

# Global Governance: Conceptual Analysis and Operational Challenges

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**Abstract:** The escalation of global proximity in the present-day world has impelled recasting of the global order. It has given impetus to the novel trend of global governance which involves an interplay of manifold entities to grapple with the issues that endanger the existence of humanity. Global Governance poses a formidable challenge to conventional state centric theory of international relations as it has played down the significance of individual states and enhanced the role of non-state actors. The present paper seeks to analyse and elucidate the concept of Global Governance, trace its historical evolution and highlight challenges before it. This study contends that system of global governance needs drastic reforms to upgrade its performance quotient and ensure a better future for humanity.

**Index Terms:** Global Governance, Transnational issues, World Government, International Organizations.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Global Governance is an exceptionally phenomenal conceptual notion and a desirable pragmatic form. It is an outcome of neo-liberal resurgence in international political and economic interactions. This idea cropped up as an ineluctable corrective to state centric theorizing which had monopolized the field of international relations for long. Global governance leads to convergence of varied actors for collective exercise of power. It is a framework of governance grounded in acknowledgement of global reciprocity over restricted national priorities. The idea of Global Governance enfoldes multiple issues like protection of humanity, unalienable rights of women, human rights, economic progression, democratization, environmental sustainability and investments. It is analysed from two different perspectives. While the supporters of global governance illustrate it as a phenomenon strengthening democracy, those sceptical of this concept visualize it as instrument of eroding national sovereignty.

## II. UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The concept of global governance is a compound of two discrete words 'Global' and 'Governance'. Global means pertaining to the whole world and governance refers to a system by which the entities are directed and controlled. The combination of these two words boils down to the fact that Global governance refers to a network of institutions, mechanisms, associations and processes between and among states, non-state players, markets, citizens and organizations that expatiate collective interests on global plane, ease cooperation, approve rights and obligations, allay collective action problems and intercede differences. It delineates a system of rules encompassing both formal and informal control operations. The Forum for New World Governance conceptualizes global governance as 'collective management of planet'. As described by World Health Organization, 2015, global governance is understood as, "the way in which the global affairs are managed. As there is no global government, global governance typically involves a range of actors including states as well as regional and international organizations. However, a single organization may normally be given a lead role on an issue, for example, World Trade Organization in world trade affairs, thus global governance is thought to be an international process of consensus forming which generates guidelines and arguments that affect national governments and international corporations. Example of such consensus would include the WHO policies on health issues."

The UN Commission on Global Governance has propounded that global governance is "a continuing process through which conflicting and diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action may be taken." K. Benedict affirms in International Encyclopaedia of Social & Behavioural Sciences, 2001 that, "Global Governance is a purposeful order that emerges from institutions, processes, norms, formal agreements and informal mechanisms that regulate action for common good. It encompasses activity at the international, transnational and regional levels and refers to activities in the public and private sectors that transcend national boundaries. In the conception of global governance, cooperative action is based on rights and rules that are enforced through a combination of financial and moral incentives. In the absence of a single authoritative institution or world government structure, global governance comprises of elements and methods from both public and private sectors. These basic components include agreed upon standards, evolving norms based on shared values and directives issued and enforced by states. Methods of global governance include harmonization of laws among states, international regimes, global policy issue networks and hybrid institutions that combine the functions of state agencies and private sector organizations. The concept of global governance raises two sets of unsettled issues- one has to do with claims of legitimate exercise of authority and other with democratic values."

The agencies of global governance wield control over political realm of their concern by engaging a persuasive approach towards international relations. Avant, Finnemore and Sell point out, "Global Governors are authorities who exercise power across borders for purposes of affecting policy. Governors thus create issues, set agendas, establish and implement rules or programs and evaluate and/or adjudicate outcomes." The presumable facilitators of global governance as categorized by James Rosenau include "transnational (NGO's, multinational corporations, social movements), subnational (ethnic minorities, trade organizations) and 'jointly sponsored' (cross border coalitions)." The triad of these major actors is assiduously involved in activities beyond the confines of state borders.

### III. RATIONALE BEHIND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Global governance can be construed as an answer to concerns emanating from expanding interconnectedness of the world. It has become imperative in contemporary times because humanity is currently experiencing problems and opportunities that are universal in extent. Today, multinational issues such as terrorism, arms race, pollution and pandemics incessantly travel across borders tormenting the entire humanity. We have always been susceptible to the risk of natural catastrophes but with the headway in the magnitude of technology, the threat we pose to ourselves as species has become more pronounced. Nuclear weapons are a notorious risk to survival of mankind. The advancement of technology has made us prone to new perils such as bioengineered pathogens, nanotechnological hazards and the risk of uncontrolled artificial intelligence with deleterious intent. These issues are too complicated for any state to address them alone. Increased degree of global collaboration is crucial for battling with these multifarious risks.

Besides this, there are other problems also that are not life threatening but are detaining the development of prosperity and progression. Armed conflicts still besiege us, superpowers rivalries have been replaced by regional conflicts which breed extensive human sufferings and loss of life in parts of world without stable government. The indiscriminate use of fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions are exposing us to climatic change. Widespread automation has aggravated pressure on the social and economic texture of our societies. Our ability to tackle unemployment, poverty, issue of human migration, social tensions and economic disparities is at risk of being lost. Global Governance can help ease these issues in diverse ways. Effective Global Governance structures authoritatively manage and regulate actions, processes and problems of global scope and enable us to eliminate armed conflicts, deal with new and ascending problems such as technological risks and automation and achieve unprecedented levels of prosperity and progress.

Angel Gurría, OECD Secretary General has stated that, “We also need more inclusive global governance because there is no longer any country that enjoys global economic supremacy. Emerging economies represent around 86% of world population and 50% of World’s GDP. They are now the main source of economic growth. We cannot build a better global economy without their contribution.”

### IV. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

History is loaded with appeals for exploring alternative political frameworks for organizing global human affairs in a way which is conducive to well-being of humanity. One such option based on universal cooperation to manage shared problems is referred to as Global Governance. The proposition of creating supranational institutions to deal with global issues as a requisite of Global Governance has well known antecedents. Its historical roots can be traced back to the distinguished works of Dante Alighieri ‘De Monarchia’ (1313), Emerie Cruce’s ‘Le Nouveau Cynee’ (1623), William Penn’s Paper ‘An Essay Towards Present and Future Peace of Europe’ (1693), Rousseau’s ‘A Project of Perpetual Peace’ (1761) and Kant’s proposal for a federation of nations operating under rule of law and eventually evolving into a perfect union of mankind. Dante forwarded the notion of unity of humanity and wrote, “it is evident that mankind, too, is most free and easy to carry on its work when it enjoys the quiet and tranquillity of peace. To achieve this state of universal well-being a single world government is necessary.” French litterateur Emerie Cruce remarked in his celebrated work that, “a council would be formed with representatives from all countries of the world. All states shall abide by terms of this council and the role of the council shall be to resolve disputes between states. This Council will have its own police force and will be used as needed.” William Penn made a case for Federal European state to keep peace. “This state would govern relations between its members with common legal framework, including a supranational parliament and respect the sovereignty of members within their domestic territories.” Penn’s essay is an outstanding instance of how abject poverty and frequent wars among states prodded preminent scholars to suggest alternatives for securing sound basis of peace and security. French Cleric Charles Castel de Saint Pierre in his ‘Plan for Perpetual Peace in Europe’ also pressed for European confederation. In line with the thinking of his predecessor, Rousseau also opined that, the problems like conflict, rebellion, deprivation and unrest in Europe were hindering people in their path to stability. To get rid of this anarchy, he spoke of establishing a ‘Governmental Confederative’ where interdependence would develop between the states. Immanuel Kant also proposed, “a voluntary federation of nations relating to each other within the framework of respect for agreed rules of conduct in which government would act in the public interest in peaceful ways because citizens would no longer like to face the rigors and consequences of armed conflicts.” Kant was convinced that states needed to seek common ground with other states for sake of security and prosperity. These scholars may be regarded as forerunners or early visionaries of the concept of global governance and postulations floated by them formed the groundwork of the idea of global governance.

The concrete manifestation of the theoretical formulations of political visionaries emerged in the last century in form of League of Nations. It was the first attempt to club national sovereignties together to tackle the issue of war. It is regarded as a watershed development and a germinal experiment in the long process aimed at constructing an effective mechanism of international cooperation. Woodrow Wilson endorsed the institutionalization of global governance and desired to abdicate the policy of isolation for the sake of building up strong engagement with the world. In his vision, “League of Nations would be founded on a moral principle, the universal application to military aggression as such.” Established in post First World War period, the prime goal of this organization was to maintain world peace. Decisive measures were also taken to address a plethora of issues like uplifting the status of workers around the world, prevention of arms trade, drug and human trafficking, promoting the release of war prisoners, global health and just treatment of minorities in Europe. The League of Nations proved ineffective in due course because of ruinous power of deep-seated nationalism and militarism in the consciousness of its member countries. The enforcement mechanism of the League was too weak to undo these tendencies on its own.

Another significant organization named Federal Union was established in Great Britain in 1938. The chief reasoning of this union was that: “to secure peace, humanity had to move beyond a league of sovereign states to federation of states.”

Post Second World War period proved to be a crucial point of time for institutionalization of global governance mechanism under American leadership. US President Franklin Roosevelt endeavoured to create an organization for securing global peace and security which culminated in establishment of United Nations Organization in 1945. It is a preminent institution shouldering the overall responsibility of preventing prospective rivalries and war. The United Nations links up sovereign nation states to maintain universal security through its principal organs like General assembly and Security Council. Furthermore, the UN can settle the international legal issues through International Court of Justice and implement its key decisions through Secretariat led by Secretary General. The United Nations has supplemented an array of fields to its fundamental authority since 1945. It manages these areas with the help of a spectrum of agencies and related institutions to foster common well-being and global equilibrium. As a crucial step in this direction, in 2015 the UN enunciated the Sustainable Development Goals generating shared objectives for shaping the collective future of planet. The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan acknowledged that, “no state however powerful can protect itself on its own and the threats we face are interconnected.”

The role played by UN in global governance is further supplemented by other institutions with a worldwide recognition like the Bretton Woods institutions, World Bank and IMF whose purpose is to control the world economy and financial markets which issue debts. Global governance is also stimulated through diverse organisations acting as intermediary bodies. These include regional groupings like European Union or ASEAN which harmonize the policies and interests of their constituents in a particular geographical sector. Strategic or economic initiatives under the auspices of one country like NATO under US coordinate defence and APEC or ANZUS work for economic integration. Finally, Global Governance counts on intergovernmental forums such as G-20, G-7 and the World Economic Forum which serve as a platform for assembling and deliberating upon proposals, designing plans and fixing rules.

Concisely it can be inferred that Global Governance is a wide ranging, intense, disjointed, disintegrated and complicated phenomenon. It has been constantly evolving and responding to changing circumstances. A multitude of actors define and shape the current structure of global governance. They have broadened the scope of activities in which they are involved and they have also changed the pattern of interaction and cooperation in tackling current issues on a global scale.

#### V. GOALS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

- ✓ To ascertain that the citizens of world are able to realize shared human interests.
- ✓ To ensure that the world remains intact as a single unit with its natural opulence, alluring charm and heterogeneity.
- ✓ To provide global public goods specifically peace, justice, integrated and humane education, extensive human security and conciliatory systems for conflict.
- ✓ To provide functioning markets and uniform standards of trade and industry.
- ✓ Setting up appropriate mechanisms to maximally lessen the probability and impact of global catastrophic risks.
- ✓ Development of appropriate technologies that are people friendly and planet friendly.

#### VI. Challenges to Global Governance

The concept of global governance for continual development has been given a practical shape by making formal arrangements and setting up institutional machinery. But it is contended that global partnerships and resulting governance practises are not functioning properly. Responses to common challenges have been primarily taken at national level with global responses being insufficient, incomplete or virtually non-existent. Present day global governance system is inept and inadequate to cope up with burgeoning economic cohesion and linkages among countries both of which have been augmented by current globalization process. Current arrangements have failed to suitably address developmental challenges such liberating humanity from abject poverty and hunger, fostering inclusive economic growth, reversing environmental degradation or mitigating climatic change.

Moreover, global governance structures and rules are marked by acute imbalances with regard to access, range of opportunities and fall outs. While the developing countries are supposed to endure the effects of global governance rules and regulations, they have sparse role in shaping them. Developing countries have marginal presence in several key decision-making bodies. Meaningful participation of all stakeholders has not been ensured. The biased character of globalization entails that the crucial sectors of common-interest are contemporarily disregarded or barely covered by global governance mechanisms while other fields are considered to be excessively determined and unduly controlled by a multitude of arrangements with varied different rules and provisions causing disintegration, enhanced costs and lessened productiveness. These flaws have led to production of imbalanced consequences and have had significant ramifications for inequality at national level as well. The prevailing perspectives towards global governance and global rules have resulted in sizable contraction of policy space for national governments of developing countries exceeding the requirement for efficient management of interdependence.

The dependency on scientific and professional bodies to set the standards, rules and procedures, on bureaucracy of the state to implement policies and on voluntary organizations to monitor compliance, none of which is based on democratic principles of representation or equal participation raises questions about the compatibility of democratic values and the concept of global governance.

The United Nations and its specialized agencies constituted to orchestrate heterogenous global problems find themselves constrained to counter crises due to dearth of apt authority and accreditation to act.

World Health Organization (2015) has pinpointed certain deficits within the system of global governance such as:

- “The jurisdictional gap between the increasing need of global governance in many areas such as health and the lack of an authority with power or jurisdiction to take action.
- The incentive gap between the need for international cooperation and the motivation to undertake it.
- The participation gap which refers to the fact that international cooperation remains primarily the affair of governments, leaving civil society groups on the fringes of policy making.”

Numerous global governance protagonists unitedly profess the creed of human rights and human security but the realization of these goals at international scale is hindered by the doctrine of sovereignty. The governments of various countries opt to decide individually whether a particular mode of action for the defence of human rights is in tune with their national interest. Massive and grave contravention of rights and liberties of people during wars and conflicts continue to diminish human safety in various corners of the world. The governance activists desirous of maintaining peace, security, justice and rights are unable to ameliorate the fate of humanity as they are constrained by elaborate approval mechanisms of humanitarian intrusion or complicated procedures of obtaining clearance for carrying out peacekeeping operations.

The increasing interdependence of global economy and integrated decision-making calls for better mechanisms of global governance for tackling sustainable development challenges.

## VII. STRATEGY FOR BETTER GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

A sizeable and meaningful rectification endeavour is vital to amplify considerably the basic structure of global governance system substantiated by basic points of law willingly accepted by states worldwide. There should be refinement, de-bureaucratization and democratisation of global organizations such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization and United Nations System so that the proposals, programs and agreements can be made workable. Reforms in United Nations System should echo the geopolitical realities of the new world, the expansion of Security Council should be undertaken and right to veto vested in certain states to sanction issues of global interest should be ended. It is necessary to bolster the enforcement mechanism of international law, restructure international judicial set up and strengthen prevailing mechanisms of global affinity which appear to be predominantly insufficient and lacking as of now.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Global Governance appears to be inexorable for the preservation of human kind both at present and in times to come. Although the concept of global governance seems weak and tenuous in face of numerous challenges, the call for global governance can no longer remain unheeded. The future of this idea is likely to be bright because rapid advancement in information technology and exposure of individuals to internet and media, is likely to step up their understanding regarding the importance and impact of international security on their personal lives. This awareness will help to mobilize the communities for collective action for the sake of peace. The ever-expanding network of international institutions is also likely to strengthen the trend of global governance.

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