

not only on cost factors; it depends on marketing and branding exercises, the ability to navigate country-specific rules, etc. One hopes that the authors will extend their analysis to provide a more complete picture of all these issues.

The book could also have done with more careful copy-editing by OUP. Several sentences make no sense and awkward expressions abound.

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The Intelligent Person's Guide to Good Governance, by Munshi, S, B.P. Abraham, and S. Chaudhuri, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2009. Price: Rs 270

Deployed primarily to address the issue of eligibility of the developing countries to receive aid from international financial institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the concept of good governance acquired wide currency since the nineteen eighties with the neo-liberal policies of Reagan and Thatcher administrations providing that with the much required support. The volume of literature available on good governance or what is commonly known as a 'conditionality for aid' (p.3) is considerably large given its importance in a world where the never ending politics centered upon aid-doling and receiving is played out between peoples and nations. Indeed, it is in this arena of "unequal" partnerships that the concept of good governance comes to acquire a life of its own. Given its increasing relevance in the modern, neo-liberal world it is but natural that those in possession of adequate grey cells or what is generally termed as intelligence would display interest in embarking upon a guided (and quick) knowledge tour that would take them if not to the depths, then at least to the idea of good governance. This slim volume authored by three Munshi, Abraham, and Chaudhuri serves as an aid, a guide to those who are intelligent enough to grasp the significance of the concept, and consequently keen to explore that further. Divided into six chapters, this volume perhaps would have been like another "intelligent person's guide to god-knows-what" had it not been for its serious content, lucid prose and stylistic elegance.

The book opens with a short preface which among others, argues why concern with good governance is necessary in the contemporary world. As Munshi writes, 'Concern with good governance opens the possibility of rethinking the issues of governance that are relevant for our times. It helps us to go beyond the state and to think of different modes of partnerships that need to be worked out'. In fact, it is precisely because the issue of good governance is addressed in a possibilities-laden expanded sense by the authors that this book makes for such a relevant and interesting reading. The process of recovery of the concept from its 'self-inflicted narrow perspective' begins with Chapter I and it is this important chapter that I discuss in detail which situates good governance in the context of policies and programs of international organizations such as WB, IMF, Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union (EU), United Nations (UN), and so forth. Having outlined the contextual (and motivated)

deployment of the idea by such organizations, WB and IMF in particular, the chapter delineates the critical debates surrounding good governance. Believed by critics as the strategy of international financial institutions to 'cover up' the failures of their economic programs in the developing states, the agenda of good governance is invoked by, for instance, the WB to counter the "bad governance" of those states by introducing (by WB, for example) in turn social programs which are meant to 'shrink the state and make it more efficient and at the same time shift the balance of power in favour of private individuals and groups' (p.13). And it is this relentless pursuit of state (and political) barriers-lifted free trade and liberalized, free market advantages and benefits in short 're-colonization' that remains at the core of third world development, and consequently good governance agenda of first world controlled fiscal aid-doling institutions. Joseph Stiglitz's critique of the policies WB and IMF shows how these institutions instead of fostering economic growth, in East Asia in particular, have been responsible for 'bringing the world to the verge of a global meltdown' (p.16). Drawing upon such critical debates, Munshi suggests that the approach towards good governance ought to be that of 'reflective evaluation' rooted in 'democracy, bureaucracy and industry' (p.23). He defines good governance as follows:

Good governance signifies a participative manner of governing that functions in a responsible, accountable, and transparent manner based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy, and consensus for the purpose of promoting the rights of individual citizens and the public interest, thus indicating the existence of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustainable development with social justice (p.25).

Good governance, thus, as suggested by the authors involves four Ps - 'process, persons, principles and purpose' [Ibid.]. Role of the state being central to the concept and its manifold dimensions, it is this theme that the authors take up in Chapter II. Tracing the historical trajectory of the state (including the delineation of its features) in the West and India considerably well known to be repeated here this chapter addresses both the challenges faced by the territorially fixed modern (welfare) state as well as its 'resilience ... and the purpose it serves in social life' (p.26). Certainly without writing off the state, the authors argue that it is imperative for the institution to engage in functional innovations reinvention to be precise so as to survive and emerge as a multi-level player in contemporary societies. An extension of the debate on the future of state, democratic governance and social welfare leads the reader to Chapter III which very interestingly, focuses on the idea of the Third Way: a beyond "Left and Right"/ "state centric social democracy and neo-liberalism" idea conceptualized initially in the power corridors of the advanced, industrialized countries and later in academia by scholars such as Anthony Giddens to ensure that people are put first in the agenda of socio-political and economic governance. The Third Way, in short, seeks not to erase but revise social democracy, not to abolish but negotiate with free market, and finally, not to 'dismantle' but 'modernize' the welfare state. Indeed, Giddens for example, visualizes the state as one that is proactive in terms of providing positive welfare measures on one hand and making markets 'efficient' on the other. Examining the relevance of the idea in the Indian context the authors argue in favour of the necessity of both the state and the market though with a rider pointing

towards the 'specific requirement of the country' (p.79). The next three chapters on civil society, nation-states and globalization, and democracy respectively throw light upon issues that remain extremely closely intertwined, and hence, critical to the agenda of good governance. Calling for a 'balanced' approach towards the state-civil society relationship, the authors argue for the reforms of global and national 'institutional structures' so as to ensure the realization of the principles and goals of good governance at the global as well as domestic levels; and this where democratic principles and ideals public participation become pertinent, says Munshi, Abraham and Chaudhuri, to the extent that it is on these that the practice of good governance is crucially hinged.

Having addressed the myriad dimensions on which good governance rests in the fast globalizing contemporary world, the book concludes with an appendix which on a mode of analytical interrogation seeks to investigate whether India is 'ungovernable'. In a brief but succinct summary of post-colonial India's socio-political and economic strengths and weaknesses, this section takes on the issue of the world's largest democracy's governability head on. By 'removing major bottlenecks' (p.167), the authors argue, that Indians would be able to utilize the country's 'full potential' and consequently, ensure that India becomes governable. With the six historically contextualized chapters, and in addition the appendix, the book does highlight the possibilities of rethinking the concept of good governance. More importantly, by meandering through other related ideas such as civil society and democracy, it attempts to rescue good governance from the exclusive clutches of either the market or the state. An idea as slippery as good governance could not have found a more stable treatment but for this book. However, there are two points for instance, the authors could have elaborated upon, and those perhaps would have added to the book: one, a far more serious analytical engagement with contemporary world politics, and two, discussion on India adequately, and certainly beyond the appendix so as to make the argument more nuanced. In short, the book could have cited as many empirical examples as it cites the works of scholars and policy makers to establish its central argument about good governance. And indeed, following the second, this work can surely be proud of an extensive bibliography, and the authors deserve to be congratulated for that, not to mention for the act of putting together the book itself.

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