

Assessment of the Performance of Municipalities in Framework of Good Governance Criteria (A case study of Herat Municipality)

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Abstract

Urban management is facing a wide range of challenges and good governance can be a reasonable solution to the situation of cities with today's population. Good governance seeks to achieve urban sustainability by considering civil society, public and private sectors. This research aims to evaluate the performance of Herat Municipality based on Good Governance criteria. The statistical population of this research is citizens of Herat city which are 632206 people and based on Cochran formula, 384 individuals were identified and have been distributed to 15 urban areas in proportion of population. The current research is applied research in the objective view of point, in terms of the nature, it is descriptive and in term of the information gathering method is quantitative. Simple random sampling has been used to select the sample. Eight good governance criteria are used in this research, out of which efficiency and effectiveness index having the highest mean score of 2.70 and transparency index having the lowest mean score of 1.98. For data analysis, Excel and SPSS software are used by Friedman Rank Test and the variables are evaluated using Likert spectrum. The result of the research indicates that the level of all good governance criteria is lower than the average of Likert spectrum with the exception of the efficiency and effectiveness index. Therefore the performance of Herat Municipality in framework of good governance criteria from perspective of Herat citizens is unsatisfactory.

Keywords: Good Governance, Municipality, Performance, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Transparency.

Introduction

Nowadays, the population of people living in urban areas is more than any other time in human history. The process of urbanization is irreversible. It is estimated that the urban population all over the world will double by 2025, which will account for over 90% of the growth in developing countries. (UN – HA – BITAT, 2003). Growth of urbanization in Afghanistan reaches 4% annually (Poppl, 2014, p. 8), which is an unprecedented figure in urban management of Afghanistan. The most important reason is the influx of refugees and returnees from other countries especially Pakistan and Iran, who, after returning, prefer to live in cities because of their livelihoods, access to qualified public services, better job opportunities and better security. But these are the numbers only, cities as engines of social growth and development have an incredible potential that must be noticed (Lewis and Mioch, 2005, 50). Urban management in the future in general and in the 21st century will be confronted in particular with the challenge, a challenge that comes from technological, demographic, economic, political and international change.

Many of the current urban areas face devastating realities, among them unemployment, violence, pollution, insecurity, living under standards conditions, vulnerabilities to human impacts, and so on. (Lewis and Mioch, 2005, p. 51). The international community also concludes that the major problem with urban management is not the lack of financial resources or modern technology or skilled manpower, but the main problem is lack of sound urban management. Regarding the fact that cities are considered as the driving force of economic growth in the world, in the current situation of urban management, there should be some criteria such as transparency, accountability, participatory, rule of law, efficiency and Consensus (Torabi, 2004, p. 6).

In a long period of time but satisfactory process, a broad consensus emerged both by international institutions and economists about the redefinition of the sovereignty of the state. The set of these efforts has led to the conclusion that a specific government can properly carry out its core tasks of reforming market failures, increasing competitiveness, achieving free markets and improving social capital. It must have several characteristics that are defined in the form of good governance (Naghibi Monfared, 2010, p. 107). Historically, the concept of governance is as old as human civilization, and depending on its level (national, regional, and local), it includes a series of formal and informal actors that influence decision-making processes. An essential basis for good governance criteria is the eight indicators set out by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and World Bank. These criteria are: Participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability. This research examines performance of Herat Municipality in framework of good governance criteria and lastly based on good governance approach; it will make suggestions for Herat Municipality's managers and citizens.

Problem Statement

The term good governance may have been used for the first time in 1979 by William Sven in the literature of economics, and in 1980 the term became more widely used. When the World Bank assigned its annual report to good governance in 1989, no one thought that good governance would expand its position in the development literature (Sotoudeh, 2008, p. 2). With fortification of this theory, as well as increasing the demands of the citizens, various governments who viewed their policies' feedbacks in the city, deeply studied good governance (Akbari, 2007, p. 22), which resulted in a definition from the Housing Committee United Nations. Regarding to the committee: Good governance is a collection of individuals and institutions, public and private, which plan and manage the city's affairs. In fact, there is a continuous process of matching and reconciling the conflicting interests of individuals and groups. This process involves both formal and informal institutions as well as social capital of citizens. Urban governance has an unbreakable bond with the welfare of citizens. Good governance should help citizens to access citizenship benefits.

The growth of urbanization in Afghanistan over the past two decades and after the creation of the new government has been accelerating, causing problems such as population concentration, pollution, marginalization, housing shortages, rural immigration and the problems of a new urban management system, which the process of codification and implementation of public policies in the economic, social, political and cultural fields, with the participation of civil society organizations and observance of the principles of participation, accountability and effectiveness (Romani, 2003, p. 30). Cities in Afghanistan have been experiencing rapid and unpredictable growth in the last two decades. Given the rapid growth of urbanization as well as the lack of an efficient management system, in the past and present, it seems necessary to have a new management system that has a more dynamic attitude towards the city and its citizens.

Herat is a city with a history of urban management, which crystallizes urban symbols in ancient Ariana. Considering that the management of Afghanistan's cities is low, Herat city seems to be no exception and it requires a new and more dynamic management system to increase its impact in the city. This research will try to assess performance of Herat Municipality. It will consider how good governance principles are implemented in Herat's municipality. In general, this research is based on the assumption that performance of Herat Municipality is not completely within the framework of good governance, and also among the good governance criteria, there is a significant difference in performance of Herat Municipality.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to assess the performance of Herat Municipality in framework of good governance criteria. Another objectives of the research are following:

- I. Assessing the current status of Herat Municipality and comparing it with good governance indicators.
- II. Achieving good governance as a transparent and accountable management with the goal of sustainable social and economic development in Herat city.
- III. Achieving the participation of all the experts from Herat city include urban managers, private sector managers and citizens in various aspects of urban development.
- IV. Achieving the theoretical foundations of good governance based on its criteria for Herat City, as a case study for other cities in Afghanistan.

Research Questions

- I. Does Herat Municipality perform its performance regarding to the framework of good governance criteria?
- II. What is the level of participation and consensus of citizens in different affairs of Herat Municipality?
- III. How Herat Municipality covers the equality and equity in service delivery?
- IV. What is the level of responsibility of Herat Municipal managers to people?
- V. What is the level of efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness and the rule of law in performance of Herat Municipality?
- VI. What is the level of transparency in performance of Herat Municipality?

Research Significance

Urbanization in Afghanistan has accelerated over the past two decades, causing problems such as population concentration, environmental pollution, marginalization, housing shortages, migrant villagers, and so on. These problems require the existence of a new urban management system that will shape the process of developing and implementing public policy in the economic, social, political and cultural fields, with the participation of civil society organizations and observing the principles of participation, accountability and effectiveness. On the other hand, the current research provides comprehensive information on the performance of municipalities in Afghanistan, their duties and performance of managers and staff, level of participation and satisfaction of people from them and their current state of affairs with good governance indicators. This research will be an important source of information for future studies for researchers and other national and international institutes in term of municipalities' performance based on good governance criteria.

Concept of Good Governance

Governance is not a new concept, and its background begins to the formation of human civilization. In simple terms, the concept of governance is a process of decision-making (Farzin Pak, 2004, p. 68). Hence, it can be considered as the age of human civilization. World Bank in its studies, found that governance as the management of the country's administration, or the relationship of citizens to government, is the central issue of development. Subsequently, the United Nations in its second human settlements conference (Hobbit 2) in Istanbul in 1996 emphasized that governments are taking steps to establish urban governance in the cities of the world, and their motto is "Global activity for decent urban governance (Berek Poor, 2011, p. 500)." Afterwards, the concept of good governance was examined at numerous seminars and conferences, and since 2000, World Bank has reported on its activities with various countries under the title of "Reforming Public Institutions and Strengthening Governance" (Arab Shahi, 2004, p. 12). This area has been largely newly introduced and presents new demands for government institutions and policies.

Lots of organizations and scholars have presented different definitions of good governance based on their own attitudes. Governance is a process through which public institutions manage public affairs, public resources and protect the rights of individuals (Johnson, 2001). Good governance is the process of codifying and implementing public policies in the economic, social, political and cultural fields, with the participation of civil society organizations, and observing the principles of transparency, accountability and effectiveness in such a way that while meeting the basic needs of society, to achieve justice, security and sustainable human and environmental development (FarhadiNejad, 2006, p. 24). In other words, the origin of power and legitimacy in good governance is all citizens, and their presence in all aspects of civil society (Shahidi, 2007, p. 42). Governance in fact is a process led by the government, but come along with the private sector and civil society. (Barabadi, 2004, p. 45). Good governance strengthens the legitimacy of government departments and the democratic response of political actors. Good governance

framework is under the umbrella of the third Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), under the title of "Growth of public capacities and government in local level for cooperation to increase the well-being of the people."

Researchers, policy makers, international institutions have attempted to conceptualize the concept of governance and identify its basic characteristics. These include:

GOOD GOVERNANCE CRITERIA			
Sr. No	WORLD BANK	UNDP/TUGI	UNCHS
1	Participation	Participation	Decentralization
2	-	Equality	Equal access to resources
3	Transparency	Transparency	Transparency
4	Responsiveness	Responsiveness	Responsiveness
5	-	Rule of Law	-
6	Sensitivity to poverty	Responsibility	Civil intervention
7	-	Consensus	-
8	-	Efficiency and Effectiveness	Strategic Insight, Sustainability

Table (1 - 1) Characteristics of Good Governance (Kozagar, 2016, p. 4)

Considering the criteria presented in Table 1-1 and other researchers' studies, it seems that United Nations Development Program (UNDP) provides a set of good governance indicators that are more comprehensive rather than groups, which are summarized in the following:

- I. **Participation:** This is considered to be the core of good governance. Governments aiming to ensure the requisite freedom to the citizens in order to participate in the decision making process, articulate and represent their interests, which get reflected in policies and programs.
- II. **Responsiveness:** The earlier governance mechanisms lacked in their approach of bringing all the stakeholders in their ambit. In the present times, the emphasis is more on institutions being responsive to the needs of all those who are going to be affected by their actions.
- III. **Effectiveness and Efficiency:** Good Governance and, NPM need to aim at effectiveness and efficiency in usage of resources in consonance with the societal needs and demands. Result-orientation needs to be the key concern.
- IV. **Transparency:** This is based on the premise of free flow of information and its accessibility to those affected by the decisions taken in the governance process. People, especially shall be in a position to understand as well as monitor governmental and other sectors' activities, on the basis of information that is accessible to them within reasonable limits.
- V. **Equity:** Since governance structures and mechanisms aim at participation, they have to promote equity. A society's well-being and development depends on ensuring that all the members have a stake and role in it and are not excluded from the mainstream activities.
- VI. **Rule of Law:** Governance does not imply arbitrary use of authority. Any type of governance to be effective needs to be supplemented by a fair legal framework. This should be supported by appropriate enforcement machinery, independent judiciary, which instills confidence in the people.
- VII. **Responsibility:** Includes acceptance of citizens' responsibility and respect for autonomy and equality of rights between citizens.
- VIII. **Consensus:** All citizens and their interests, should be considered directly or indirectly by the legal institutions, in order to reach a broad consensus on what is best.

These characteristics reinforce each other. A proper governance strategy needs to take cognizance of these features. Many countries in the present times, are trying to bring about administrative reforms to foster Good Governance.

Review of Literature

Good governance is one of the effective models in the field of management science, especially in public administration. Review of the research shows that the beginning of good governance in Afghanistan has been started since 2001. Indeed governance, has not had much precedent for this contemporary approach in Afghanistan, and for the first time since the Bonn Conference and the fall of the Taliban rule, has been used. In the documents of the Bonn Conference, issues such as democracy, human rights and rule of law have been discussed, which constitute the essential elements of "good governance". Gradually the academic community is familiar with necessity of research in this field, which is briefly referred to some of them.

- A research carried out under the name of Local Government in Afghanistan was searched by Hamish Nixon in 2008, published by the AREU Institute . Its purpose is to collect evidences of governance initiatives at local level in Afghanistan since 2002, which has been conducted in a descriptive way. Women's true participation in development and governance is facing problems, and secondly, community acceptance from Local Development Council to past experience, and their human and material resources ready for facilitation and executive practices.
- Sarrafi and Esmailzadeh (2005), carried out a research titled "The Position of Good Governance in Urban Planning in Tehran Metro Plan", at the Faculty of Urban Management, ShahidBeheshti University of Tehran. They have assessed good governance system that includes principles such as participation, accountability, Transparency, efficiency, rule of law and so on, and have paid attention to the role of the people in the planning process and the level of interaction between the Dimensions of sovereignty (authorities, people and the private sector). The research method is descriptive in nature and data collection instrument is a questionnaire.

- Hamzah – Ee and others, in a Research entitled "Good Governance in the Mashhad Municipality" in 2013, have implemented good governance principles with actions taken in the municipality of Mashhad in order to achieve desirable sovereignty. This research is descriptive and its results show that measures taken in 83.3% of cases with good governance principles (transparency, accountability, effectiveness of roles and responsibilities, constructivism and capacity building), have adopted and only principle of promoting values is not seen in these actions.
- The role of civil society in promoting good governance in Afghanistan is another study carried out by Urzela Ashraf Nemat and Keerin Werner in 2016 and published by the AREU¹ Institute. Researchers concluded that rethinking each group in their perceptions could lead to more positive dialogue with influence on governance structures.
- Urban Governance: An assessment of the Urban Development Program in Afghanistan is the title of a research which has searched by Dietlif Kemir and Zabiullah Esa in AREU in 2017. The research method is descriptive and data gathering tool is conducted through interview. This research focuses specifically on the four major cities in Afghanistan including Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad. The results of the current research highlight the fact that all cities of Afghanistan need very large investments, financial and human resources to make cities regular or habitable, in which the inhabitants can have a peaceful and vibrant life.

With the study of literature of review, valuable researches have been done in this field. Regarding to these researches and their summing up for the assessment of good governance, each of the above studies have worked on good governance criteria, and in some cases they have been considered some other components such as security, corruption and public confidence. But they have been less comprehensive, because none of the above-mentioned researches and studies have not taken eight good governance components or characteristics at the same time.

Researches and studies on the problems of urban management in Afghanistan, although over the past two decades, have been increasing, but due to the weakness in the principles of urban management in Afghanistan, these researches are more general investigations and have often had the theoretical aspect. Due to the characteristics of each city of Afghanistan and its particular circumstances, less studies have been done. The range of researches in the country indicates that written papers and researches have a theoretical aspect and have not studied a specific city in a case-study manner, and this can be seen as a difference between this research and other researches carried out up to now.

Research Methodology

The current research is applied research in the objective view of point, as well as it is descriptive and in term of the information gathering method is quantitative. Research setting is Herat City and statistical population of this research is Herat citizens which are 632,206 persons without districts². In this research, 'Cochran Formula' has been used to determine sample size of research. According to Cochran formula, sample size will be 384. Sampling method in this research is probability as well as Stratified sampling method because the universe is divided into different strata which are 15 districts (urban area) and these areas are managed by Herat Municipality. According to the number required in proportion to population of each of these areas, then by simple random sampling will be selected.

Both secondary and primary data are used. Secondary data is collected from government publications, official gazettes, national and international journals, articles, books and reliable censuses, and for primary data collection, a questionnaire is used which is closed ended based on Likert scale. As well as Excel and SPSS are used as statistical techniques analyze primary data.

Data Analysis

This sections divided into two parts which are demographic data of respondents and statistics data. It should be noted that researcher is used Friedman test to rank indicators of good governance in Herat Municipality performance. The researcher will also uses charts and tables to show the adaptation of respondents 'answers to research questions.

¹Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

² Estimated settled population of Herat province by administrative unit, urban, rural and sex in 2019-20, which has published by Central Statistical Organization of Afghanistan.

Respondents' Demographic Data

The demographic characteristics of the respondents which are Herat Citizens include: gender, civil status, age, education and urban area.

Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Data															
Gender		Frequency				Percent		Marital Status		Frequency				Percent	
Male		247				64.3 %		Single		142				37 %	
Female		137				35.7 %		Married		242				63 %	
Age		Frequency				Percent		Educational Level		Frequency				Percent	
18 – 25		79				20.6 %		Diploma		133				34.6	
26 – 35		136				35.4 %		Associate		66				17.2	
36 – 45		108				28.1 %		Bachelor		115				29.9	
46 – 65		61				15.9 %		Master		45				11.7	
								PhD		25				6.5	
Urban Area No															
No	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Frequency	19	11	26	20	49	43	31	27	33	28	23	46	9	9	10
Percent	4.9	2.9	6.8	5.2	12.8	11.2	8.1	7	8.6	7.3	6	12	2.3	2.3	2.6

Table (2 - 1) Analysis of Respondents' Demographic Data

Based on findings of questionnaire on gender statistics, more than 35% of the respondents are women and remaining 64% is men. The main reason for lack of women participating in statistical sample can be the lack of referral to Herat Municipality to address their problems. Regarding the age of the respondents, findings of the research indicate that there is significant participation in all age groups. It is also seen that youth under 35 years of age are more likely to complete a questionnaire than those over 35 years old. Based on research findings about marital status, married people are about twice as likely as single people.

Also people in all degrees of educational level have participated in completing and answering research questionnaires. Most of the respondents are graduates of 12th grade, which are 133 people. Also, the lowest number are people with doctorate degree, who make up only 25 of total sample. The bachelor's degree is the second highest in the sample population. Finally based on findings related to urban area of respondents, the majority of respondents were from the fifth district, comprising 49 people. Similarly, the least responds are from the 13th and 14th districts, comprising only 9 people.

Inferential Statistics Analysis of Research

In this section, researcher presents the results of inferential statistics related to the evaluation of good governance criteria in Herat municipality. For data analysis, Friedman Rank Test is used to rank indices.

Descriptive Statistics					
Criteria	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Participation	384	2.0729	.81558	1.00	4.80
Responsiveness	384	2.4536	.84182	1.00	4.60
Efficiency and Effectiveness	384	2.7031	.97187	1.00	5.00
Transparency	384	1.9844	.70475	1.00	4.80
Equity	384	2.1276	.69558	1.00	4.40
Rule of Law	384	2.2026	.73800	1.00	5.00
Responsibility	384	2.2307	.71375	1.00	5.00
Consensus	384	2.0427	.82053	1.00	4.80

Table (3-1) Descriptive Results of the Friedman Test for Good Governance Indicators

The above table shows the statistics obtained from Friedman test regarding the ranking of good governance indicators in Herat Municipality. So, the highest average is dedicated to efficiency and effectiveness index with mean of 2.7031 and the lowest average is dedicated to transparency index with mean 1.9844. Statistics data show that Herat's Municipality is at the top of efficiency and effectiveness, but has failed to meet the benchmarks in transparency. The next indicator that has been able to get a high average is the accountability which has reached 2.4536.

Friedman Test (Ranks)	
GG Criteria	Mean Rank
Participation	4.06
Accountability	5.16
Efficiency and Effectiveness	5.85
Transparency	3.71
Equity	4.29
Rule of Law	4.44
Responsibility	4.62
Consensus	3.88

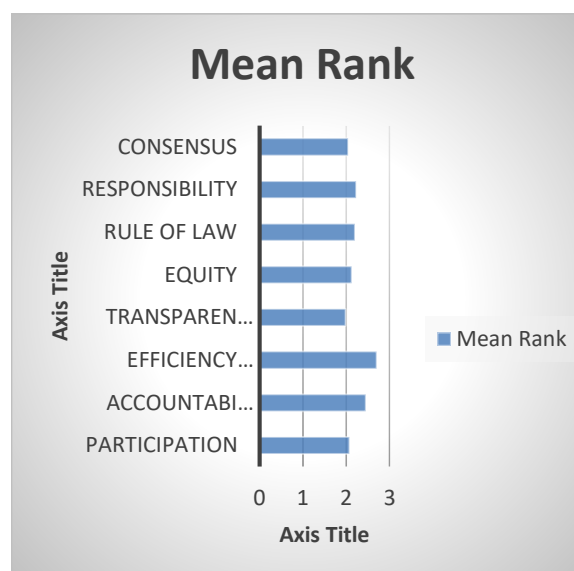


Table (4-1) Ranking of Good Governance Criteria in Herat Municipality

Table (4 - 1) shows rank of good governance criteria. Considering the above table, it can be seen that the highest rating is the efficiency and effectiveness index of 5.85. Likewise, accountability index 5.16, responsibility index 4.62, rule of law index 4.44, equity index 4.29, participation index 4.06, and consensus index 3.88 and finally, the transparency Index, with a score of 3.71, was the lowest index.

Test Statistics ^a	
N	384
Chi-Square	237.244
Df	7
Asymp. Sig.	.000
A = Friedman Test	

Table 5-1: Inferential statistics of Friedman Rank Test

As shown in the table above, Chi-Square is equal to 237.237, which is at the error level of less than 0.5. Namely Asymp. Sig (p) = .000. On the other hand, df is equal to 7. So the above statistics data show that the ranking of good governance indicators in Herat municipality is significant. This indicates that the rankings of good governance indicators differed among respondents and citizens have different rankings of good governance indicators in Herat municipality.

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning of this research, the main purpose of this study is to assess performance of Herat Municipality based on good governance criteria. As shown by research data analysis, good governance criteria are observing in Herat Municipality at the lower level of intermediate. Therefore Herat Municipality performs its performance regarding good governance criteria but not in a satisfactory level. This result is also corroborated by the Friedman Rank Test and respondents had different ratings for good governance criteria. In nutshell, efficiency and effectiveness index has the highest rank and average among the indicators of good governance in performance of Herat Municipality and transparency index has the lowest rank.

Regarding to second question of the research about people's participation and consensus have not a good and fair place among the other indicators of good governance in Herat Municipality performance. So the mean scores obtained for these two indices are not at acceptable levels and it can be concluded that there are indicators of people's participation and consensus in Herat Municipality performance but not in a satisfactory level. Based on third question of the research about equity, this index is not in good place in assessment of Herat Municipality's performance. The mean score for equity is 2.12 which is less than intermediate level. So respondents were not satisfied with the equality and equity indexes in Herat Municipality and thus the third question of this research is not in fair level. The fourth question of this research is about responsibility which regarding to findings, has not fair place in Herat Municipality performance. Therefore, the mean score obtained for this indexes not at the acceptable level.

The fifth question of this research is about level of efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness and rule of law in performance of Herat municipality. So the highest ratings and scores are related to the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness, respectively. But the rule of law index has not an acceptable rank. Also, the averages for good governance indicators show that the highest average is related to efficiency and effectiveness and secondly to responsiveness. Therefore we can say that the core values and indicators of good governance, including efficiency and effectiveness, responsiveness have been reflected in performance of Herat's municipality and this has been endorsed by the respondents and rule of law has reflected in less than intermediate level of Herat Municipality's performance. Finally, the last question of this research is transparency index which has the lowest rank and

average among other criteria of good governance in Herat Municipality. Therefore, based on combinatory graph of good governance criteria, Herat Municipality does not have acceptable transparency situation in implementations and procedures.

Suggestions

Good Governance is the prerequisite for development and immediate measures should be taken to ensure it. Some suggestions in this direction are listed below:

- Ensure citizens' participation in city planning and decisions. It also includes provisions to provide platform for citizen's direct communication with mayor and top city managers.
- Necessary provisions should be made to ensure citizens to participate in municipal elections and City Council members.
- Living standard of citizens should be maintained and improved.
- Infrastructure must be developed to cope with the issues and challenges emerging out of urbanization and industrialization.
- A well-structured grievance redressal mechanism is required to provide a clear and convincing answer to the people's legitimate demands and avoid postponing people's problems into the future.
- Municipality must publicize its specific programs in media about the functions and outcomes of urban plans.
- Observance of law and transparency must be ensured in procurement processes and tenders.
- Urban staff and managers must explain their sense of responsibility towards their duties and citizens as well in order to provide better performance.
- Provisions should be made for the direct election of mayor and members of city council. This, however, also requires serious attention from the central government.
- Specific programs and channels should be created to convey the demands of citizens to the mayor and top city managers, and to fulfill those demands realistically.

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