Governance Challenge: Is There a Way Out?

Governance is a contested term in literature and practice. Critical literature on political economy does not denote governance to be the main cause of failure of malfunctioning of developing countries. It focuses on structures and power relations. The International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have been focusing on second generation reforms and placing great emphasis on governance since the mid 1990s.

The idea of governance embodies political economy and its interactions with citizens, with a focus on institutions and rules. Rules in the institutional framework are themselves institutions. Governance corroborates centre-provinces relationship, decentralisation, transparency, effectiveness of the state, the rule of law, and the ability of the state to deliver social services. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute has been actively working on various dimensions of the subject, such as on functioning and operationalisation of rules, political institutions and organisations.

The panel solicits papers from Pakistan, South Asia, and other developing countries that focus on redefining and challenging the concept and praxis of governance from political economy perspective. Overtime governance has been interpreted in terms of decentralisation, civil service reforms, participation and transparency only, but the crucial aspect of lack of state effectiveness and its inability to deliver have not been taken into account. This panel urges to take into account the failure of governance in terms of issues such as colossal failure of taxation in Pakistan and the inability to deliver on critical social services including health, education, drinking water, sanitation and provision of justice. Papers critical of both the concepts of governance and its failure in applicability to developing countries like Pakistan, will be appreciated. A comparative framework across countries, regions, and within countries will also be welcomed

Panel Organiser: Ms Foqia Sadiq Khan, Associate Research Fellow, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad.

E-mail address: foqia@sdpi.org