

Launching of the Journal of Governance

Address by CVC

Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri M Hamid Ansari Ji, Shri Prabhat Kumar, Shri Syed Sahid Mahdi, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

1. It gives me great pleasure to participate in this function to launch the “The Journal of Governance” brought out by the IC Centre for Governance.

2. Since the last decade, the term governance has come to replace the terms management or administration, as it better denotes the essence of running organisations and managing resources for the overall public good. Governance denotes the whole gamut of activities right from policy making at the highest level to the delivery of goods and services to the citizens. According to the United Nation, the essential characteristics of good governance are:

- (a) Consensus and participatory approach, not only in decision making but also in implementation.
- (b) Effectiveness in achieving the objectives.
- (c) Efficiency in utilisation of resources.
- (d) Responsiveness to the expectations of all the stake holders and equity and fair play to all players; and
- (e) Accountability and transparency.

3. The present state of affairs in the country indicates that we fall short on most of the criteria of good governance. It is paradoxical that while in terms of advanced parameters like strength of financial markets, business sophistication and technological readiness India scores very high but, in terms of basic services like health, education and public administration we fare poorly. This highlights a serious anomaly in our governance system especially with respect to the delivery of services. The Mid Term Statistical Review of the Millennium Development Goals which was released this week by the Hon'ble Vice President does not reveal an encouraging scenario.

Corruption is a key issue in governance and the Planning Commission has reiterated in its last two reports that "Corruption is most endemic and entrenched manifestation of poor governance in Indian society, so much so it has almost become an accepted reality and a way of life. Good governance is not possible without addressing corruption in its various manifestations".

India does not fare well on various governance indices and ranks 85th out of 179 countries in the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. There is palpable disenchantment among people about the state of governance in this country and unless urgent corrective measures are taken people may lose faith in the integrity institutions and the governance structure.

4. Recently, the government has taken various measures to improve governance and integrity in public services which include measures like Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System and the Civil Services Accountability Bill. We are in the final stages of ratifying the UN Convention against Corruption. The Central Vigilance Commission has been striving to mainstream corruption in the governance agenda. Preventive and participative vigilance is the most effective means of combating corruption. In furtherance of this goal, CVC is formulating a National Anti Corruption Strategy in consultation with all the stake holders.

5. This journal of Governance could not have come at a more opportune time. I am glad to note that an important hallmark of this journal is that it is a confluence of theory and practice, because, I have been a firm believer that good theory is also good practice. Delineating a problem is one aspect, finding effective means of implementation is far more difficult. If this journal is to bring about a significant change in the way we are governed and not become another of those journals of public administration which largely remain a collection of readable articles; then it needs to have a practical orientation. The focus should be on providing innovative and “out of the box” solutions in order to overcome the implementation bottlenecks and improve the delivery of public services to the weakest in the society. The inbuilt rigidity in the administrative system is due to its over emphasis on complying with rules, regulations and

procedures in their letter without appreciating their spirit. Compliance is often enforced even at the cost of the outcomes. This has promoted a culture of inertia and risk avoidance and inhibits any creative or innovative approach to solving problems. Given the complexities and myriad dimensions of present day governance, it is important to look for localised and innovative solutions. It is here that persons with rich experience in public service must contribute actively. To devise innovative and pragmatic solutions, theoretical construct is equally important. The problem of terrorism or naxalism would require detailed theoretical analysis before arriving at a practical solution. When practitioners of Public Administration synergise with the think tanks and academicians, I am sure it would produce more viable solutions to the problems faced in governance.

6. Another important point which is noticeable about this journal is that it provides a participative platform for engaging various stakeholders, more importantly the Civil Society Organisations. As the old adage goes, “war is too serious an issue to be left to the Generals”, similarly, governance is too serious an issue to be left to the Government alone. Public Private Partnership has emerged as a new mode of enhancing development through participative governance. In so far as corruption is concerned, our efforts have remained largely focussed on the public servants, ignoring the equally culpable supply side of corruption. Any meaningful anti corruption strategy has to

address both the bribe taker and the bribe giver. This calls for engaging not only the private sector, but also the citizens. This would involve educating, creating awareness, allaying their fears and convincing them so as to create a confidence in them to say no to corruption.

7. While traditional methods of enforcing accountability have failed to have the desired effects, two new means have emerged to be more effective, viz. the Right to Information and the increasing involvement of Civil Society Organisations in governance. World over, much of the transparency and oversight in public functioning is being achieved through the Civil Society Organisations on behalf of the citizens.

8. Leveraging of technology, especially information technology has proved to be an effective and efficient method of improving governance. The results of CVC's efforts at deploying information technology to fight corruption have been encouraging. Therefore, I am glad to note that Technocrats and Scientists are also contributing to this journal and to the work of IC Centre of Governance.

9. National security especially in the context of growing terrorism, naxalism and other anti national activities has become a priority concern of governance. This again calls for a comprehensive multi pronged approach and the journal has provided space for the analysts as well as practitioners of national security to deliberate on the issue.

10. I hope this journal would provide an inter disciplinary forum for discussion and rendering advice in a free, frank and independent manner. This journal should also serve as a means for dissemination of best practices, replication of successful experiments; and documentation of case studies and lessons learnt. I am sure by virtue of these qualities this journal can act as an important source of active, continuous and real time source on policy making as well as its effective implementation.

11. C K Prahlad in his book “Fortune at The Bottom of The Pyramid” states that the governance capacity of a nation is determined by its ability to enforce laws, regulations and contracts. In terms of laws and institutions of market economy, India is well developed and can be counted at par with USA, Japan or Germany. But, in terms of capacity to interpret and enforce laws, contracts and regulations, we are inadequate. I hope this journal will go a long way in building this capacity.

Keeping in view the practical orientation of the journal, it is apt that the launching of this journal is being done by Hon’ble Vice President of India Shri Hamid Ansari ji who himself has been a distinguished Civil Servant. I would like to recall from his speech in July, 2008 on the occasion of the release of the Transparency International’s India Corruption Study Report where he had highlighted the three ways in which corruption impacts the nation. In its moral dimension,

it cuts at the very roots of the social and political fabric of the society and increases injustice. In its legal implications, it results in disregard for the rule of law, in its developmental aspect, it distorts investment decisions and other commercial transactions. I would also reiterate his modification of the old maxim “Eternal Vigilance is the price of liberty”, wherein he had added that eternal vigilance is also insurance for proper governance.

I am grateful to the Hon’ble Vice President of India for extending me the honour of presiding over this important function held for the cause of good governance which is rightfully due to the citizens of this vibrant nation. I express my heartfelt thanks to Shri Prabhat Kumar and the members of the IC Centre for Governance for providing me the opportunity to be part of this event. I wish the Journal of Governance and IC Centre for Governance all the success.