The Challenge of Cultural Diversity for Good Governance

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I. Culture and Diversity

Culture is a system of values, beliefs, traditions and practices which structures and regulates the behaviour of individuals as well as of groups of human beings; as such, culture influences the lives of individuals and collectives. A culture is generally embodied in “its arts, music, oral and written literature, moral life, ideals of excellence, exemplary individuals and the vision of the good life” (Parekh, 2000, pp. 143-144). Culture helps citizens to lead their lives with freedom and dignity, which, over time, becomes heritage. The cultural heritage of a nation may be seen as possessing a composite and heterogeneous culture, drawing upon diverse traditions. A culture is also represented by its myths, customs, rituals, symbols, traditions, institutions and the manner of communication. As such, it is not uncommon to see different societies differently interpreting, prioritizing and operationalizing their vision of a good life, moral values, myths and customs in their respective cultures. Cultural diversity, then, represents various cultural communities’ distinct ways of life, beliefs and practices and their views of the world surrounding them.

Human diversity consists of various attributes or markers, such as culture, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, caste, tribe, physical ability, sexual orientation, age, economic, geographical background and status. In this essay, the author concentrates on the cultural dimension of human diversity. There are two main constituent parts of cultural diversity: cultural freedom and multiculturalism. These are briefly discussed below:

Cultural Freedom

Cultural freedom is a rather special kind of freedom compared to fundamental freedoms listed in the UN Charter of Human Rights. While most freedoms refer to the rights of individuals, cultural freedom is a collective freedom that “refers to the right of a group of people to follow or adopt a way of life of their choice” (UNESCO, 1995, p. 25). Cultural rights “refer to the rights an individual or a community requires to express, maintain and transmit their cultural identity” (Parekh, 2000, p. 211). Since culture is an integral part of an individual’s sense of identity and well-being, cultural rights are part of human rights.

Cultural freedom, when properly interpreted, helps individual freedom to flourish because all core individual rights are exercised within the social context. In that context, collective rights and cultural freedoms exist which provide additional protection for individual rights and freedom. Individual rights are actually entitlements that require corresponding obligations and duties. What the movement for human rights has not done is to create a regime for duties and obligations, including the respect for cultural freedom. This is one area where a lot of work needs to be done. Thus, individuals while exercising their rights and freedoms, have certain duties and obligations to their community, society, the country and finally to the universe of which they are a constituent part. Also, cultural freedom encourages creativity, experimentation with alternate ways of living and the protection of diversity, which are essential aspects of human development. Such freedom, if constitutionally guaranteed, affirms the equality of status for all citizens, gives pride to their individual cultures and allows people to live with dignity. In turn, the cultural freedom creates conditions for multiculturalism.
Multiculturalism

The term ‘multiculturalism’ represents culturally derived differences found among various cultural communities and refers to a society within a country, which is characterized by ethnic or cultural heterogeneity. A multicultural society is the one where two or more cultural communities reside, where cultural diversity is cherished and where cultural communities feel that they are a constituent part of the national identity rather than being encouraged to completely merge over time with the main stream. Multiculturalism, as a policy, refers to a government action programme to recognize cultural (including ethnic and racial) diversity as a fundamental character of a country and to ensure that the rights and freedoms of all cultural communities are fully protected, without any coercion for any community to follow a monocultural standard and to allow and encourage inclusionary participation and contribution by all. Multiculturalism embraces the concept that cultural differences are a source of strength and a foundation for liberal democracy.

There are many benefits that may accrue from cultural diversity. Some of these are:

(a) An increase in the available range of options and freedom of choices for citizens;
(b) The creation of a rich, varied and aesthetically pleasing and stimulating world;
(c) Encouragement of a healthy competition between different ideas and ways of life thereby preventing a dominance of one culture over the other;
(d) Generating tolerance and respect for different cultures; and
(e) Creating a climate in which different cultures can have a mutually beneficial dialogue and collaborate on commonly agreed national goals and vision (Parekh, 2000).

For cultural diversity to survive and sustain itself in any country, it is important that different people from varied cultures share at least some common values and also agree on some common commitments toward the common good. Indeed, the overriding aspect of cultural freedom has a strong requirement for one to go beyond individual liberty and rights to seek equality of freedom for all (Sen, 1999, p. 233).

There is no doubt that different cultures represent different systems of visions of good life here on earth and hereafter. Each culture needs others to understand itself better, expand its moral horizon and even guard it “against the obvious temptation to absolutize itself” (Parekh, 2000, p.337). And because no culture is worthless, all cultural differences deserve to be valued. However, each culture can realize only a limited range of human accomplishments and grasp only a part of the totality of human existence. As such no one single culture has the right to impose its values and beliefs on others without their cooperation. A dialogue between various cultures is mutually beneficial. In order for such a dialogue to occur, each culture has to accept others as equal partners in human development.
II. Biodiversity and human diversity

It is a given that human beings belong to the natural bio-physical world and have many elements in common with other species. However, unlike other species, humans create their own habitat (sometimes by invading or destroying the habitat of others), their own languages, cultures and ways of conducting themselves. Despite their culturally specific attributes (such as languages, beliefs and manners of behaviour), they share some common values and aspirations such as worrying about their fellow beings, the survival of their world and preserving biodiversity.

**Biodiversity and human diversity**

Loss of biodiversity is considered one of the greatest threats facing humanity today. The loss of biodiversity is related to over-exploitation of natural resources, introduction of exotic species, human encroachment into the bio-habitat and the greenhouse effect on the ecosystem health. There are four main reasons for such a biodiversity loss:

(a) Humans have neglected to protect biodiversity;

(b) Their governments have failed to create appropriate institutions and laws (both at the national and international levels) for internalizing the common good which accrues from biodiversity;

(c) Inappropriate governmental national policies have condoned (and even encouraged) the destruction of ecosystems within their national boundaries as well as in oceans; and

(d) In their self-interest, nations have pursued economic development that is in fundamental conflict with other species.

It has been estimated that about one million species could potentially be lost during the first decade of the new millennium. The Earth Summit of June 1992 highlighted this issue and created a global consensus for biodiversity protection and conservation. The above-listed four reasons are, however, equally relevant in the issue of human diversity because if its protection is neglected, consequences similar to those we have witnessed in the case of ecosystem destruction and biodiversity neglect may arise. Both human and biodiversity are intertwined; and if one is threatened the other is endangered. As natural resources and biodiversity are essential for human survival, so are the cultures of human diversity; or to put it another way, survival of humanity depends upon the sustenance of its cultural diversity. The world pressure for the protection of biodiversity ought to acknowledge that human diversity is a fundamental feature of our biodiversity.

**Late recognition of diversity in governance**

It is claimed that until the 1970s, Western political thought did not show appropriate understanding or respect for the cultural diversity of humanity, within its own governing system (McRae, 1974). Monoculturalism, as a concept, emerged in those Western nations that had a single dominant national culture into which it was expected that all their citizens would
assimilate. Afterwards, these nations found that due to the arrival of a large number of immigrants, a total cultural assimilation was not possible, as these immigrant groups belonging to different and distinct cultural groups decided to remain distinct cultural groups rather than merge with the main stream. Later the issue emerged as a major public policy concern, which was addressed in various countries like Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the United States (although the US had earlier insisted on swift assimilation of immigrants into its mainstream American culture). For example, in the case of Canada, the demographic changes during the later half of the 20th century had shown that the country had become ethnically and racially more diverse than what it was earlier. Soon, managing diversity within the framework of liberal democracy became a central policy concern for the Canadian federal government (Canada, 1988). The concept of representative bureaucracy was considered as a means to manage diversity in government.

**Representative bureaucracy**

The advocates of diversity representation in government claim that the Weberian concepts of meritocracy and civil service neutrality have worked against the interest of minorities. Representation in government service is desired because:

(a) Representatives from different cultural groups can bring a variety of perspectives to policy planning and determination;

(b) As expertise and professional competence is not the preserve of an ethnic group in this information technological age, the overriding concern of public services should be to secure such services from everywhere in the society;

(c) As people from diverse cultural and ethnic background do perceive public issues differently and thus democratic pluralism demands that all such perceptions be considered before a firm and commonly agreed policy is made; and

(d) A barrier or a glass-ceiling resulting in systemic discrimination to diversity representation in the public sector, if continued, may generate public distrust about the fairness and equity of the governing process.

Of course, opponents to diversity and pluralism in public sector agencies have decried such a move as parochialism, reverse discrimination, promotion of less experienced and qualified minority people, pluralism gone mad, protection of incompetents which may result in the possible disintegration of the society (Stahl, 1983, pp. 82-83). Other arguments against diversity in government have included: breeding double cultural consciousness resulting in loyalty to more than one country, emerging ethnic ghettos and continuing ethnic hostility among groups rather than assimilation to the mainstream.

It has been argued that to act in an effective and responsive manner in a complex and multicultural society, government services should represent the microcosm of the total population. There is no doubt that the belief in democratic pluralism demands that all sections of society should have unfettered access as well as representation in all government services. Such
access and representation become more important in order to increase the responsiveness of citizens’ needs and to generate a requisite attitude on the part of public servants to provide service to all. Despite such views, it is clear that cultural diversity provides a vision for a strategic policy designed to “address the historical and contemporary exclusion of ethnocultural and racial minorities” (Wilson, 1993, p. 654). That vision, sometimes, gets into conflict with the contemporary administrative culture of a country where a monocultural view of government and administration. Such a monocultural view of administering public programmes tends to ignore potentially valuable new perspectives and visions which can be contributed by those who represent diverse cultures; in addition, it deprives the organization of value-added human capital by placing pressure to conform to prevailing administrative sub-culture thereby stifling human creativity; and finally, representative bureaucracy as a concept creates an atmosphere for strengthening diversity in the public service.

III. Has cultural diversity weakened the merit principle in the public service?

One of the foundations of the traditional Western public administration system has been the merit principle, which emerged as a main component of the Western administrative culture, largely influenced by Max Weber and other administrative philosophy gurus. The American scientific management specialists thought that science of administration was an end itself worthy of systematic study and improvement. For them, government administration was a machine to be driven by scientific management theories such as POSDCORB principles, PPBS, MBO, etc. It was also thought that the scientific study of administration led to the discovery of principles of administration analogous to the principles or laws of the physical sciences. And finally, it was assumed that the principles of administration determined the way in which specific administrative values such as efficiency and economy could be realized. In such a scientific environment, the use of merit principle became the main ingredient which sustained the functioning of government administration.

Although the human element was introduced at a later stage, public administration remained a scientific endeavour. The individuality was emphasized in scientific management because the individual was the unit of measurement in relation to output, efficiency and accountability. Such a philosophy was well suited for the entrenchment of the merit principle, which encouraged individual achievement. The merit principle was initially used to control political interference and patronage as well as corruption in the government service recruitment and appointments. It also meant that public servants would not be permitted to engage in any partisan work. The principle, when applied to recruitment and promotion in the public service, emphasized individual suitability to perform a fixed set of duties. Merit, then, involved the determination of an individual’s basic abilities (including educational qualifications, training and preparedness for the task) and the ability to develop new skills as change dictated.

It was much later, after World War II, that a different philosophy of administration emerged which stated that public service administration cannot be reduced to a science alone because the imperatives of ethics and morality could remain fenced out. Emergent values such as equity, social justice and non-discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, culture, language, etc. started making inroads into the monolithic world of administrative culture. However, the introduction of social equity in the public service (human resources) management also created an uncertainty
including the fear for loss of objectivity, efficiency, economy and accountability. Thus, a
tortuous evolution occurred when the issue of managing diversity (or social equity, as well as
affirmative action) in the public service was raised which was perceived as the beginning of the
end of the merit principle.

In each of the countries where an affirmative action, equal employment opportunity or a quota
system was introduced, various objections were raised:

(a) It was thought that such a social equity programme may not in reality benefit those who
were the real victims of discrimination but assist and accelerate the mobility of those in an
organization who (because of their race or ethnic origin) were already doing well under the
existing system.

(b) It was also claimed that if the high test scores were to be reduced or waived especially for
the disadvantaged, then such a discriminatory practice would get entrenched indefinitely
thereby weakening the effectiveness of government operations.

(c) It was suggested that without a sunset clause to such a practice even after the public service
employment has achieved it target level for representation of the proportion of
disadvantaged groups to the population at large, the practice would be continued.

(d) Finally, if such a privilege is granted once, it could turn into a fundamental right to those
cultural minorities for generations to come.

These questions are still asked in many countries. These tough questions need to be discussed
thoroughly, not because they are raised by those who are the sufferers of reverse discrimination,
but mostly because such issues influence the trust of people in the process of democratic
pluralism and good governance.

**Does diversity dilute the public service accountability?**

Public service accountability is the foundation of any governing process and the effectiveness of
that process depends upon how those in authority account for the manner in which they have
fulfilled their responsibilities, both constitutional and legal. “Accountability is the fundamental
prerequisite for preventing the abuse of delegated power and for ensuring instead that power is
directed toward the achievement of broadly accepted national goals with the greatest possible
degree of efficiency, effectiveness, probity and prudence” (Canada, Royal Commission 1979,
p.21). Indeed, the requirement for responsibility and accountability of ministers and public
servants lies at the very root of democracy.

Accountability means being answerable for one’s actions or behaviour. Generally, public
officials and their organizations are considered accountable only to the extent that they are
legally required to answer for their actions. However, from the public’s perspective, other
aspects of officials=behaviour, such as professional conduct, fair play, justice, equity and the
morality of administrative actions are equally important. Public service accountability involves
the methods by which government ministries, departments, public agencies and public servants

fulfil their *legally assigned duties* and the process by which those departments, agencies, or public officials are required to account for such actions.

Those who believe in procedural accountability assert that the means, processes and procedures in government administration are just as important as purposes or ends. “Thus the emphasis is on the effects observed, results achieved and ends met” (Dwivedi and Gow 1999, p.168). Public officials who believe in this approach feel that in public policy and administration, most choices are not moral absolutes, but depend on calculations of costs and benefits, not only to the public, but also to politicians and public servants. This approach emphasizes creating institutions of external control (such as the office of auditor general, a parliamentary committee on public accounts, vigilance commission, etc.) and procedures to check financial mismanagement and corruption. However, the main weaknesses of this approach are its emphasis on reductionism and lack of a moral imperative. We know that no matter how comprehensive the rules and procedures to check the misuse of power and authority, people will invent the means to bend the rules or use legal loopholes in order to engage in unethical activities.

It has been argued that a diversity regime in government service could also weaken the accountable management of public services. Of course, good governance requires that public officials be held responsible and accountable for their actions. In each country, various procedures have been established to make public servants accountable for their actions. Experience has shown otherwise because public servants belonging to diversity groups are more careful with respect to rules, regulations and procedures established to secure accountable management of government operations. Accountability does not get weakened with diversity; on the other hand it gets strengthened with an appropriate administrative culture prevailing.

*Creating a culture of diversity in the public service*

Public servants are perceived to be the interpreters of societal conscience; they are also the people who turn the public’s moral values into fair results by operationalizing public morality in action. Public trust is what governance is all about. For a liberal democracy to flourish, it is crucial that its public service exhibits a sense of fairness and a sense that everyone (irrespective of their colour, creed, race, language and culture) is entitled to that fairness. Based on that fairness, we protect other values in the society such as integrity, compassion, tolerance, courage and idealism. All these values are an integral part of shared values that a nation has. Thus *idealism, integrity, tolerance, compassion and courage* are the cherished values of the public service profession. Only when the public servants exhibit such values through their deeds, will public respect and history’s gratitude be theirs. And so it is up to them to make the dream of cultural equality, equity and justice come true. It is in this sense that the cultural diversity in the public service is worthy of our attention, because without the commitment of public servants to diversity management in government, the public would not feel duty bound to practice what it does not see its own government doing!

For that dream to be realized, some concrete steps must be taken to create a culture of diversity in the public service. Among these, the followings are suggested:
(a) First and foremost, governments set the stage by endorsing the value of diversity by enacting enabling legislation, by creating a corporate culture that embraces diversity, preparing policy document and programme directives to all ministries and departments and creating structures and institutions to implement such policy and programmes;

(b) A systematic process of awareness generation and cultural change by education for cross-cultural management and relevant training programmes for all managerial and supervisory positions;

(c) Nurturing an inclusive administrative culture by maintaining ongoing assessment for measuring the degree of acceptance and implementation to control organization’s cultural rigidity and resistance for change; and

(d) Strengthening top management commitment and demanding results as well as revisiting the goals (Nancoo, 1995).

For diversity initiatives to survive and flourish, appropriate change in the administrative culture of a nation must take place so that the full potential of the diverse workforce can be harnessed to the benefit of the entire society. For this to happen, a commitment to a collective vision is needed; such a vision is derived from the concept of public service as vocation. For, if the profession of public service is not a calling, then it is merely a job; and in that case, loyalty to that job will depend largely on the material benefits but not on inner satisfaction which one gets in doing selfless to others. Under these circumstances, no one can expect public servants to exhibit the virtues of service to society, prudence in the use of taxpayers’ money and commitment to the common good and collective welfare of the people; and if that does not happen, then good governance is difficult to achieve.

IV. Democratic pluralism as a foundation for good governance

It may be an understatement to say that the field of public administration is going through a period of turmoil, both in practice and in theory. After a period of unprecedented growth from the end of World War II until the mid-1970s, the industrialized nations experienced recession. Led by politicians, business people and some academics, bureaucracies were blamed for creating such problems. The New Public Management movement (NPM) began with the following major characteristics:

(a) Budget restraint, reducing bureaucracy and accent on results, both in planning and in evaluation of programmes and people;

(b) Service to the public, with a special concern for quality, citizens as client;

(c) Decentralization and devolution and delegation of authority as close as possible to the level of action and empowerment of employees;

(d) Greater attention to cost through comprehensive auditing, contracting out and introduction of competition; and
(e) Private sector techniques for motivating employees, such as merit pay, mission statements and quality circles (Dwivedi and Gow 1999, p.130).

The NPM has also introduced notions like corporate management, corporate culture and bottom-line management, an essentially market-driven rhetoric. This paradigm is based on the premise that by narrowing down the scope of government activities, efficient, transparent, effective and accountable governance would appear. The rationale appears to be that with fewer bureaucratic structures there would be only a few bureaucratic problems. This anti-public service stand has created a strong challenge for managing diversity in the public sector. Perhaps, we have come full circle, as we try to grapple with fundamental questions of democratic pluralism and good governance. Administration is something more than rational cooperative action. It is full of meaning and mired in conflict and controversy, at the root of which lie various values which shape the cultural characteristics of any organization.

The foundation of good governance is based on a society’s cultural values. That foundation includes a special kind of fundamental freedom which enables citizens of a country to integrate diverse cultural values and ideals toward a just society for sustainable human development. And as an ideal, such freedom ought to be the basis of a nation’s political system. This concept fosters and supports different and differing opinions and traditions in the society. These ideals also include such values as democratic pluralism, fundamental freedoms, human rights, the rule of law, equality and cultural and spiritual diversity. Democratic pluralism, to elaborate further, does allow individuals and groups to have their own opinions, follow their specific cultural traditions and encourage the accommodation and sharing of common values through the liberal democratic process. The fundamental goal of democratic governance is the provision of appropriate conditions by the state for the realization of individual and group potentialities. Finally, democratic pluralism is an integral part of good governance which reflects such traits as the common good, liberal democracy, public service ethics, control of corruption and spiritual guidance for secular affairs. It is in this context that the notion of representative bureaucracy becomes important to democratic pluralism.

The concept of ‘democratic pluralism’ as a foundation of human development is based on a few major ideals, namely:

(a) Fundamental freedoms for all, which means that human beings are the ultimate measure of all human values;

(b) Equality of all, so that everyone receives an equitable recognition from others but especially from the state; and

(c) Universal participation in the governing process.

These ideals constitute democratic morality, which draws from three implicit virtues: equality, empathy and tolerance for diversity. For democratic pluralism to flourish and survive, it is important that these ideals and values remain as necessary conditions for the humane and open society. Further, process by which these conditions are met is equally important. Such processes
depend upon the operationalization of such commitment of the state through its public service, including the sensitization of its own workforce toward the common good.

The common good

The term ‘common good’ has come to mean several things, such as ‘the good of the whole in which the parts share’, ‘the greatest good of the greatest number’, ‘the commonweal’, or ‘the universal happiness’. The term also ‘refers to a comprehensive set of goods in which the entire civil society participates’ (Simon, 1993). This ‘comprehensive set of goods’ relates to material as well as spiritual goods and services of an entire society. Also, we should note that rarely does anyone know in advance how all the components of the common good can be made to fit together; the challenge is how to bring together individuals’ or groups’ needs and aspirations within the overarching domain of the common good.

Further, the common good should not be perceived as some kind of rigid or static declaration of values. Rather, it is a dynamic affirmation and promotion of values, beliefs, institutions and cultural determinants, which encourage the pursuit of a common endeavour by a society, a nation or a global community. Thus, the essence of the common good is to secure universal welfare by voluntary cooperation of community members by creating a respect for diversity and requiring individuals to willingly sacrifice a part of their own advantages or privileges to the common good. Essentially, it resides in the conscience of a person. A person who is conscious of his or her duties and obligations sustains the common good, just as the common good persuades people to attain that consciousness and reach for that common goal.

Perhaps, in the distant past, the term might have meant to embrace ‘all and everyone’; but presently in the Western thinking, the term rarely encompasses universality. On the contrary, in Asian and other non-Western cultures, the term means an action or a deed which is beneficial to all and everyone although such benefits or privileges may not be immediately attainable or available, including whether or not everyone realizes it; furthermore, while the benefits may be available to all, it does not mean that all the people are entitled to the same (identical or equal) benefits, instead the concept means that everyone should receive (or given) their individual and collective due share (Dwivedi, 1998, p. 253).

The concept of the ‘common good’ in some cultures also includes both receiving from others (including the community, state or other entities) and rendering to others whatever is their due share. A nation with a strong base for cultural diversity strengthens this kind of common good, which in turn requires the backing of democratic pluralism as a commonly agreed value by all. Both the common good and democratic pluralism then get strengthened when moral concern is expressed by public officials through their deeds by being accountable. This facet of moral accountability is examined briefly below.

Moral approach to accountability

A democratic society is founded on the principle of the dignity and worth of all people. That moral principle emanates from basic religious values that hold human life both sacred and social. Furthermore, every constitution is generally the embodiment of moral values that guarantee us
fundamental freedoms, including cultural and religious freedoms, justice, rule of law and the like. These are the moral foundations on which public policy and its management must be based. We live in a world of interdependence, in which morality and diversity share and balance each other in the protection and development of human values.

By insisting on morality in public policy and governmental decision-making, we may be able to strengthen the ethical and moral obligations of the people as well as of the organizations they represent. The focus must be on the ethics and morality of the administrator: What sense of duty should the public servant have, toward whom and how can this sense be operationalized especially with respect to diversity? The moral approach assumes there are correct ways of doing things. Public officials are expected to be moved by a higher cause, believing they have been entrusted with the stewardship of the state and therefore owe special obligations, have specific expectations and reside in a fiduciary world (Dwivedi, 1987).

An ethical and responsible administrator believes in self-discipline and humility and, above all, shows the absence of arrogance in holding public office. If the goal is to serve and protect the common good, then morality can provide the incentive for public officials to serve the public with dignity and respect and an environment for the cultural diversity to flourish. Further, we cannot expect moral government unless public officials are guided by a sense of a vocation, service to others, accountability and respect for diversity.

This belief holds that government is a public trust and public service is a vocation for persons who should know how to behave morally. Behaviour emanating from ideals associated with service as the highest calling includes possessing and exhibiting such virtues as honesty, impartiality, sincerity and justice. Further, it is equally desirable that the conduct of public administrators should be beyond reproach; that they should perform their duties loyal, efficiently and economically (Dwivedi 1995, p.297).

The challenge before us is how to remove impediments (systematic, institutional and others) in order to make democratic pluralism an inclusive process. However, if the process is to succeed, necessary changes will have to be made in national laws, constitutional amendments where necessary, including governmental commitments to the international human and cultural rights. Recognition in law for cultural diversity is the foremost prerequisite for good governance because a multicultural society can foster a strong sense of unity and common belonging among its citizens; furthermore, it is a valuable collective national asset. Sustenance of diversity whether biophysical or human, is a prerequisite of a just society and good governance.

V. Managing diversity for good governance

Essentially, what I have argued in this short essay is about the challenge before us to manage cultural diversity within the framework of democratic pluralism and good governance. I have also made an attempt to link the importance of cultural diversity to:

(a) The worldwide movement to protect biodiversity;
(b) The creation of a culture of diversity in the government service by strengthening the concept of representative bureaucracy;

(c) The argument that the introduction of diversity need not weaken the merit principle and accountability in the pubic service and

(d) The foundation of good governance and the common good.

To conclude, the following two observations are offered.

1. **Cultural diversity protection is an essential element of good governance.**

The concept of governance has emerged as a new paradigm which denotes more than ‘government’. While the term ‘government’ refers to a set of instruments through which people living in a state, believing and sharing a common core of values, govern themselves by means of laws, rules and regulations enforced by the state apparatus, the term ‘governance’ denotes a system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interaction within and among the state, civil society and the private sector. Viewed in this context, the term ‘governance’ involves all government activities that guide, steer, control or manage society. In essence, governance includes a range of activities involving all cultural communities and various stakeholders in the country, all governmental institutions (legislative, executive, administrative, judicial and parastatal bodies), political parties, interest groups, non-governmental organizations (including civil society), the private sector and the public at large (Frederickson, 1997, p. 86).

Expanding on the above, we may say that the concept of good governance implies a complexity of activities which derive strength from its cultural diversity, are pluralistic in nature, inclusive in decision-making and set in a multi-institutional organizational context, empower the weaker sections of society (including minority cultural groups) and attempt to achieve the common good. In order to operationalize such activities, good governance requires a moral determination.

Recognition of that moral determination in governance marks the direction in which those who govern must channel their efforts toward the common good if they are to justly serve the society. That direction calls for individual moral responsibility and accountability (already discussed earlier), sacrifice, compassion, justice and an honest effort to achieve the common good. Ultimately, it is the moral determination which provides the foundation for the governing process. Public confidence and trust in liberal-democracy and democratic pluralism can be secured only when the governing process exhibits not only a higher moral tone but also the degree of trust, the reciprocity of relationship between government and civil society, the degree of accountability and the nature of authority wielded (Hyden, 1993, p.7).

Elites must share an essential degree of trust concerning the nature and purposes of the state and the rules and practices of socio-political behaviour. Without trust in the political system, individuals and interest groups have no reason to engage in active political life. Public trust helps to create an environment in which stakeholders are able to interact across public, private and community sectors to form alliances and seek change in the governing process. It is here where
the respect for diversity becomes an essential ingredient for good governance. Reciprocity is necessary within a civil society because it permits associations, political parties, diverse cultural groups and other groups to promote their interests through competition, negotiation and conflict resolution. A UI forces those who govern to be accountable by means of institutionalized processes (such as fair elections, public oversight of governmental operations, referenda, etc.) as well as by being morally responsible for their acts. Finally, it is also vital to understand the nature of authority and the way in which power is wielded by political leaders to devise and implement policy. In other words, the capacity to govern depends upon the political legitimacy obtained by creating conditions in the polity which sustain these three criteria.

In addition, there ought to be certain articles of faith (drawn from societal values, diverse cultural traditions and moral ideals and commonly agreed values) which should govern our lives, and these should be encouraged, reinforced, resurrected and strengthened in the name of good governance. These articles of faith, when supported by democratic pluralism and human diversity, help in achieving good governance. For good governance to be sustained, cultural diversity needs protection because in this context, the administrative culture of a nation has an obligation to foster the convergence of such democratic ideals as respect for individuals, individual freedoms, equality, justice, rule of law and constitutionalism.

2. **The world of the 21st century is the world of cultural diversity.**

The world of the 21st century is going to be a world of cultural diversity and poly-ethnicity instead of the world of cultural homogeneity and dominance or cultural exclusion and coercion. The prevailing historical and ethnocultural demography of our world has minimized the possibility of a worldwide mono-cultural society, be it based on the Western or a non-Western culture. Nevertheless, the globalization of the culture of governance should be watched carefully, so that no one single nation or a culture acts as a global missionary and assumes the role of a moral leader to dictate its own values, such as those advocated by the New Public Management or other business management precepts, which may not be relevant for many nations. The presence of cultural diversity in governance, national and sub-national administration and multinational corporations, as well as in international organizations, is equally desirable. It is here where the worldwide movement for managing diversity, propelled by the United Nations, is going to have global impact on governance and its culture. The time has come for world of the 21st century to learn to live with, accept, celebrate and operationalize its own diversity.
REFERENCES


