

Preface

The magnificent idea called 'Asia', which finds its origin in the great Asiatic resurgence of the post-Second World War period, stands like a demoralised hostage of Western donors. The bold governance research, which attempted to capture this idea in totality irrespective of the usages common today in governance research, is gradually being lost to implanted visions about poverty, capacities and development. This book is an effort of NAPSIPAG's ongoing efforts to generate a non-West literature in governance, which resonates with local public policies, developmental programmes and requirements of global market competition besides bridging the gap between the academic and administrative research.

Governance in the Asia Pacific region has an idealistic origin in the idea of total human development and the widespread acceptability of the spiritual values in place of the bare markets of goods. The local, regional and global vision emerging from Asia has kept the West occupied since its phenomenal origin in the 1950s and 1960s when 'Panchsheel Agreements' and Bandung Conference established the solid grounds for Afro-Asian solidarity and peace. As the three stalwarts and legendary political leaders Nehru, Nasser and Tito faded in the violence of the Cold War and mutually assured destruction strategies of dominant powers, Asia was thrown open to implanted solutions bought from the West. Since then the world of governance studies continues to be dominated by ideas and projects largely located in USA or Europe. There is a shrinking ground for the voices exclusively and indigenously coming from the Asiatic region. Research in governance has narrowed scope for capturing local policy innovations and implementation initiatives especially needed to achieve lasting development or more precisely to achieve MDGs which present a mutually agreed lowest common denominator for development in the region.

NAPSIPAG selected the state of Kerala as a location on December 2010 to deliberate upon the manner in which the government of Shri V. S. Achuthanandan, the chief minister during that period, could encounter corruption, involve people in developmental programmes, strengthen ordinary people in local institutions and tame technology for women's development and access to health and education. The bureaucracy served the requirements of institutional governance and could communicate the planning processes to those for whom they were formulated. Kerala had

the highest developmental indicators in the otherwise haggard India struggling to overcome an unmanageable corruption with its undefeatable impact upon all people's developmental programmes. Governance faced the problem of balancing the perplexing gulf between creating wealth and promoting social justice. Kerala model of development was nearest to this search for the ideal of governance.

The authors found it pertinent to treat MDGs as a base for studying developmental efforts in a comparative context within Asia. Scholars have by and large agreed upon the manner in which quantifiable targets were set for achieving these goals. Developing countries were found to be more focused in their approach, and many have made sincere efforts in cost and manpower management within the budgetary allocations. As Malaysian experience stands as an example of knowledge-based leadership both in government and politics, the MDG targets have mostly been achieved for this country. However, South Asia in contrast suffers from leadership crises, and whatever success has come its way is due to local community leaders, administrative leadership in local institutions and success in planning strategies. This does not guarantee any success or rise in developmental indicators for the country or achievement of MDGs as these experiments in best practices are scattered and personality driven. A large number of scholars, administrators and NGOs participate in the development process, but for the governmental failure in monitoring and evaluating their contribution, there is weak incentive to do better and greater incentive to earn through developmental funds. Most contributors to this volume have laid faith in the state-driven programmes with meaningful partnership of civil society agencies. However, scholars agree that capacity enhancement should precede goal achievement; otherwise, the goals are likely to be diverted to serve the vested interests of donor agencies.

There are many organisations which deserve to be appreciated in making this volume a success. The first and foremost is NAPSIPAG (Network of Asia Pacific Schools and Institutes of Public Administration and Governance) located at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. Shri N. Ravi Shanker, (secretary, DIT and NIXI), Mr. Keshav Desiraju (additional secretary, Ministry of Health, Government of India) and Ms. Anne F. Stenhammer (regional programme director – UN Women, South Asia Regional Office) provided the ideological frame and focus for the policy debate, and Dr. K. N. Jehangir of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) extended valuable suggestions on interventions wherever needed in achieving MDGs through social science research. The enterprise of preparing a volume filled with rich country experience without being passionate about national and patriotic leanings would not have been possible if NAPSIPAG had not received inputs from some of the leading administrators and public sector planners from Asia on primarily academic papers from universities. This could be possible due to the support and swift undertakings possible under the leadership of Dr. Manupipatpong Worapot, director, capacity building and training, and Dr. Anbumozhi Venkatachalam, capacity building specialist of Asian Development Bank Institute, Kasumigaseki at Tokyo. More than 50 administrators arrived from South Asia and adjoining countries to share their experience and get involved into a mutual learning process. The administrators

of the Kerala Government, to name a few, Dr. P. Prabhakaran, chief secretary, and Mr. T. K. Manoj Kumar, director, Institute of Management in Government; Shri SM Vijayanand, IAS; Shri Rajeev Sadanandan, IAS; Dr. Mridul Eapon; and Dr. Ajay Kumar, secretary, DIT Kerala Government, Trivandrum, along with their political leaders Dr. Thomas Issac, honourable finance minister, and Ms. P. K. Sreemati, minister of health, Kerala, participated in a truly democratic classlessness rarely visible in other states of India. Some of the developmental specialists from the region, Dr. Mridul Eapon (State Planning Board, Kerala, India), Prof. S. Parasuraman (director, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai, India), Dr. Thirumalainambi Murugesh (Optus, Australia) and Dr. Jacob Kumarasan (WHO – Kobe, Japan), Prof. Manzoor Hassan (director, BRAC, Bangladesh), Justice (Rtd.) Nasir Aslam Zahid (dean, Law Faculty, Hamdard Law University, Karachi, Pakistan), Prof. Norma Mansor (National Economic Advisory Council, Malaysia), Dr. Mohad. Gazali Abas (director, Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia), Dr. George Mathew (chairman, Institute of Social Sciences) and Prof. RFI Smith (Monash University), have shared their rich experience in administration, policy implementation and adoption of technology solutions to governance reforms to make the chapters of this volume more balanced, dispassionate and free from the ideological baggage of bureaucracy bashing or also of the fashion of the third sector worship. The studies have covered a vast area of governance research in education, health, technology, leadership and third sector partnerships, but the focus has been the drive and achievement towards the MDGs.

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