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## Evaluating Effectiveness of Governance of Afghanistan Government & Recommending Measures for Transforming Good Governance in Post War Afghan Society

1. **Dr. Lt. Col. (R) Rooh ul Amin** (Corresponding Author)  
Deputy Registrar Academics, University of Wah, Wah Cantt, Pakistan Email: [rua58@yahoo.com](mailto:rua58@yahoo.com)
2. **Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Awan** Department Peace & Conflict Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan Email: [sizova79@hotmail.com](mailto:sizova79@hotmail.com)
3. **Ms. Toheeda Begum** Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar, Pakistan Email: [toheeda236@yahoo.com](mailto:toheeda236@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

*The study examined the effectiveness of governance of Afghan government with a view to transform it to postwar Afghan society. We employed mixed method design to undertake this descriptive research. A total of 219 randomly selected participants completed the questionnaires about good governance and consequential outcomes. The results of linear regressions analysis revealed that good governance has strong positive relationship with all seven consequential outcomes. It was further found that good governance predicts 36.5% variance in accountability ( $\beta = .723^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 29.1% variance in political support ( $\beta = .831^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 39.8% variance in government effectiveness ( $\beta = .628^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 34.2% variance in rule of law ( $\beta = .720^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 37.6% variance in inclusion and participation ( $\beta = .609^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 41.3% variance in corruption control ( $\beta = .882^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and 21.5% variance in institutional operational capacity ( $\beta = .647^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Based on the findings of the study, conclusions have been made and recommendations have been offered.*

**Keywords:** Good Governance, Consequential Outcomes, Postwar Afghan Society

### Introduction

Good governance is a technique of gauging performance of institutions in managing resources in transparent and possibly most rewarding way. The concept broadly covers all aspects of governing a country including its socio-economic strategies, regulatory structure, and observance of law during the conduct of its affairs. Governance encompasses all of the procedures and practices of governing undertaken by the government of a state, or by a market, or by a social entrepreneur as admissible by their laws or statutes or socio-cultural norms. The "good governance" focuses on the welfare of masses in general, and appeared as an effective model of sustainable economies and political organizations (Amundsen, 2004). On the contrary bad governance is a consequence of decision-making that encompasses variant of conditions from bribery, exploitation, dishonesty and unfairness in planning and implementation (Helms, 2012). Poor governance offers openings for corruption and abuse of power for personal gains that ultimately results undermines economic development and public trust upon the governing body. Poor governance can be turned in to good governance by improving institutional ability and capacity, accountability, adherence to law and regulatory framework.

Governance is "the institutional process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented" in mobilizing and managing public resources in conduct of public affairs. The process shall be in agreement to regulatory and legal compulsions. Government is the medium through which the power of the state is employed and governance is the act of governing or ruling in conformity with the set of rules and laws framed for the purpose. The state is more capable, in collection of taxes if the bureaucrats have autonomy with more discretionary powers to conduct things without being coached on nitty-gritty details (Amundsen, 2004). Lawson (2011) equates the concept of "good governance" with the concept of impartiality as it is assumed that bureaucrats accomplish their responsibilities not for their self-interest rather for the public interest. UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan perceives Good governance is safeguarding esteem for rule of law and human rights;

solidification of democracy; sponsoring transparency and enhancing institutional capacity in public administration." (Weiss, 2012). A promising governance is collaborative in nature that involves consensus of stakeholders in decision making and implementation process (Ansell and Gash, 2008). According to Fukuyama (2013), there are two dimensions that qualify governance as good or bad are; capacity of the state and autonomy of bureaucracy. Both of these dimensions complement each other.

Since Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, the country has been governed through a hybrid system of governance evolved over American / NATO military command and the handpicked political elite. Consistent and generous support from international community, Afghanistan has made substantial progress in rebuilding its institution, enhance state capacity with improved infrastructure, and economy to plug the void formed by decades of engagements of violence. The government has made substantial advancement in education, health, and the provision of other basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity. Afghanistan is rich in mineral and other natural resources claiming to the worth around \$3 trillion. Afghanistan natural minerals and "New Silk Road initiative" if Effectively explored, would go a long way in improving and boasting Afghan economy and strategic positioning South and Central Asia.

Over the past 19 years, the U.S. engagement in Afghanistan has human cost nearly 3,500 troops from international security contingent and over tens of thousands of Afghans; and about \$900 billion as economic cost on war and reconstruction of Afghanistan as of financial year 2019 (Magsamen and Fuchs, 2019). State leadership endeavors to build good government institutions capable of satisfying people in provisions of their hierarchy of needs. Today Government governance is monitored by the people on the quality of service delivery, fairness in their functioning, meritocracy in their employment, inclusiveness of women, respect for human and labor rights, equality of law across society. Oversight from the media, judiciary, civil society, and other social networks including elections facilitate people to hold governments and its defaulting official accountable for their failures. Sequel to the long drawn conflict in Afghanistan has made accountability redundant to the degree of not existence for the powerful. The social structures of the Afghan society are damaged.

Over the years the Afghanistan socio-political governance structure and authority have broken down, people are frustrated, and women are marginalized, and public trust on state institutions is shattered. The Afghan government is politically and economically unstable with overwhelm infighting and corruption. The only America's overriding demand from intra Afghan and intra Pashtuns dialogue on Afghan peace process negotiations is an "assurance that Afghanistan does not again become a sanctuary for terrorist groups". The assurance cannot be guaranteed unless there is a stable Afghan government having political will and capacity with writ of law on its people. Therefore, the post war Afghanistan must succeed in reinventing sustainable governance and revamping trust and authority of state institutions capable of preventing reoccurrences of incidents of violence, facilitating enduring peace and preventing reemergence of civil wars, nurturing a society with respect for human rights and opportunities for inclusion (Wittes, 2016).

Geo-economic viability and Socio-political stability in post peace process Afghanistan hinges upon the good governance of state institutions capable of establishing writ of their legitimate authority and reviving trust of the people of Afghanistan. For this to happen, government machinery must succeed in addressing people's "hierarchy of needs" including security, justice, and economic development through good governance. Failing which the international support promised for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan may be stopped – resulting Afghanistan to slide back to the pre-war disorder and turmoil that drew international forces into the country in 2001. Therefore it is encompassing for Afghan government policy makers to take stock of the situation of its governance problems and undertake appropriate measures to overhaul the system of country's governance towards positive ends.

### **Research Problem**

The research study aims to investigate the prevailing level of governance system and its effectiveness with a view to point out grey areas existing in the "inputs" and "outputs" of the system. The study also intends to suggest recommendations to address the prevailing challenges in following areas so as to enable it to transform in to a politically and economically viable and sustained state equipped with elements of good governance in the community of nations. Research study recommendations would focus on following areas in special and others in general:

- a. Creating national solidarity amongst diverse ethnic groups, structured arrangements for desired political stability and reinforcing security operates to prevent violence across the country.
- b. Enhance government effectiveness in establishing writ of law and regulatory framework for protection and promotion of human rights.
- c. Enhancing state capacity by reforming institutional capabilities, introducing meritocracy, and placing system of accountability across board to curb corruption and abuse of power for personnel gains.
- d. Developing legal framework for promotion of “ease of business” and code of conduct of organizational functioning on the bases of; transparency, disclosure, third party audit, and internal and external monitoring system.
- e. Revisiting election laws and prevailing devolution of power in several of governments such as, Central, provincial and district with a view to promoting ease of delivery of public services and people trust on the government.

## **Literature Review**

### **Governance:**

Literature defining governance and qualifications that constitute good governance is in abundance. The governance in its function is “infrastructural” rather than authoritarian command (Mann, 1984). The term denotes to government’s ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not, democracy and good governance are mutually supportive (Rothstein, 2011; Fukuyama, 2013). Good governance inclines to focus on implementation of state capacity to provide rudimentary public goods and services. Lawson (2011) equates the concept of “good governance” with the concept of impartiality as it is assumed that bureaucrats accomplish their responsibilities not for their self-interest rather for the public interest.

UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan perceives Good governance is safeguarding esteem for rule of law and human rights; solidification of democracy; sponsoring transparency and enhancing institutional capacity in public administration" (Weiss, 2012). The rule of law is generally known for doing all public responsibilities under the rule of law rather than whims of the person or rule of man that denotes to “authoritarian orders”. In other words rule of law negates the rule of authoritarian administration. The rule of law is defined contrarily by diverse scholars with alternative and substitute meanings such as; law and order, property rights and contract administration, observance of human rights, and constitutional constraints on the power of the executive or trilogy of power in a state. (Kleinfeld 2006). Therefore, good governance initiatives may contain advancement for legal reform and reforming institution through their capacity building (Evuleocha and Ugba, 2014).

The four all-encompassing methods to assess the quality of governance include: procedural measures, input measures, output measures, and measures of bureaucratic autonomy (Fukuyama, 2013). Rotberg (2015) strongly supports to measure governance through outcome indicators as outcomes are the eventual objective of the state. The term “governance” holds three main connotations (Fukuyama, 2016):

- a. The transnational collaboration and cooperation through non-sovereign organizations outside the state system.
- b. Governance as a state capacity for effective application of state rule and policy. Weak state capacity indirectly promotes corruption, non-transparency and unaccountability in the system that breed poverty in turn- an indicator of bad governance.
- c. The governance regulates social behavior through networks of stakeholders.

**Measures of Governance:** Governance reflects states ability and capacity to serve its citizens and pronounced as a measure of stability and performance of the government and society (Addink, 2019). Governance is direct outcome of state and institutional capacity which can be measured through indicators such as; “government effectiveness, regulatory quality, political stability and absence of violence, and control of corruption (Fukuyama, 2013). Kaufmann and Kraay (2002) maintained that the quality of governance and country’s economic development and progression are positively correlated. According to Kaufmann et al. (2005) and Sheng (2009) the summative governance perspective is measured through six dimensional indicators as follow:

- a. Accountability and Whistle blowing culture
- b. Political stability and violence

- c. Functional effectiveness of the Government
- d. Quality of integration and inclusiveness of the regulatory framework for the marginalized groups of the society.
- e. Rule of law and equality of its applicability across various classes/ groups of the society.
- f. Control on corruption and abuse of power

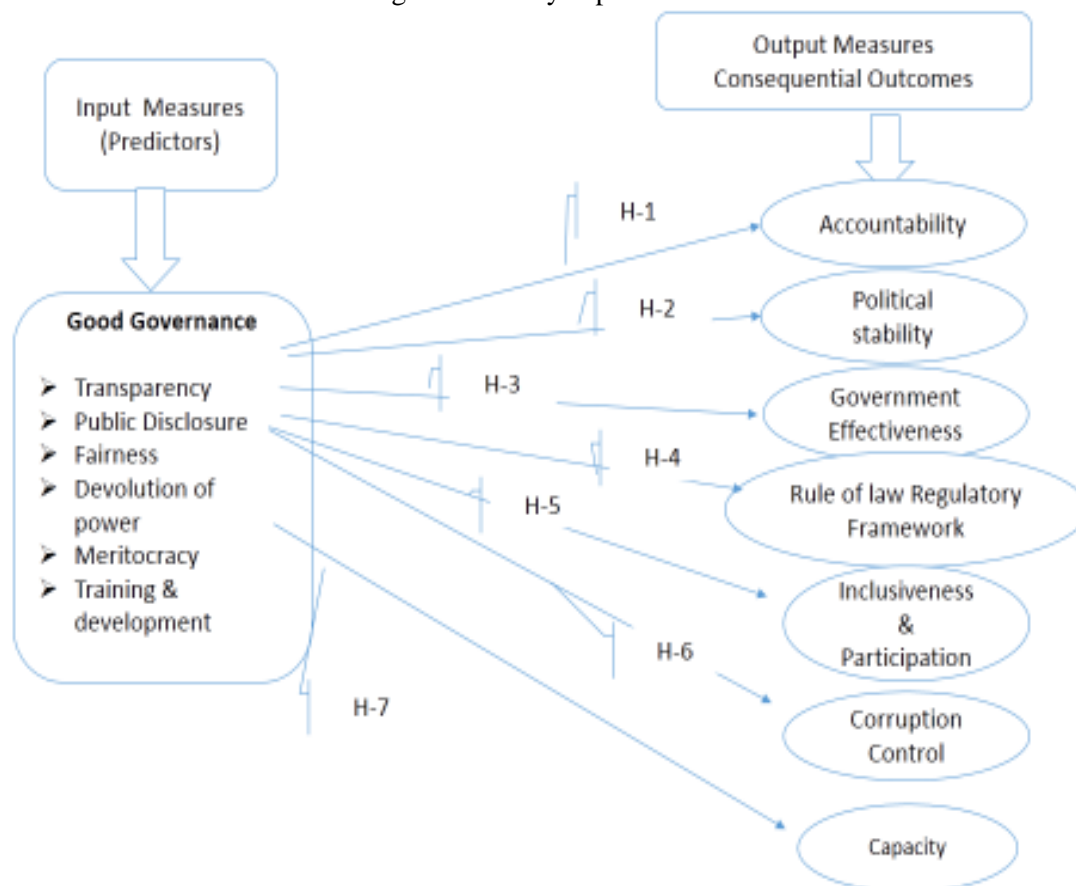
T3:46 PMhe UN Human Rights commission, in its resolution 2000/64 defines key attributes of the Good Governance as follow:

- a. Transparency in processes
- b. Adherence to responsibility
- c. Accountability to decision making and action taken
- d. Participation of all members of society especially inclusion of women and marginalized groups/ classes
- e. Responsiveness to the people needs and rights

Al-Rodhan (2009) contends that sustainable history of human being is function of good governance with following expressions as its criteria:

- a. People participation in governance system
- b. Fairness, justice and inclusiveness across society
- c. Rule of law applicable for all
- d. Separation of powers for check
- e. Free, fair, and accountable media
- f. Legitimacy of Government
- g. Accountability of decisions and actions
- h. Transparency of processes
- i. Prohibiting misuse of money in politics
- j. Ethical consideration during planning and conduction phase.
- k. Individual competency and institutional capacity.
- l. Innovation and Openness to Change.

**Theoretical Frame work & Development of Hypotheses:** The theoretical mapping of the good governance measurement model is diagrammatically depicted as follow:



### **Hypotheses**

- H-1: Good governance has a significantly positive relationship with Accountability
- H-2: Good governance has a significantly positive relationship with political support and stability
- H-3: Good governance has a significantly positive relationship with government effectiveness
- H-4: Good governance has a significantly positive relationship with rule of law
- H-5: Good governance has a significantly positive relationship with people inclusiveness & participation
- H-6: Good governance has a significantly negative relationship with corruption
- H-7: Good governance has a significantly positive relationship with institutional operational capacity

### **Methods**

#### **Research Nature & Approach**

The research is a scientifically conducted process of investigation or evaluation to seek answers of given question(s) through seeking insight about the phenomenon or exploration in given contextual setting (Kothari, 2004; Leavy, 2017). The research in hand is descriptive, evaluation and explanatory in type and mixed in approach. Descriptive research answers; what, when, where and how about a phenomenon under study (Kothari, 2004). The Evaluation research is an applied research that investigates about the effective working of a policy or program in attainment of its goals or objectives (Lawrence, 2014, p.28).

#### **Mixed Methods Research**

The mixed research approach is combination of quantitative and qualitative in its character with following distinct phases of operation:

The quantitative phase of the research would be initiated from the review of existing theories and related literature with a view to derive a preliminary theoretical framework and develop set of hypotheses accordingly. This approach of the research works from a post positivist paradigm, and conducts a survey research, administer questionnaire to collect data (Leavy, 2017).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase would be comprised of “Exploratory Research” following qualitative method of investigation to explore any new measure of good governance in Afghanistan socio-political and socio-economic settings. Exploratory research is commonly deductive or qualitative in nature and aimed at filling the gap existing in the prevalent knowledge theory or in contextual setting (Leavy, 2017). This exploration of new variables would be done through focus groups interviews of experts from academia, journalists, and government senior officials from civil and military bureaucracy and representative from country’s political leadership. All necessary precautions would be taken to ensure that the ratio of members of focus group should confirm to the proportion of the ethnic group in country’s overall population.

#### **Participants**

A total of 219 randomly selected participants participated in the study. The sample of the study comprised of experts from academia (56), journalists (67), government senior officials from civil (33) and military bureaucracy (25) and representative from country’s political leadership (38). The researcher mailed questionnaires to these participants. All the questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of 100%.

#### **Data Collection**

Data about the variables were collected through two prong strategies involving survey research for primary data from the selected sample chosen across all provinces and all major ethnicities. Survey instruments for the collection of primary data were prepared with the help of exploratory research, input of review of literature and guidance from the supervisor and research veterans. The validity of reliability of the instruments were ensured through systematic progression through pilot testing, and factors analyses modeling (Chawla and Sodhi, 2011). The secondary data were extracted from published sources through content analyses of relevant documents, reports, articles, books etc.

#### **Instruments**

After a comprehensive review of available literature on good governance and its outcomes, seven outcomes were identified based on the findings of the studies of United Nations’ Human Rights Commission, Zhai (2020), Addink (2019), Brinkerhoof (2017), Rotberg (2015), Fukuyama (2013), Lawson (2011), Sheng (2009), Al-Rodhan (2009), Kaufmann et al. (2005) and Kaufmann and Kraay (2002). We developed separate scales for good governance as well as each outcome. All the scales

were validated and their reliabilities were established through a well fabricated process of model fit. Good governance was measured through 11×items scale, accountability through 4×items, political support through 3×items, government effectiveness through 4×items, rule of law through 4×items, inclusion and participation through 5×items, corruption control through 4×items and institutional operational capacity through 4×items (see table 1).

**Data Analyses:** The primary data collected through survey were subject to various descriptive and inferential statistical tests of reliability, and linear regression for hypotheses testing. Triangulation of data was used to cross check the findings of the statistical analyses with the findings drawn from the secondary data analyses.

## Results

**Table 1: Model Measurement**

Constructs	Items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Good Governance (11×items)	GG1	0.71	0.89	0.87	0.721
	GG2	0.83			
	GG3	0.91			
	GG4	0.67			
	GG5	0.86			
	GG6	0.78			
	GG7	0.76			
	GG8	0.63			
	GG9	0.49			
	GG10	0.82			
	GG11	0.75			
Accountability (4×items)	Ac1	0.89	0.91	0.89	.677
	Ac2	0.91			
	Ac3	0.79			
	Ac4	0.77			
Political Support (3×items)	PS1	0.67	0.86	0.94	0.632
	PS2	0.82			
	PS3	0.79			
Government Effectiveness (4×items)	GE1	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.596
	GE2	0.76			
	GE3	0.83			
	GE4	0.82			
Rule of Law (3×items)	ROL1	0.91	0.96	0.94	0.782
	ROL2	0.85			
	ROL3	0.93			
Inclusion and Participation (5×items)	IP1	0.87	0.88	0.87	0.694
	IP2	0.73			
	IP3	0.79			
	IP4	0.96			
	IP5	0.79			
Corruption Control (4×items)	CC1	0.75	0.83	0.82	0.584
	CC2	0.81			
	CC3	0.78			
	CC4	0.92			
Institutional Capacity (4×items)	Operational	IOC1	0.93	0.92	0.778
		IOC2			

IOC3	0.97
IOC4	0.85

We evaluated the model in four phases. The reliability of the model is believed sufficient if outer loading of corresponding item exceeds 0.70 (Hair et al., 2016). It is evident from the table that all the items have outer loading greater than threshold of 0.70. At second stage, we further examined the reliability through Cronbach's Alpha reliability as well as composite reliability (CR) measure. Table shows that all the constructs were reliable as their  $\alpha$ -reliability and CR values exceed 0.7 (Bari & Fanchen, 2017). Finally, the average variance extracted (AVE) measure helps to determine the limit to which a variable converges on its indicators by evaluating the item variance (Hair et al., 2016). Table above explains that all values of AVE are higher than the threshold level of 0.5 (Bari, Fanchen, & Baloch, 2016).

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

	GG	Acct.	PS	GE	ROL	IP	CC	IOC
GG	1							
Acct.	.916**	1						
PS	.903**	.882**	1					
GE	.909**	.904**	.753**	1				
ROL	.893**	.892**	.921**	.952**	1			
IP	.902**	.759**	.579**	.669**	.701	1		
CC	.875**	.791**	.682**	.556**	.861**	.508**	1	
IOC	.861**	.783**	.793**	.890**	.683**	.732**	.592**	1

GG= Good Governance, Acct.= Accountability, PS= Political Stability, GE= Government Effectiveness, ROL= Rule of Law, IP= Inclusion and Participation, CC=Corruption Control, IOC= Institutional Operational Capacity

We applied Pearson's Correlation to establish relationship between independent variable (good governance) and outcome variables (7xconsequential outcomes). Table 2 above shows significant positive relationship between the independent variable i.e. good governance and dependent variables i.e. seven dimensions of consequential outcomes of the study the 0.01 level (2-tailed) of significance.

**Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis**

	Accountability		Political Support		Government Effectiveness		Rule of Law		Inclusion & Participation		Corruption Control		Institutional Capacity	
	$\beta$	$R^2$	B	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$
Good Governance	.723**	0.365	.831**	0.291	.628**	0.398	.720**	0.342	.609**	0.376	.882**	0.413	.647**	0.215

Results of linear regression analysis at table 3 above suggest that good governance predicts 36.5% variance in accountability ( $\beta = .723^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 29.1% variance in political support ( $\beta = .831^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 39.8% variance in government effectiveness ( $\beta = .628^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 34.2% variance in rule of law ( $\beta = .720^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 37.6% variance in inclusion and participation ( $\beta = .609^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), 41.3% variance in corruption control ( $\beta = .882^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and 21.5% variance in institutional operational capacity ( $\beta = .647^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### Discussion

Our study depicts that 36.5% variance in accountability ( $\beta = .723^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) can be accounted due to good governance which is in line with the findings of the study of Brinkerhoof (2017), Gyong (2014) and Carrington, DeBuse & Lee (2008). These studies suggest that good governance is predictor of accountability in public administration system of nation. Lack of accountability in financial as well as performance areas is detrimental to the slogan of good governance (Johnston, 2006) which in turn may pollute the entire administrative system of a country (Brinkerhoof, 2017). This confirms our hypothesis, "Good governance has a significantly positive relationship with Accountability".

Our result reported 29.1% variance in political support ( $\beta = .831^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) due to good governance practices in a country. These results are similar to the results of the study of Zhai (2020) and Fukuyama (2013) who reported that economic as well as political governance positively affects the political support in a specific country. The studies suggest that as a result of good governance,

masses continue to support the democratic leadership in the country. This confirms our hypothesis, “good governance has a significantly positive relationship with political stability”.

While examining the predictive ability of good governance, we found that 39.8% variance can be accounted in government effectiveness ( $\beta = .628^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) as a result of good governance. Similar results have been reported by Rindermann, Tedika & Christiansen (2015), Perry, Graaf, Wal, Montfort (2014) and Johnston (2006). Findings of their studies suggest that good governance is predictor of overall government’s effectiveness in terms of economic and human capital development i.e. it promotes steering societal development. Further, it promotes the effectiveness in the operations of public institutions. This confirms our hypothesis, “good governance has a significantly positive relationship with government effectiveness”.

We found that good governance cause 34.2% variance in rule of law ( $\beta = .720^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings are consistent with the findings of Rotberg (2015) and Johnston (2006) who argued that good governance encompass rule of law and eradicating corruption in public administration. This study further suggests that well fabricated governance mechanism in public administration system may help in effectively implementing public laws and controlling corrupt practices. This confirms our hypothesis, “good governance has a significantly positive relationship with rule of law”.

This study reported 37.6% variance in inclusion and participation ( $\beta = .609^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) due to good governance. These results are similar to the results of the studies of Chakarbarty (2014), Kardos (2012) and Johnston (2006). These studies suggest that a sound democratic system that ensures inclusion and participation of all the segments of the society in public administration accurately maps the good governance in the country. Contrary to it, strict authoritarian administrative machinery spoils the slogan of good governance. This confirms our hypothesis, “good governance has a significantly positive relationship with inclusion and participation”.

We found that good governance predicts 41.3% variance in corruption control ( $\beta = .882^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings are consistent to the findings of the studies of Pippidi (2015) and Johnston (2006). These studies reported that effective governance mechanisms help in eradicating corrupt practices existed in the administrative system of a country. It helps in restricting public authorities from disturbing public goods and resources for their own vested interests. However, this can only be achieved through merit based system denying nepotism and favouritism. This confirms our hypothesis, “good governance has a significantly positive relationship with corruption control”.

Our study reported that good governance accounts 21.5% variance in institutional operational capacity ( $\beta = .647^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This has been supported by Weiss (2012) who asserts that good governance is predictor of institutional operational capacity. Al-Rodhan (2009) holds that it enhances individual competency as well as institutional capacity. Moreover, Evuleocha & Ugba, (2014) reported that good governance initiatives may contain advancement for legal reform and reforming institution through their capacity building. This confirms our hypothesis, “good governance has a significantly positive relationship with institutional operational capacity”.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, it is safe to conclude that good governance is strong predictor of accountability, political stability and support, government effectiveness, rule of law, inclusion and participation, corruption control as well institutional operational capacity. The further study suggests that these variables may reciprocate each other i.e. they also may predict good governance. In view of the findings of the study, government of Afghanistan may employ this framework of good governance to effectively meet the expectations of the masses and keep pace with the dynamic and technology driven world. The newly established government may establish a system of accountability that may help them ensure rule of law and empowerment of institutions. Further, in view of inclusion and participation for good governance, it is highly advisable to invite all the segments of the Afghan society to participate in public administration machinery of the state. This may further help the current government to seek political support and ensure enduring political stability.

### **Implications**

Since the study revealed that accountability is predicted by good governance, it may be recommended that current Afghan government may devise a system of accountability that may foster government effectiveness and eradicate corruption from the country. It may help state actors to strengthen the institutions which in turn may enhance the operational capacity of the institutions.



As the study revealed that good governance may predict inclusion and participation, it may be suggested that current government must invite all the stakeholders in the government to seek public support which may result in enduring political stability in the country. Contrary to it, state may face challenges of rebellion from different stakeholders.

It is evident from the study that rule of law is predicted by good governance; it may be ensured by the state to make no compromise on implementation of public laws. This may help in eradicating corruption, eliminating nepotism and favouritism and strengthening the institutions.

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