

GOVERNANCE ROOTS OF CONFLICT

The general discourse relating to conflicts and their roots across societies and states have, by and large, remained tethered to security and strategic paradigm. This framework, generally devised by security experts who focus on the military aspects of the problem has ignored the societal sources from which such conflicts emanate. It may be presumed that since the conflicts assume political dimensions and in some cases put the security of the state under strain which results in ignoring the main root causes of such conflicts. This is not to suggest that inter-state and /or global conflicts are not shaking the world peace and do not involve the issue of human security. However, it needs to be recognized that even such conflicts draw their sustenance from the social support and do not prevail in vacuum. The numerous case studies reveal that there is discernible social support base which either exists or is created to nourish such conflicts. Thus, it is axiomatic to locate and identify the roots of conflict within societies in conflict.

'Governance' in essence is a European concept which found currency during their colonial occupation of vast lands in Asia and Africa. This concept creates apparatus to run the state and devise mechanisms to control the functioning of government. The concept of 'Governance' in the Western sense of the term was passed on to the new decolonized world order. However, it is generally well recognized that 'democracy' is the plinth of the new order on which the structure of 'Governance' is erected. Thus, democratic governance became order of the day which distinguishes this type of governance from dictatorship and totalitarian systems of governance. In the onward march of Human Rights regime, governance was brought within the framework of human rights. Gradually, the human rights approach towards governance found reflection in the postulation of *Good Governance*. It is well established now that *Good Governance* and Human Rights are intrinsically interdependent.

Malfunctioning of governance in societies has been proved to instigate agitation, turmoil and violence. It would be an oversimplification to assume that merely non realization of expectations of general public tantamount to mal-governance. It may be argued that it would not be always possible to meet the high expectation levels of the people due to multiple constraints. In fact, it is the malfunctioning of the organs of the state and not the non fulfilment of expectations which manifest in the form of social tension and turmoil. Moreover, the subversion of avenues of decision making of governance, manipulation of the processes of the system and garnering the material benefits by foul means results in the disenchantment on the part of general public regarding the system under which they are governed. In such situations the grievance redressal mechanisms also become a casualty.

Therefore, in order to seriously address the issue and ward off its dangerous consequences the mechanisms to ensure the proper functioning of the system need to be revitalised. It may be recognized that by projecting this problem as a 'law and order' issue would amount to shutting one's eyes from the real problem. It is high time that an objective appraisal of the governance be made while dealing with the sources of a conflict.

Riyaz Punjabi