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Governance:

Concept, Dimensions, and Measurement Indicators

Introduction:

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed objectives largely depends on a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental principles of effective governance. These principles were designed by a committee of experts in public administration to assist interested countries on a voluntary basis in building effective, inclusive, and accountable institutions at all levels. The aim is to create a shared vision that encompasses all peoples on the planet, as articulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ⁽¹⁾.

It is worth noting that the concept of governance is neither new nor old; its historical roots can be traced back to the concept of decentralization, which advocates against the concentration of power in one entity and promotes participation in decision-making at the state level, organizational level, or even at the level of smaller administrative units. With the onset of the 1990s, the concept of decentralization emerged strongly in a new guise under the name of governance. It is well known that scientific schools that produce knowledge tend to innovate and introduce new concepts from time to time, which often spark debate and attract the attention of academics and decision-makers alike. The concept of governance remained ambiguous for a period and was a topic of discussion in various academic forums until its dimensions crystallized and its features became clear. Finally, a set of indicators was developed to measure its degree of implementation worldwide. Reports on governance indicators have become important documents that are regularly circulated

and discussed, determining how countries are classified in relation to other countries.

The United Nations Development Program defines “**governance**” as “**the exercise of administrative, economic, and political authority to manage the affairs of a state, which includes the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens express their interests, exercise their legal rights, fulfill their obligations, and reconcile their differences**(2).”

According to the program, governance should be directed towards achieving “**human development**” rather than merely economic growth. Therefore, the primary goal of developing institutions and governing rules should be to enhance individuals’ lives⁽³⁾.

The World Bank defines governance as “the process of exercising official authority to exploit the resources available to the state with the aim of achieving development rather than growth.”



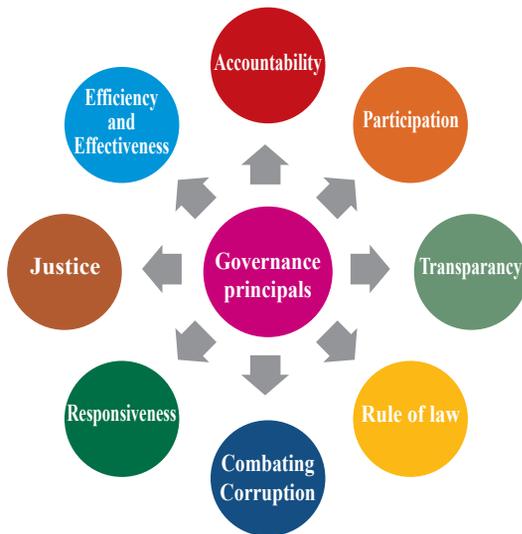
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Despite the various translations of the concept of governance (Governance / Good Governance) into Arabic since its emergence, it has finally been agreed upon to use the terms “الحكومة” (governance) or “الحكومة الجيدة” (good governance). Some of the most notable terms that have expressed “governance” throughout its development include:

Dimensions of governance⁽⁴⁾



Accountability:

This refers to the obligation of government institutions, their leaders, and employees to be held accountable for their actions and decisions. It involves establishing procedures that ensure accountability for actions that violate regulatory laws. This requires clearly defining the roles, tasks, and powers of leaders and employees in a

way that guarantees a separation between political and executive powers within the institution.

Participation:

Participation is defined as the engagement and involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes at all levels, whether in planning, execution, or monitoring and evaluation.

Transparency:

Transparency means ensuring and facilitating access to information and sharing it with all stakeholders. It reflects the degree of openness in the relationship between the government on one side and citizens, the private sector, and civil society on the other.

Rule of Law:

This concept pertains to how well all parties (individuals, government institutions, or civil society) comply with the rule of law. It indicates the degree to which the behaviors and policies of actors from government institutions, the private sector, and civil society align with governing legal rules.

Anti-corruption:

Corruption is defined as the misuse of power for personal gain. Combating and reducing corruption requires a politically and legally favorable environment, appropriate institutional capacities, and enhanced participation from media outlets and civil society organizations. Combating corruption entails having an integrated and effective national strategy to address it and monitoring this strategy.

Responsiveness:

This refers to the government's response to the desires and needs of citizens, civil society, and the private sector, as well as to political, economic, and institutional changes, and its efforts to achieve these within an appropriate timeframe.

Justice:

This means adopting rules and procedures aimed at organizing and providing public services to all targeted groups, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities to access public services and jobs in the same manner, at the same cost, and through the same procedures, without discrimination in service delivery based on gender, religious beliefs, or social, literary, or professional status, while affirming the principle of equal opportunity.

Efficiency and Effectiveness:

This refers to achieving objectives through the optimal use of resources such as effort, time, and cost; that is, obtaining the maximum output with the least amount of input.

Global and Regional Governance Indicators

Given the importance of applying governance as one of the mechanisms for achieving the seventeen international Sustainable Development Goals, many indicators have emerged to measure the degree of governance implementation; these include international and regional indicators. Some countries have also sought to develop their own local governance indicators, including Egypt. Below are some of the most notable indicators.

First. World Governance Indicators (WGI)

The WGI is an international indicator issued by the World Bank that monitors overall and individual governance indicators for more than 200 countries and regions since 1996. These aggregate indicators combine perspectives from a large number of respondents in surveys conducted among businesses, citizens, and experts in both industrialized and developing countries. Each indicator is scored from zero (the lowest ranking for a country) to one hundred (the highest ranking). The index relies on six dimensions of governance⁽⁵⁾:

- a. Voice and Accountability
- b. Political Stability and Absence of Violence
- c. Government Effectiveness
- d. Regulatory Quality
- e. Rule of Law
- f. Control of Corruption

Second. Ibrahim Index of African Governance

This index provides a comprehensive assessment of governance in African countries based on various dimensions such as safety and security, rule of law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development.

These indicators are essential tools for assessing governance performance and guiding policy decisions aimed at improving governance practices across different regions.

The Ibrahim Index of African Governance is a regional index that measures the degree of governance and anti-corruption efforts in African countries. This index has been conducted since 2000, using a scale from zero (the lowest level of governance) to one hundred (the highest level of governance). The index consists of four main elements of governance, which include 84 sub-indicators. These main elements are⁽⁶⁾:

- a. Safety and Rule of Law.
- b. Participation and Human Rights.
- c. Sustainable Economic Opportunities.
- d. Human Development.

Third: The Indicator for Preventing and Combating Administrative Corruption in Egypt

This is an annual local indicator that measures citizens' perceptions of administrative corruption in Egypt and its prevalence in public institutions and government sectors (such as health, education, traffic, banking, etc.). It also evaluates their personal experiences regarding exposure to various forms of corruption, such as (offering bribes, gifts, and gratuities; mismanagement of public funds; favoritism towards relatives; and relying on connections to facilitate government procedures; theft of public funds). The objectives are to⁽⁷⁾:



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- Support decision-makers with information and data that can assist them in making sound policies.
 - Assess the level of citizens' awareness of corruption.
 - Rank governorates according to citizens' perceptions of the prevalence of administrative corruption.
 - Rank sectors based on citizens' perceptions of the prevalence of administrative corruption within them.
 - Identify the level of public trust in the government's efforts to combat corruption.
- Currently, this indicator is divided into two main indicators:**
1. Indicator of Perceived Administrative Corruption.
 2. Indicator of Perceived Efforts to Prevent and Combat Administrative Corruption.
- This indicator is measured on a scale ranging from zero (no corruption) to one hundred points (the highest levels of corruption).

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