

Good Governance, Human Rights and Social Progress: Struggling to Create a Transnational Culture in Sri Lankan Context

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ABSTRACT

It appears that the concepts of good governance, human rights and social progress have separately emerged in different eras that led to separate discourses held even in various academic forums in Sri Lanka. That is the perspective of independent and particular concepts which have blossomed in different schools of thoughts. But in a modern global context, these concepts are deeply interwoven and inseparable from each other. The overall objective of the study was to fill the above gap in the context of Sri Lankan literature. This research needs to be considered as a library reference study. The academic framework used in this research was the 'sociological imagination' conceptualized by C. Wright Mills. The concept of 'social progress' is generally defined as a set of actions aimed at making a change in a given situation. Modern globalization march and its component of transnational cultural advancement point out that neoliberalism or global capitalism being the sole and highest path towards social progress for which the world community required to turn to and without which any country in the present world would not be able to achieve any desired development. As such it should be decided either to march towards a mighty development effort accepting capitalist methodology or to fall back as 'Lilliputian' countries. Sri Lankan citizens too are required to be practicing and honoring the democratic citizenship essentially. Although this change would be a little difficult to make reality, Sri Lanka as a country should struggle to survive present problems and also to create a transnational social order spurred by modern globalization juggernaut.

Keywords: Globalization, Lilliputian Countries, Social Progress, Sociological Imagination, Transnational Culture

INTRODUCTION

This article is not to add more fire to the controversial discussion on the consequences of transnational socio-cultural order. Rather than the globalization process, the modern globalization stage or the post-capitalist stage, far differs from any era of social history. Also, the period commencing from 1990 and 2000 has been defined as a 'Flat World' based on a technological society (Scholte, 2005). At this stage, there arose an ideology as to develop a 'progressive man' for the purpose of enriching a better society. According to the long dialogue erupted as to find out such an exemplary person could be created either by the Western capitalist system or by the Marxist socialist system. Marxist ideology has pointed out that such a noble human might only be created by a socialist system (Weerasinghe, 2013). Marxist perspective advocates that the highest stage of

their social system would be realized in a universal communist society. However, the capitalist way of social system advocates that a perfect manhood could be improved within the capitalist system. Anyhow, the World society has now climbed up to the topmost point of that long dialogue by 1990 decade (Robertson, 1983). This is the commencement modern stage of the globalization process. At this stage it has been pointed out, that the 'progressive man' as has been developed by the modern globalization process. This has been the common ideology agreed upon by modern transnational western society. The globalization joins here with new western ideology on 'progressive man' in keeping with perspectives on neoliberal policy of economy, sustainable development, human rights and good governance (Roy, KC & Tisdell, CA, 1998; Udayanga, K. S., & Manurathne, M. G., 2016). It stands for growing power of

transnationals in every corner of the world as well as for the worldwide spreading of knowledge and human rights. With the many faces it has, it affects every sphere of human life. It appears that the concepts of good governance, human rights and social progress have singularly emerged in different eras that led to separate discourses held even in various academic forums. That is the perspective of independent and particular concepts which have blossomed in different schools of thoughts. But in a modern global context these concepts are deeply interwoven and inseparable from each other.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the study was to fill the above gap in the literature. Within the above overall objective of the study, the following specific objectives were perused.

- To point out the concepts of good governance, human rights and social progress are fully interconnected and interdependent.
- To illustrate the compulsory nature of interrelationship and mutual nurturing, enabling to create a new social order.
- To establish the view of transnational social order as a modern social process.
- In order to build relevant interpretations about aims will be analyzed first. Thereafter the access towards the principal aims of this article will be approached.

METHODOLOGY

This research needs to be considered as a library reference study. Accordingly, various publications associated with the relevant theme including books, journals, magazines, documents, newspaper articles and also internet sources accumulating secondary data and information were descriptively analyzed. This study can also be described as an analytical investigation based on the data gathered from various secondary sources. The academic framework used in this research was the 'sociological imagination' forwarded by C. Wright Mills (Hemantha Kumara, 2015).

THE PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL PROGRESS

The concept of 'social progress' is generally defined as a set of actions aimed at making a

change in a given situation. Planned change is another connotation for social progress. It implies a positive change or progress. It is the idiom in which Western modernity and capitalism enclosed. This concept is always defined in terms of modern standard of living, westernization, urbanization, industrialization, and globalization, adaptation of the values and principles of transnationality, including particular forms of social order, rationality, and individual orientation. These characteristics represent the condition of globalization process. Thus social progress is not simply a 'practice', but more importantly, involves an ideology which is instrumental in connecting local societies with transnational culture (HemanthaKumara, 2017; RanaweeraBanda, 2000; 42). Achieving this goal, social sciences have involved in theory building – within a framework of 'unilineal' progress of society. In order to present this argument, the researcher examines the discourse of social progress, expert patterns of Western knowledge, the interaction between local and transnational cultures and cultural resistance movements operating in local society (HemanthaKumara,2017; RanaweeraBanda,2000;10). Social progress is understood in this article not merely as an action but rather as powerful ideas guiding people in a specific direction. "Nevertheless, this direction is predetermined according to a historically unique experience, namely Western modernity" (RanaweeraBanda, 2000; 19). Also, Ashu Pasicha has mentioned about four waves of social progress. He has identified each wave is a paradigm about the world which the changing of waves are the paradigm shifts (Pasicha, 2005; 250; Weerasinghe, 2013; 24).

First Wave of Social Progress

He mentions this stage as having colonial experience common to third world countries. During this stage both the happenings of anti-colonial responses and co- responses were experienced. There the opposite cooperate responses had been maintained (Pasicha, 2005; 250- 253).

Second Wave of Social Progress

This wave is the post-colonial stage of social progress. This wave is also called the neo-imperialism (Robertson and Scholte, 2005;987). Under the imperialism, imperialist productions

and aforesaid ideologies spread making this wave of the social progress.

Third Wave of Social Progress

This is the modern globalization which is still occurring in the 21st century (Pasicha, 2005;255-259). During this period distribution of new production system spread worldwide. This wave has been named as a stage of globalization, dawned after 1980 decade.

Fourth Wave of Social Progress

This wave of last 15 years is marked with socio-economic and cultural changes occurring on a global scale. This is the new period beginning since the year 2000, which we have considered as the age of transnational stage and the age of postmodernity.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Concepts of social progress enjoy a trial of long history. Almost all the founders of religions have preached about the necessity of the progress of society and also of the significance of social improvement. Accordingly many important views and opinions regarding the spiritual and material progress of the individuals are inculcated along with social development. As such, social progress is attainable at the same time with the material or physical development along with lofty spiritual advancement. Anyhow, social progress focusing on socio-economic views and religious ideologies will be paid more attention at this juncture. Human Kind since the beginning of its social life has constantly thought about the betterment of the society in which he was destined to live. As a result, he has finally been able to enter finally into the present global capitalistic society by passing many a different era of human progress. There exist two major ideologies on social progress despite us all, including Sri Lankans live within a global capitalist transnational society.

- Socialist ideology or the Marxist – Leninist ideology.
- Capitalist ideology or neoliberalism

Now we are facing the dilemma whether to choose one ideology from either ideology in order to build a better global society (world society) deploying previously mentioned development strategy socialist and capitalist ideologists have added two different theorems

aimed at development discourse. Accordingly, the social system practised in the then Soviet Union and in other socialist states had adhered to the first mentioned ideology. However, many countries of the world at present have accepted the secondly mentioned ideology. The reasons being the serious and complex changes and fluctuation inflicted on the path of world development by 1980 decade. Modern globalization process has been activated since that decade. As a result, not a single country in the world is able to act freely and independently of this globalization juggernaut as from 1980 decade. DE radicalization of some socialist states have evidently faced disarming of their hitherto venerated ideologies in front of global capitalism. Thus the dilemma prevailed in the concept of social progress has been solved by process of globalization. That is,

- Whether social progress could be achieved by way of socialist philosophy?
- Whether social progress could be achieved by way of capitalist ideology?

The dilemma has been solved now.

Modern globalization march and its component of transnational cultural advancement point out that neoliberalism or global capitalism being the sole and highest path towards social progress for which the world community required to turn to and without which any country in the present world would not be able to achieve any desired development. As such it should be decided either to march towards a mighty development effort accepting capitalist methodology or to fall back as ‘Lilliputian’ countries.

TRANSNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The concept of civil society has meant many things since it appeared in sixteenth-century English political thought (Chambers and Kymlicka, 2002; Cohen and Arato, 1992). In today’s context we might conceive of civil society as a socio-political space, or arena, where self-generated associations of citizens seek, from outside political parties, to shape the rules that govern social life (Scholte, 2005; 218).

Contemporary civil society has ‘gone global’ in at least seven important ways (Scholte, 2005; 219-220). First, many civil society associations have begun to address the governance of

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transplanetary problems. Second, civil society activities have obtained global qualities by engaging with transplanetary governance institutions. Third, civil society activity is its use of transnational and super territorial travel and communications. Civil society has also become transnational in the fourth sense of adopting global organizational forms. Fifth, parts of contemporary civil society development have been helped by global finance. Sixth, considerable elements of contemporary civil society have become global inasmuch as they are motivated by sentiments of transplanetary solidarity (Johnson and Laxer, 2003). Finally, some civil society associations have turned transnational by themselves undertaking trans world regulatory activities.

As per the explanations given by certain personages in Sri Lanka, Good governance is the fruit of the present Sri Lankan government that came into power since January 8th, 2015. This was included in the election manifesto proclaimed by the President Mr Maithreepala Sirisena and the Prime Minister Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe. Another interpretation asserts that this concept of good governance has been achieved with the mediation of National Movement for a just and fair society. In any case, it is identifiable as a movement originated up by the citizens and various civic organizations who are keen on good governance concept. However, this concept has not been born in Sri Lanka. Instead, it has become the latest feature within the democracy in the international political arena.

Good governance or good governing policy illustrates the meaningful upbringing of democratical deliberations and also the enforcement process of such decisions containing certain egalitarian components. Another clarification is that any state in its governing process allows all participants ways and means to participate in the administrative structure. Good governance concepts leave, except the government all the other functions to be embodied in the civil society.

Civil society could be plainly identified as an interim space surrounding family unit, economy and government. This concept of civil society has emerged as an integral part of the political atmosphere during 1980 s. Views and opinions sprung up from institutional democracy and the civil society during 1990 s. Good governance

came into the limelight as a necessary part of democratization in western capitalist countries including the United States of America

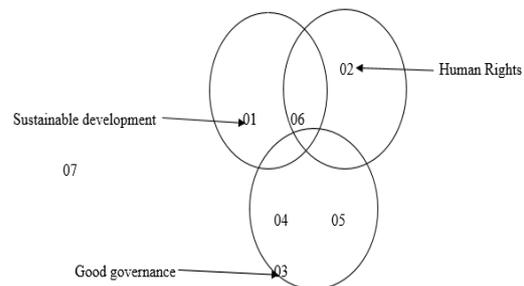


Figure1 .Construction of Progressive Sri Lankan Society

- Sustainable development (SD)
- Human rights (HR)
- Good governance (GG)
- Sustainable development and good governance (SD+GG)
- Good governance and human rights (GG+HR)
- Sustainable development and human rights (SD+HR)
- Construction progressive Society in Sri Lanka (SD+GG)+(GG+HR)+(SD+HR)

The core of good governance could be explained as the promulgation of an ethical governing frame encompassing following factors in democratically elected government (www.goodgovernance.org.au/ Accessed on 27.03.2017)

- Good governance follows the rule of law
- Good governance gives responsibility to the voters
- Transparency of political and administrative process
- Rule without corruption
- Good governance is accountable
- Good governance is effective and efficient
- Good governance is equitable and inclusive
- Good governance is participatory

The analysis given above points out that the idea of good governance was not a thing introduced by the present Sri Lankan government nor by

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any non-governmental organization. Further, the term good governance is not a mere concept broadcast by the Sri Lankan political parties at present. Different countries who possessed authoritative power when subjected to more meaningful democratically transition have employed this concept.

The purpose of this discussion on civil society and good governance is the confirmation of good governance through strengthening of the civil society that would lead to social development within the globalization process. Accordingly, the necessity of achieving not only economic development but also social improvement will be fulfilled. What we ought to accept is that factor Good governance has not been forwarded by a single country but instead as a global principle. It should be trusted by countries the world over. Today any country cannot survive alone due to their being combined with each other due to the globalization process. Anyhow the development effort, as well as the political sphere, are influenced by globalization. This phenomenon is apparently seen in Sri Lankan politics recently as accepted by the international community.

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

Universal Declaration on human rights was proclaimed by the General Assembly of United Nation on the 10th December 1948. Since then, every 10th day of December has been named as International Human Rights Day. By the term human rights, it denotes the entitlements commonly belonging to every individual in the world irrespective of ethnicity, sex, nationality, religion, social class, clan, caste, etc. without any disparities whatsoever. Thus the universal charter as agreed upon the human rights consisting of some 30 basic rules declares human rights relevant to each and every person of the world.

However, these human rights entitlements had been enforced on behalf of senior citizens only up to the year 1989. Then the UNO took steps to promulgate children's rights charter because the elder people had their own childhood rights and entitlements. Sri Lanka, along with old political representatives has unanimously accepted the world charter and passed children's protection act in the year 1998. Accordingly rules and regulations concerning children's rights have been added to 30 basic rules pertaining to human rights universal proclamation thus forming present Sri Lankan enforcements in the

legal field. Furthermore, charters, agreements, declarations numbering about 200 pertaining to human rights have been passed since the universal declarations on this issue had been agreed upon in 1948. Sri Lankan government too has promised to protect such and such rights in accordance with the UN-sponsored declarations. There operates an institutional body appointed by UNO empowered to inspect such countries as to find the true degree of relevant protection up to the desired level. Also, the UN charter has instructed it's each and every member countries including Sri Lanka about the responsibility of protection and promotion of human rights. As such, this UN charter seems parallel to the international constitution. Accordingly, all the countries in the world are bound by the international law to protect human rights.

Today, as the context of global society we need to understand the strength and significance of relevant universal declaration could rely on consideration of some more justifiable rights than could request from the existing judiciary belonging to a member country. Certain human rights which have been contained in the universal declaration become legal rights when they included in the fundamental rights category. Most of the countries the world over have included human rights in their constitutions. Sri Lanka too has provided constitutional protection on the basic human rights as per the government constitutions of 1972 and 1978. But all human rights have not been included in the fundamental rights. Acceptance and enforcement of human rights in any country pave way for good governance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The argument, whether the global society could be developed through socialism or by capitalism is still being carried on. Anyhow what is shown in the present globalization process the only path seeking social progress is the capitalist neoliberalism, the only way left to the betterment of the existing status. This ideology illustrates no other alternative to social development. The majority of the global community seems to welcome this ideology, when we pay attention to present Sri Lanka too, it appears to allow towards this ideology. Economic policies of neoliberalism found opportunities in Sri Lankan society since 1978. Governments came into power since then have not done away with this capitalist way of

neoliberalism. This way of social progress or development must be adjusted as per our requirement and accompanied with more meaningful concepts like good governance and human rights.

More attention is paid to human rights here in Sri Lanka since 1980 decade. Furthermore, the concept of good governance hitherto limited to the academic and political forums has not found its way to practical politics in this nearly two year period. Although its present activities are not up to the desired level, it would be worthy of a suitable application of this lofty concept, with optimistic fruition in time to come. This is an important part of the meaningful democratization in the present world and also an essential factor needed for the development activities. Therefore good governance aims at the protection of human rights, improvement of society to the optimum level. Good governance does not reject these aims nor does it consider a separate concept but interdependent and interconnected concepts.

Furthermore, the sustainable development concept (17th SDGs, 2015-2030) has been accepted as social progress in the development sphere of present global society. This concept of social progress, social development or sustainable development goes parallel to good governance and human rights depicted in the illustration.

This makes it clear the necessity of a governing process in accordance with the good governing principles while protecting human rights in order to establish on optimum sustainable social progress or development. This requires Sri Lanka to go a long way, along with such administrators practising and adhering to good governance processes.

Sri Lankan citizens too are required to be practising and honouring the democratic citizenship essentially. Although this change would be a little difficult to make a reality, Sri Lanka as a country should struggle to survive present problems and also to create a transnational social order spurred by modern globalization juggernaut.

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Citation: Hemantha Kumara, " Good Governance, Human Rights and Social Progress: Struggling to Create a Transnational Culture in Sri Lankan Context". (2018). *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies*, 5(7), pp.6-12.

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