

Inclusiveness & Equity : Essential characteristics of a good public Institution

What drives economic growth and ^{ensures} social emancipation of a nation or a community? Is it the geography, or resources or cultural values etc.? If it is, then how can we explain the enormous variance of North Korea and South Korea? While South Korea is a nation of enormous peace, prosperity and technologically advancement, ~~on the~~ other hand, ~~South~~ ^{North} Korea is reeling under the spectre of famine, poverty and repressed human beings.

Though both countries, before 1950, were almost same culturally, geographically and development wise (i.e., poor). But, South Korea is today one of the most advanced country in almost every socio-economic indicators. The reason for the divergence between two countries is inclusive and equitable public institution.

A group of humans

can flourish in desert also, if public institutions are inclusive and equitable. As, Israel is an epitome of this phenomenon.

Human beings, have since ancient times, grouped themselves to prosper under the constant threat of dangerous animals. In this process, we started creating subjective realities over objective realities to govern social order and ensure cooperation ~~and~~ ⁱⁿ flexible manner. For instance, kinship, marriage, religion, nation-state, caste system etc. are a product of our collective imagination that governs social order.

Similarly, public institutions are a collective endeavour that establishes organised system in a community or nation to govern social, political and economic order in a society. The purpose for creating such institutions is to ensure prosperity of a community or for some vested interests.

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Like, civil service in India was originally created by the British to extract economic resources from India, but our founding fathers changed the ideals of this institution towards socio-economic development of India and to liberate the poor from the vicious cycle of deprivation.

Though, public institutions may, theoretically, be created for the development of a nation and its people, but it doesn't always lead to liberation of the vulnerable sections of the society like untouchables, women, construction workers etc. Why is it so?

The answer lies in the basic, fundamental values enshrined in the public institutions. A good public institution is distinguished by rule of law, inclusivity, equity, efficiency, innovation etc. However, in the neo-liberal paradigm of human society, almost every characteristic ideal is to ensure inclusiveness & equity.

Inclusiveness is an idea which refers to inclusion of every individuals, groups etc. in the development process. For instance, while designing any policies or schemes, inclusiveness implies that poor, disabled, untouchables, women, children etc. concerns are considered and actions ^{are} taken to ensure that they also get equal opportunity to enjoy the fruits of development.

However, historically, we have seen how justice (social, political and economical) have been denied to such groups of vulnerable sections through systemic social barriers like social disability where untouchables weren't allowed to access social resources. Hence, to do justice to such vulnerable sections, Equity, along with equality is required.

Equality means equal access to resources, while equity means positive discrimination to do justice

Otherwise vulnerable sections will be condemned to live in a vicious circle of poverty.

That's why, equity & inclusiveness are considered as essential characteristics of a good public institution. Only with these characteristics, a public institution can remove poverty, generate social capital and ensure economic development of a nation.

In modern times, every democracy is established on the basic foundation of Social Contract theory and General Will as propounded by Rousseau. Even, our constitution's preface, i.e., Preamble starts with "We the People of India". Hence, if a public institution is not being inclusive and equitable, then its legitimacy itself is in danger.

Not only legitimacy, but almost every sphere of human existence, be it economy, polity and society, will be endangered if

Other public institutions don't follow the ideals of inclusiveness and equity.

Martin Luther King had famously remarked that, "Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere." That's why, a good public must ensure that fruit of development must reach every sections of society, then only our nation can prosper. Otherwise, its inadequacy manifest in various ways.

For instance, Left wing Extremism is one of the most serious internal security threat in India. It has risen because of growing mistrust and disillusionment with the public institutions that couldn't bring development of poorer sections of the society. If public mistrust rises, then it can erupt often violently. Like, growing lack of confidence with police and judiciary have led to mob lynching and vigilantism.

Not only security and economic sphere social sphere, even

is affected by lack of inclusiveness and equity. Today, India's poor economic development is often ~~not~~ criticised because it doesn't offer equal opportunity to every section of the society. For instance, only 23% of females are participating as labour forces in our country. While, Bangladesh is growing phenomenally because of enormous participation of women.

That's why, we need inclusive and equitable institutions that give equal opportunity and positive discrimination to every section of the society. In the coming times, we will be facing more difficult challenges like climate change, terrorism, rise of AI etc. To ensure resilience of society we need inclusive and equitable institutions.

Since Independence, India has lifted many millions out of poverty, provided education and healthcare to its citizens. But, it

hasn't been satisfactory because of poor, fragmented design of institution that works on the principles of patronage rather than rights based approach.

It is necessary that our institutions must be revitalised to make it inclusive and equitable. Though, to correct the historical injustice, our constitution^{polity} took many steps like reservation, poverty alleviation programmes and rights based approach to development. But, much more needs to be done, as still we have the largest number of poor peoples across the world.

How to reinvigorate our institutions? The most important thing to do is to involve the vulnerable sections itself in the development process, right from planning, implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Involvement of vulnerable

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section will make institutions aware of the specific problems of the particular sections. It will also reduce Corruption by public officials.

Further, civil society organisations and panchayati Raj institutions (CSOs) need to be strengthened, as bottom up approach is the best way to ensure inclusiveness and equity.

Rajivram Rajan, in his seminal work, "The Third Pillar" said, "it is necessary to balance all the pillars of the society that is state, Market and civil society".

But, our institutions are leaving the third pillar behind. Hence, adequate legislative, administrative and financial autonomy must be given to the CSOs & PRIs.

Moreover, public officials need to inculcate the ethical values of compassion, sense of duty, accountability and integrity to realise the ideals of inclusiveness and equity for this,

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proper training programmes like Karmyogi schemes is a step in the right direction.

Besides, these, our public institution's capability and capacity building must be given due importance. As we have seen in India, many innovative institutions like Central Information Commission was created to realise the fundamental rights of Right to Information. But, today vacancy has led to inaction which have led to denial of rights. Even, in police & judiciary, lack of human resource and infrastructure have made the realisation of inclusiveness and equity elusive.

Hence, capacity building through timely appointment and adequate financial resources must be done.

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Above all, our institutions goals must be aligned towards the ideals of Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity in almost every action and our institution's mission is to realise the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, i.e., to remove poverty, hunger, health and education for all and gender equality.

To conclude, every stakeholders of public institution must heed to the old Indian adage.

"Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah,"

Sarve Janu Niramayaha,

Sarve Bhadrani Pashyantu,

Maa Kshit Dukh Bhag Bhareet."

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Data as a 'public Good' in India

Data is the new oil of the 21st Century.
~ World Economic Forum

With the emerging technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML) and Big data, data has truly become the primary source of assets in the contemporary world. That's why MNCs like Google, Amazon, Facebook etc. are racing towards controlling as much data as they can.

Like in the Medieval era, land became the main asset and conflict emerged among community, states to control land, while in the Age of Enlightenment, industry became the primary focus and almost every aspect of human society revolved around industry. Today's world will now revolve around controlling data. That's why the threat of data colonisation, concentration

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Question No.	<p>of economic and political power are emerging because of <u>data ownership</u>.</p> <p>In this context, it is being widely debated that <u>data</u> should be made a <u>public good</u> in India. Let's explore the various facets of data and its necessity to be made a <u>public good</u>.</p> <p>Data is any information about anything be it <u>personal data</u> like <u>name</u>, <u>age</u>, <u>sex</u>, <u>religion</u> or non-personal information about <u>weather</u>, <u>economy</u>, <u>transportation</u>, etc. which can be stored over the computer and can can be sent via the internet across the world in a matter of seconds.</p> <p>While, public good is any thing which is non-excludable and non-rivalrous. i.e., anyone can use a public good and its consumption by one set of people doesn't diminish or hinder its use by other group of people. E.g., public health, education, public infrastructure like road, railways etc.</p>	Remarks

of economic and political power are emerging because of data ownership.

In this context, it is being widely debated that data should be made a public good in India. Let's explore the various facets of data and its necessity to be made a public good.

Data is any information about anything be it personal data like name, age, sex, religion or non-personal information about weather, economy, transportation, etc. which can be stored over the computer and can ~~can~~ be sent via the internet across the world in a matter of seconds.

While, public good is any thing which is non-excludable and non-rivalrous. i.e., anyone can use a public good and its consumption by one set of people doesn't diminish or hinder its use by other group of people. E.g., public health, education, public infrastructure like road, railways etc.

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In the contemporary world, data is being generated continuously and by everyone while we use social media or when we google any information. With these data, MNCs are using it to deliver us better services like better directions in google map or searching for flight to anywhere across the world or personal things like what books, videos or movies to watch.

Truly, dataism is fastly emerging as the new motto of the world, especially for the multi-national companies. In dataism, world is viewed as a complex web of information and almost anything can be deciphered with adequate data. Emerging technologies like AI, IoT and ML present unique technological power to disrupt almost every aspect of human sphere in social, political and economic dimension.

It is being said that with the fusion of biotech and infotech, humans entire intelligence

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can be hacked, if adequate amount of information is given. Further, ^(data) democracy is in threat as we have seen how Cambridge Analytica used our facebook information to spread propaganda using Artificial Intelligence.

Further, economic power is getting concentrated with companies like Amazon, google, facebook etc.

And technology based on data presents the threat of enormous job loss because of automation. In such scenario, data sovereignty and data colonisation have become important because a country's huge data asset is being owned by MNCs located across the world, and they are immensely profiting over it, while India is being denied of any benefit.

That's why, data is being thought that it must be made public good. If data is made public good, then such threat

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of data colonisation, economic inequality, etc. can be tackled.

For instance, if data is made accessible to all, then any citizen can use it to make any innovative product that will lead to economic growth and job creation, and at the same time broad-based growth will reduce economic inequality. Currently, if google owns data then they will try to establish monopoly in the market, while public good will equal opportunity to everyone to participate in the growth process.

Even Economic Survey 2018-19, had proposed that data should be for the people, of the people and by the people. Currently, government collects enormous amounts of health data, and if it is made available to everyone, with proper privacy safeguards, then innovative startups can come up that can provide accessible healthcare to all.

Similarly, google map

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	<p>Collects information about our location and various movements, based on it google provides location, direction, mapping and shortest distance service. If it is made available to all in anonymised form, then innovative products can be created by emerging startups.</p> <p>Not only in economic sphere, but for the sake of security, we need to ensure that data is a <u>public good in anonymised form.</u></p> <p><u>AI, IoT, Biotech and ML</u> are fastly trying to understand human dynamic and its intelligence in a data form. If it can be done, then any thing can be sold to us by manipulating our <u>emotions</u>. That's why democracy, liberal market etc. are in danger because of increasingly large data collections.</p> <p>Recently, a chinese Company, associated with chinese political establishment was found</p>	

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to be secretly monitoring top most leaders of India and the world through data mining. By understanding our leader's mindset, they can start cyber-warfare and using AI-based propaganda tool they can interfere in our democracy because today's campaigning and increasingly becoming digital.

With such threat of data colonisation, cyber-warfare, economic inequality, it is necessary that data should be made public good in India, but in anonymised form to safeguard privacy. Not only because of such threat, but also because of enormous benefit of data as public good.

Like in governance, data-based, policy making is increasingly being seen as panacea for policy incoherence and its failure. For instance, Project Insight was launched by tax department that will use AI based tools to monitor public

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taxation system.

Further, AI-based tech startups are emerging in Agriculture because of government policy to make data available to all. Data based on soil Health cards, weather's data by ISRO, supply-demand information are being used by innovators to provide predictive models for farmers to sow particular crops and get remunerative prices.

In the recent COVID-19 pandemic, covid-data was used by many startup to design apps that can provide information to everyone regarding hospital availability and safe area to travel.

Thus, data's enormous benefit for every section of society demand that it should be made public good in India. Though, we have seen various threats, benefits, but one more important

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reason to make it public is because data is generated by everyone so each human deserve to be owner of its own data. since, not everyone can store its own data; That's why it should be public good.

However, there are many challenges towards making it as public good. First, infrastructure capacity for data storage with the government is inadequate. while, MNCs are investing enormous sum in data storage.

Second, How to ensure data privacy, if data is made public good? Third, Data can be sent, mirrored with speed of light, so how to regulate its storage. Fourth, Cyber espionage and Cyber security are monumental threat.

It is a settled principle that any technology, in its wake brings enormous benefits and challenges. The idea is to capitalize

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	<p>on the benefit, while striving hard to find solutions for the challenges.</p> <p>Hence, Government needs to take various steps to ensure data's evolution as public good. The most important step is to pass <u>Data Protection Bill</u> as per the <u>B.N. Srikrishna's</u> recommendation that envisages that critical, sensitive personal data must be stored and processed in India only.</p> <p>Further, it should be mandated that MNCs must make data available to everyone with minimal cost. And, data must be in anonymized form, so that individual identity can't be used to do surveillance and invade privacy of a human.</p> <p>Next step would be to invest heavily in creating a data storage infrastructure. In this endeavour, <u>public-private partnership</u></p>	

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model can be adopted. Also, government needs to incentivise to create an ecosystem where any one can ~~use~~ use this data to create innovative product.

For developing innovative ecosystem, inclusive institutions and mechanisms must be created that ensures equal opportunity for all. Capacity building through skill development in IT sector and manufacturing of data storage infrastructure is the need of the hour.

To conclude, India needs to understand the potential of data in the coming decades in almost every sphere, be it social, economic or political, and its revolutionary impact in both positive and negative way. And with these acknowledgement, Data should be made public good, along with removing all the challenges and augmenting ~~the~~ capacity to create Knowledge economy in India.