership at all levels, policy makers, business persons, civil society leaders, and religious leaders) in ways that activate the strong desires and commitments to make good governance a realistic goals [2]. Good governance ensures that organizations are fit for purpose, are well led and managed, establish appropriate appetite for and provisions for risks, and are sustainable in operations and delivery of quality of services, learning from experience, through review benchmarking evidence, and well warranted advice.

According to good governance does not come by chance rather it must be demanded by citizens and nurtured explicitly and consciously by the Federal and Regional governments at all levels [3]. The observable facts reveal that there are increasing trends of miss governance and unreliable governance and service delivery system in Oromia. As a result, the problem of good governance needs the attention of all stakeholders in ways by which all stakeholders see themselves as having a stake and where they are encouraged to contribute with sense of belongingness and common good.

Whenever there is a question not apparently answered administratively, it may be that this is a challenge that requires attention through scientific and systematic inquiry. First, this approach identifies the degree of challenge and then, second, looks for mitigating strategies that provide leverage for change and give priority to those dimensions of good governance that are of paramount importance for regional improvement.

Back Ground of the Study

Concepts of good governance: Good governance creates an environment in which sustained economic growth becomes achievable. Good conditions of governance allow citizens to trustfully maximize their returns on investment. No theory of governance could be comprehensible unless it is seen in the context of specific culture and time.

The administrative system has to be country specific considering in view that its legal mechanisms, free market system, civil society and cultural values of the people. The government has lone responsibility for the creation enabling environment wherein good governance can be properly exercised. No other institution can perform this role as effectively as can the government. To enforce the practice of good governance, global financial institutions require good governance as a precondition for support. In this context addressed that the concept of good governance as it has emerged as a principle of international law [4,5]. The World Bank (1989) acknowledges that the term "good governance" was initially articulated by African scholars also confirmed that the concept of good governance was originated among African scholars. In this regard, the practice of good governance lagged behind as compared with its initiation in Africa.

The emergence of good governance as a key factor in providing context for sustainable development is relatively recent: "The concept of good governance emerged at the end of the 1980s, at a time of unprecedented political changes" defined good governance as securing justice, empowerment, employment, and delivery of efficient service. So far, some additional definitions have been developed for good governance; nevertheless, there is no consensus among scholars for use of one generic working definition. Besides, various definitions and constructs may not be fully representative of the specific nature of good governance in every nation or contextually efficacious.

The United Nations Development Programme indicated that good governance can be effective when it ensures the following nine factors:

1. Accountability; 2. Transparency; 3. Participation; 4. Responsiveness; 5. Rule of law; 6. Control of corruption; 7. Government effectiveness and efficiency; 8. Equity Building; 9. Consensus orientation.

The World Bank also defined good governance from a political and human rights perspective as: the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association and free media. The definition given by UNDP is more specific to develop measuring tools/use standard ones in line with every pillars of good governance.

Statement of the Problem

Good governance affects the overall political systems and economic growth of the nation. Ensuring the elimination of poor governance practices and the development and sustaining of good governance have become major challenges in public organizations. The practice of good governance differs from country to country depending on the government and bureaucratic strengths, commitments, and linkages to delivering it. The definitions and the measures of good governance have slight differences, depending on the focus of the institutions and specific contextual factors. Resolution 2000/64 of United Nation Commission on Human Rights identified five dimensions of good governance: transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation and responsiveness to the need of the people. UNDP expressed its view that good governance is constituted by measures of participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness and equity, as its most essential characteristics [6]. Apart from slight differences, each organization or institution will share similar key factors for good governance. In other words, good governance is detectable and discernable when studied.

As indicated, the subject of good governance has received wide attention since 1990 [7]. However, the aspirations for good governance have commonly been found wanting of improvement and antecedent problems have not been resolved. Absence of good governance creates chaos as one may recalled the people revolt in some African countries and in Ethiopia, Oromia too. City administration has immense challenges as governments seek to satisfy the growing needs of the citizen. It is here where good governance is among the most critical. In this regard, good governance is not simply a concept that an organization merely pledges to its constituents but rather it requires a thorough investigation of contributing factors. Where the problem precisely lies need an investigation of public perception. Otherwise simply addressing in holistic terms "there is a problem of good governance" does not reveal which factors are in problem, what root causes must be addressed and at what level there are issues remains unknown. Therefore, such an investigation will help to set strategies based on specifically the current practice of good governance (and its absence). Without improving the key indicators of good governance, such as rule of law, transparency, government effectiveness, control of corruption, accountability, and participation, it is not possible to achieve rapid growth [8].

Good governance has been studied extensively among diverse professional groups. However, there are no studies that clearly and contextually identified the status of each key factors of good governance with respect to city governance. In addition, the extent at which each factors of good governance is effectively, equitably and efficiently practiced is not known supported good

governance future research by advocating the need to focus on the analysis of disaggregated components [9].

Recently in August, 2015 good governance was studied at national level in Ethiopia considering the most essential public service sectors. The study was significant in identifying the real problems regarding good governance. However, this study didn't base on the standard key pillars of good governance. Besides, based on the findings the study proposed remedial ideas but not developed implementing strategies. Indeed, this study is different in using those standard pillars of good governance and design of implementing strategies considering the local context and the benchmark.

Therefore, it is fundamental to examine good governance challenges in public sectors in terms of its building factors and contextual nuances to generate custom-made solution.

The following research questions will guide the research process

- To what extent good governance factors such as transparency, accountability, responsibility, responsiveness, participation, government effectiveness and efficiency practiced in the selected city administration?

- What is the performance status of basic service types within the city administration?

- What are the major sources of corruption within the city administration?

- What are the challenges that hinder effectiveness of good governance in the selected city administration?

- What strategies are required to strengthen good governance initiatives in the city administrations?

Objectives of the study

General objective: To design a set of enrichment strategies for good governance, including specific direction for fostering organizational cultures and leadership which will promote good governance, measure and realize its on-going benefits.

Specific objectives:

- To investigate the practice of good governance (i.e., transparency, accountability, responsibility, responsiveness rule of law and participation) in the selected cities

- To identify the current performance of basic service types within the city administration

- To investigate the major source of corruption within the city administration

- To investigate the challenges that hinder good governance within the city administration

- To initiate strategies that enhance good governance within the city administrations

Purpose of the study

The study recognized that no theory of leadership and good governance could be comprehensible unless it is seen from the nation and local context, along with the time of implementation. The purpose of this study then is to examine the leadership type and the key factors of good governance practice within the selected regional cities to the development of a specific set of strategies and initiatives to augment the good governance building endeavours of Oromia, Ethiopia.

Scope of the study

This study covered the core factors of good governance accepted with UNDP and other related institutions and up-to-date review of the literature. The study focused on city administration where the issue of good governance becomes more challenging and demanding, and less well understood in relation to other levels and jurisdictions of government. The key elements of good governance explored within the selected regional cities.

Significance of the study

The study of leadership type and good governance challenges and mitigating strategies has comprehensive benefits. The findings, and indeed the process of the study itself, benefit municipal councillors, senior municipal and administrative officials, private business people, religious leaders, officials of civil organized societies, and leaders within regional and federal governments.

Good governance overview

According to Australian development cooperation (2011), good governance was defined as "the transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for the purposes of equitable and sustainable development".

Good governance in African context

Though the problems associated with attainment of good governance are shared global phenomena; undeniably, the range and intensity of occurrence are painfully experienced in the context of the African continent, and Ethiopia too. According to good governance, predictable administration and legitimate power, no amount of funding will set Africa on the path to sustainable growth [10,11]. The transformation of Africa States into modern and capable states, anchored on good governance and sustainable democracy remains a daunting challenge [12]. According to the UNDP, the key challenges for good governance, across the African continent have been articulated as entailing the following elements:

- Improving the effectiveness and integrity of the electoral system;

- Strengthening the mechanisms for popular participation;

- Enhancing parliamentary and local governance processes and systems;

- Creating sustainable, accountable, transparent and responsive institutions of the judiciary, legislature and the executive;

- Enhancing human rights, human security and the rule of law;

- Preventing, managing and resolving conflicts;

- Re-establishing the rule of law and addressing impunity;

- Enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in social service delivery;

- Strengthening economic governance institutions and improving their management;

- Ensuring effective management and equitable and transparent utilization of natural resources; and

- Promoting and empowering civil society;

The actualization and authentication of good governance requires the integrity among government instrument, civil society and the media. One recent study stated that the term good governance is abused by using many indicators that become nearly impossible to achieve it [13]. The hopeful suggest that there is warrant to our asking: Is it really because of the impossibility of the factors that we fail to get success in good governance?

Good governance is also conceived as proper conduct of government and the well-functioning of the public sector. In this connection and under this conceptualization, one might properly ask concerning the extent to which good governance is actually in place and to what extent the citizens of such good governance are suffering, struggling or thriving? The answers to such questions can be achieved only from the actual evidence of practice and not from mere rehearsal of rhetoric and theories. Almost all political leaders and officials at all levels propagate the importance of good governance. However, it is still unclear why the practice of good governance has fallen short of its wide-spread advocacy. The observable facts reveal that good governance remains aspired for but unattained in these times [14]. Should this time leaders accept its unattainability or get committed to exemplify good governance in all possible means is the recent question?

Good governance in Ethiopian context

Ethiopia's political leadership is characterized by a strongly expressed desire to create a middle income country within a decade of time. This is an astonishing vision that will totally and radically transform the nation, if realized. The world, and specifically Africa, is looking at Ethiopia with respect and considers Ethiopia as being in possession of ideal economic growth models. This strong desire to transform the country may not be realized unless supported by sustainable good governance and strong ethical leadership.

The strong governance reform agenda has counted about two decades in Ethiopia. The focus of the agenda includes civil service reform, decentralization, city administration; judicial reform etc. The government has implemented BPR in public sector to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery to satisfy the citizen. Consequently, BSC and Keizen tools have been consecutively put into practice. However, the desired result to realize good governance is still at its challenging phase. As a result, it is fundamental to identify the existing critical challenges with respect to key pillars of good governance and design strategies using benchmark standards in alignment with home based mitigating strategies.

Problems of good governance in Ethiopia

The problem of good governance in Ethiopia is deep rooted. During the Monarchical government system the issue of good governance was even unthinkable. Similarly, the next dictatorial military regime cracked down the question of good governance for about seventeen (1974-1991) years. The present government has tried different change management tools like BPR, BSC, and Kaizen since 2001 to address the need of good governance. However, the problem of good governance is not yet properly addressed.

Though some factors of good governance are universal in nature, it is crucial to identify the specific behaviours and set strategies according to distinct contextual features. In this regard, what constitutes good governance in the context of Ethiopia and its regional and local manifestations? Responding to such question may not be reviewed from the extant literature but rather needs to be evidenced by the findings of a primary investigation of local practices.

The African Development Bank and Fund presented the constituent aspects of governance in Ethiopia as best assessed by five basic factors: formal rules and regulations, public finance governance, progress in decentralization, accountability, degree of corruption and judicial system. The assessment identified that the civil service sector performance was constrained by limited institutional and human resource capacity. Regarding legal and regulatory framework the weaknesses were observed in areas such as in the low quality of fiscal data in some regions, by inadequate capacity of key oversight in the area of procurement capacity, and by weak implementation of audit recommendations. Decentralization is a challenge because building the requisite institutional and human resource capacity at sub-national level are contributing issues. The accessibility of purposeful information remains a significant challenge. Sadly the trend of corruption appears to be on the rising. The judicial system has identified weaknesses impeding its effectiveness and efficiency. The governance reform agenda has been strongly supported but its success will depend largely on the adequacy of implementation capacity, political commitment (will), and incentives for those best performing actors and the key agents of change.

Consistent with previous studies, identified major challenges as featured in the lack of adequate awareness about human rights among the public, the limited democratic culture and experience in the country, the limited participation of citizens in governance, the lack of adequate and appropriate laws and policies in some areas, the capacity limitations of law enforcement and the ineffectual organs for governance within the Government.

The Ethiopian Press Agency, with its daily newspaper the Ethiopian Herald, reported that the Ethiopian Civil Service Ministry organized the second nationwide good governance forum (August 15, 2014); wherein higher officials, including the Prime Minister, state chiefs, university presidents, and public representatives participated. The forum participants recognized that the lack of good governance was a fundamental challenge and continued to be a

stumbling block to the Nation's development efforts. The forum proposed some remedial solutions to strengthen good governance. These included: taking strict legal measures, side-by-side with awareness creation, to stop shifting incompetent or corrupt officials from office to office, to having clean and role model leadership for their good governance enhancement campaign.

In Ethiopia, why good governance is not practiced as it ought to be? The presences of free press, the participation of civil society and independent judiciary system have a constitutional base in the Ethiopian context. Apart from the strong presence of the Constitution and political will to address good governance, no significant change has yet been achieved (Figure 1). Hence, this study seeks to find out what contextually derived mitigating strategies offered to strengthen good governance initiatives in Oromia?

Research Methodology

Description of research methodology contains the methods and procedures that will help to identify the research design, population and sample, instruments for data collection, and tools for data analysis. This section also addresses the validity and reliability of instruments used. Basically, the existing challenges that as perceived as critical bottlenecks to exercise good governance and the alternative mitigating strategies will be addressed.

Research design

The research design for this study takes descriptive and explanatory approaches. Descriptive studies are primarily concerned with the actual facts reflected at present time and seek to describe both the commendable and the dysfunctional practices in the context of the pursuit of the features, indicators, qualities and attributes of good governance (i.e., accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, control of corruption, efficiency and effectiveness, equitable and inclusive and consensus orientation) in the selected cities.

Population and sample

The participants for this study were employees of the four cities [15]. A total of 6601 employees are considered in the study. For the sample size determination table was used (Table1).

Respondents were randomly selected from the stratified sub-groups in each city administration for the survey and purposefully selected for focus group discussion based on respondents' access to the information. The performance revealed that 91 % of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents as shown in table 1. 82% of the collected questionnaire were collected. About 77% of the questionnaire were found valid for the analysis and entered to SPSS version 20 [16].

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Questionnaire and focus group discussion: The survey instruments for leadership type and good governance are questionnaires, which have been formulated, reviewed and piloted using 20 similar respondents. As a basis for this study, extant and standardized questionnaires was used and
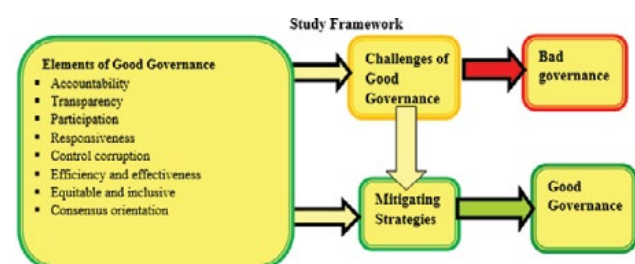

Figure 1. Challenge and mitigating strategies to develop effective leadership and good governance.

Table 1. Population, sample and valid respondents.

City	Population	Sample	Distributed	Collected	Valid
Adama	1916	125	115	101	94
Asella	1814	125	112	103	95
Batu	1063	110	106	97	91
Shashemene	1808	125	109	98	92
Sum	6601	485	442	399	372

adapted as necessary. The questionnaires supported for measuring each factors of leadership types and good governance. For instance, UNECA Good Governance, Tools for Good City administration, Municipal Report Cards, and the City administration Index (UGI) were used to measure progress in achieving good city administration. The existing questionnaire were developed by previous researchers and enriched from subsequent analyses of literature review. Besides, opinion from subject matter expert was administered, analysed and included developed. Some qualitative questions were included to reflect the situational or contextual difference for Oromia regional state.

Data analysis

As the primary objective of this study was to investigate the leadership types and good governance challenges facing Oromia cities administration, descriptive statistics were used. For statistical package simplicity, SPSS software version 20 was used. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and frequency were applied to identify the current practice of leadership types and good governance. Besides, mitigating strategies were recommended from survey and qualitative analysis.

Reached Results

The Skewness and kurtosis for each elements of good governance were found within the symmetry for few exceptions. The practice of good governance except for Adama city where participation, responsibility, equitable and inclusiveness and consensus orientation elements are judged agreed about 50%. In the remaining three towns Asella, Batu and Shashemene, all factors of good governance practice were disagreed by about 60% of respondents. This show that practice of good governance within these towns were found at minimum level.

Discussion

The elements good governance was ranked using mean and standard deviation. As a result, lack of corruption was rated the top bottleneck in the cities synonymously. This reflected in terms of deliberate delay of services, partiality in employment, irregularities in the award of bids, mal-administration of public funds, fraud in relation to project authorization and land administration are the major reflections of corruption observed. Lack of accountability for failure to achieve goals or misbehave while delivering services was identified as the second top problem rated by respondents. Then, transparency was rated as the third top blockage to address good governance. Lack of transparency was reflected during staff selection, willingness to provide information to the public, creating clear working procedure and making easy access to relevant information to the public.

The common forms of corruption as rated by respondents; fraud in relation to land administration was identified as the primary source recognized within the city administrations. Secondly, fraud in relation to project authorization was recognized. Nepotism during employment of officials was identified as the third top priority in which corruption was reflected.

The investigation made to see the action taken toward alleged corruption revealed transfer of the individual to other organization, subjected to administrative disciplinary action and no consequence actions are respectively identified as the major steps taken.

Conclusion

The survey findings revealed that elements of good governance are found at about quarter level which need key attention of the leaders at all levels to change the current miss-governance.

The findings revealed that corruption is still the leading bottleneck where this seeks engagement of all stakeholders to curb from the bottom-line. Absence of Accountability was rated as the second problem area observed from the investigation. Hence, city administrations need to take a step to ensure accountability for the citizen. Lack of transparency was judged as the third problematic that necessity commitment of the leaders to make the system transparent. In general, except for lack of consensus and equitability elements, others are rated reflecting that good governance practice was down to the bottom.

Among the forms of corruption rated, fraud in relation to land administration and fraud in relation to project authorization are the priority where resources are misused or embezzled. Besides, nepotism in employment of officials is the third problematic identified. Hence, these source of corruption necessitate leaders intervention to create a system that trusted by the citizen.

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