

BHARATIYA MODEL OF GOVERNANCE: A UNIQUE BLEND OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SYSTEMS
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ABSTRACT:

The Bharatiya model of Governance represents a unique harmonious blend of traditional Indian administrative wisdom and modern democratic principles deep-rooted in ancient texts from Vedic texts to the modern law of the land, i.e., Constitution. Traditional Governance emphasized on ethical Governance such as Dharma (Righteous Duty), Raj Dharma (Ethical leadership), Swadeshi (Self-reliance), Decentralised administration, and welfare-oriented state, whereas in contrast, Modern Governance shaped by Constitutional Democracy, Federalism, Global economic integration and Digital Transformation integrates these historical principles with contemporary Political, Economic and Technological Advancements. Despite its rich historical legacy and ongoing policy adaptations, it incorporates certain important elements while adapting to contemporary socio-political realities.

This paper puts light on the Continuity and Transformation of Governance in India. Analysing how the ancient Governance ideals and its civilizational ethos relevance in modern Governance system to meet the Modern Governance Challenges, there remains a need for greater harmonization between tradition and modernity in policy making. Bharatiya governance highlights how India balances tradition with innovations on the technological advancement in Governance aligning with Ancient Governance enriching the Governance Framework that combines this Hybrid model of Governance with cultural values and global aspirations with adopting to best practices reaching its true potentialities.

KEYWORDS:

Democracy, Decentralised Administration, Digital Transformation, Federalism, Governance, Law.



Introduction

Governance in India has evolved through centuries; it has long shared historical significance, shaped by its rich confluence of indigenous traditions and external influences. The Bharatiya model of governance, rooted in ancient wisdom and civilizational values, offers a rich depth decentralized administration, dharma-centric leadership, and community participation. With the advent of colonial rule and subsequent adoption of Western bureaucratic systems, India's governance framework transformed dramatically, adapting it to the contemporary needs.

In the contemporary era, there is a growing realization that modern administrative efficiency must be complemented by cultural relevance, ethical grounding, and people-centric approaches. This has led to a renewed interest in reimagining governance by blending traditional Indian principles such as Swaraj (Self-Rule), Dharma (Righteous Duty), Grama Sabha (Village Assembly), and holistic decision-making with modern democratic institutions, technological innovations, and rule-of-law frameworks.

This paper explores the potential of an integrated Bharatiya model of governance that harmonizes time-tested indigenous systems with the demands of modern state aspirations. It examines how traditional values helped to enrich democratic practices, enhance local self-governance, and foster inclusive development by drawing historical texts from ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary policy, and grassroots innovations. The study seeks to outline a governance model that is both rooted in India's civilizational ethos and responsive to present-day challenges. From the Indus Valley Civilization to the Vedic period, and from the Mahajanapadas to the Mauryan and Gupta Empires, the Indian political system demonstrated structured and grassroots level administration. After 1947, India adopted a Constitution that incorporated liberal democratic ideals such as liberty, equality, fraternity, and social justice, drawing inspiration from various constitutions of the world like UK, USA, Ireland, and Germany and various other Countries.

However, this externally borrowed Constitution framework from various other nations often operates disconnected from India's indigenous systems, which once prioritized harmony between rules and society, local autonomy, and moral obligation. This paper aims to bridge this gap and to explore the continuity and transformation of the Bharatiya model of

governance, analysing its effectiveness in the present-day political and administrative context.

Meaning of Governance In its broadest sense, Governance refers to the system, processes, and institutions through which a society organizes itself to make collective decisions. In classical Indian philosophy, governance is understood as righteousness in the exercise of power and the responsibility for the welfare of the people as rightly mentioned by Kautilya in his book Arthashastra “The happiness of king lies in his subjects”. It encompasses the institutions and mechanisms by which authority in a country is exercised—this includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored, and replaced; the capacity of governments to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of both citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic, political, and social interactions.

However, governance in the Indian civilizational context has historically been rooted in ethical and spiritual foundations. Ancient Indian texts such as the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Arthashastra, Shukraniti and Manusmriti emphasized that governance was not merely a matter of power and administration but a sacred duty to uphold Dharma—the moral and cosmic order. The ruler was seen as a trustee, not a master, expected to govern with wisdom, justice, and compassion for the well-being of all beings leading to Good Governance.

This dual understanding—modern institutions of governance on one hand, and traditional ethical governance on the other—forms the basis for reimagining the Bharatiya model of governance, which blends the strengths of both models of Governance, i.e., a blend of Traditional and Modern Governance systems referred as Hybrid Model of Governance. Let us analyse the important elements and also to understand the effectiveness of Hybrid model of Governance from the socio-political, administrative, economic and cultural perspectives of Bharatiya model of Governance.

Traditional model of Governance

Ancient Indian Governance was founded on Dharma (righteous rule), Decentralisation and local self-Governance. Several significant texts provide the insights into Governance practices of ancient times from Vedic Civilizations. Local self-Governance, it includes various village assemblies. Kautilya’s Arthashastra discusses about the Statecraft, it

provides the strategies for efficient taxation and Diplomacy. Manusmriti, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Dharmashastra sets standards for ethical and legal principles for justice and Governance. During the period of Republican state, it includes Janapadas and Mahajanapadas; it showcased early ancient form of Participatory democratic Governance.

During the period of Mughals and Maratha administration, there was centralised Governance with strong administrative structure leading to administrative efficiency. Later during Colonial period, imposition of Hierarchical Centralised Governance model introduced various policies and systems and introduced modern legal and bureaucratic frameworks such as Indian Civil services and some legal and judicial reforms; various acts also came into existence. After 1947, India's independence has brought paradigm shift in the governance from Traditional system into Modern administrative framework.

Modern Model of Governance

Post-Independent period after 1947 stressed on the political consolidation and nation-building aspiration. During this phase, Governance integrates traditional wisdom with modern democratic principles based constitutional framework emphasizing on Sovereignty, Equality, liberty, fraternity, welfare state, social justice, secularism and unity and integrity of the nation. This governance framework that blends India's governance knowledge system with contemporary democratic principles and technological progress in the Governance that is shaped by the civilizational values and culture for the holistic development of nation, it seeks to harmonize with ancient Indian political philosophical traditions rooted in Governance, it acknowledged India's continuity with changing times. Emphasizing unity in diversity, governance increasingly incorporates indigenous knowledge system with the aim of bridging the gap between traditional and modern systems. Let us understand harmony among these two.

Harmonious blend of Traditional and Modern Systems

The Bharatiya model of Governance represents a harmonious blend of traditional wisdom and modern administrative principles, it integrated with dynamic contemporary democratic institution, legal frameworks, and technological advancements where the ancient traditional knowledge guide the modern policy making. This integrated approach is very unique

in its way for addressing the new challenges and future prospects of governance. Let us understand the various frameworks of harmonious blend of traditional and modern Governance:

Firstly, Philosophical framework. Ancient governance is deep-rooted in philosophical principles such as Dharma (righteous rule), Nyaya (justice) and Lok Kalyan (public welfare), Danda niti (law and order) whereas in modern context the preamble of the Constitution of India fulfils the philosophical aspects of governance principles such as “we the people of India...” denotes the supremacy of the citizens, Political, Economic and Social justice, Individual liberty of thought, expression and faith, Equality, Fraternity and Secular Democracy this upholds the essence of Constitutional Morality in a philosophical context.

Secondly, the Administrative structure. From ancient times to modern times the administrative structure has undergone profound transformation. In ancient times the king is head of the state where he was guided by Rajadharma (king's duty) advised by his mantri parishad, law enforced through Dandaniti and laws were customary and moral and guided by Dharmashastras, whereas in modern context head of state is elected on will of the people, Administrative system run by group of people with bureaucratic and executive branch of government structure based on hierarchical rule bound decisions and based on rationality.

In the context of Institutional framework, it evolved immensely. From Vedic civilisation the institutions such as Sabha and Samiti represents the early assembly of representatives, more emphasises was given on Local self-governance, more autonomy given to local bodies where it represented decentralised and welfare society was major concern, where in modern context Parliamentary democracy institutions such as Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha, Gram Sabha and Panchayati Raj institutions the spirit of participatory Governance of institutional capabilities deeply ingrained governs for the same purpose.

Economic, Environmental, and technological integration in Governance. From ancient time the promotion of Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) pure emphasis was given on Economic self-sufficiency and also on Sustainable development, promoting traditional ecological values integrated with modern day Environmental and Social Governance (ESG). Ancient governance promoted balance between Development and

conservation of nature such as Vedic ecology, Arthashastra mentions about forest law and conservation, traditional practices of water conservation techniques, irrigation facility inspired modern day push for organic farming and afforestation and renewable energy align with traditional system of knowledge with modern realities of achieving Sustainable Development and Indigenous Goals.

Justice and legal Framework of traditional modern Governance highlights continuity of legal and just order of society. In ancient times, Dharma was seen as guiding principles, Vedic principles, Nyaya Panchayats – community based justice delivery system ensuring quick dispute resolution aligning with modern day Gram Nyayalaya and Lok Adalat upholding the rule of law. This fusion is very unique in delivering justice equitably.

Not only legal Framework but also this fusion emphasised on Social harmony and inclusive society based on Dharma, inclusivity ensuring social justice. In the modern context, the Constitution of India promotes social justice through reservations, women's empowerment and tribal welfare policies. Promoting Gender equality and discrimination based on caste, colour and gender addressed through the legal protections and education and more economic opportunities such as initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao align with girl child's education of Ancient times, Value based education values to adopt in New Education Policy in modern context.

Continued the Governance framework globally, diplomacy is key instruments in governance of Ancient India to manage the global affairs provided the philosophical, political, economic, social and cultural integration on the lines of Globalisation of modern context promoting values such as "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (The world is one family), promoting peaceful co-operation and co-existence showcased in G20 Presidency hosted by India shared culture and values for mutual development.

Thus with all these above factors, it shows that there is tremendous harmony between the Traditional and modern Governance mechanism, a great blend of both systems created hybrid model of Governance in India enhancing and evolving fusion which is dynamic and evolving in nature. India's Governance architecture strives to integrate with ancient

civilizational ethos with modern democratic structure. This blend is not without friction or conflicts. It undergoes various challenges; there are institutional and structural incompatibilities, philosophical and conceptual conflicts such as implementation of Uniform Civil Code pose challenges to religion and Secular mode of Governance. Also, the legal and constitutional constraints delay in delivering the justice, there is gap between knowledge and the curriculum leading to governance deficits that need to be addressed for the effective and smooth functioning of Democracy.

Conclusion:

As India is aspiring to be a global leader, the task ahead is to refine and strengthen its core values and traditional roots to matching the contemporary aspiration. To build a resilient, inclusive and ethical mode of governance aligned with modern democratic values, India needs to strengthen its institutional capacity, revitalising grassroots democracy, relooking into proper policy implementation, most importantly Ethical framework for multiple actors in governing mechanism and integration of technology with cultural sensitivity through its traditional indigenous knowledge system lens.

These traditional and modernity in governance are complimentary. As India faces multiple complex internal and global challenges, this model offers moral clarity and eases the decision-making process faster. This blend not only strengthens internal governance but also reaching India's aspiration to become Global Leader which embraces holistic progress and inclusive development.

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