

Good Governance and the Unified Management of Coastal Regions of the Caspian Sea

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Expanded Abstract

Introduction

A considerable percentage of the world's population is living in the coastal areas. Thus, there are many different kinds of problems in these regions. Because of the large amount of the people in these areas, their ecosystems are confronted with huge and serious problems. There are different types of arrangements for preventing destruction of ecosystems around the seas. Unified management in coastal states and regions, not only helps decrease ecosystem's difficulties of the sea and its surrounding areas, but also help implement good governance in these regions. Good governance is a new concept for management in all the duties of the states. During last two decades, many international institutions and organizations are interested in this approach. Based on positive experiences of many countries in using the model of good governance, it can be helpful both for states and people to remove many obstacles in the attempt for democratization and sustainable development. Since 1990s, the World Bank and its advisors have concentrated on the fruits and benefits of good governance. This method is based on openness, responsibility and observation of all the political and economic activities in a country. For many researches in different countries, implementation of the criteria of the good governance lead to improvement in the general condition of people in these countries and progress in the path of protecting their ecosystem and sustainable development.

This approach of governing can well combine all the efforts of the civil society with the government bodies. Civil society institutions help governmental branches to protect the ecosystem. Cooperation of social and state energy in these countries will diminish the strong flow of pollution in these regions. Many interest groups and also political parties may be active in this occasion. In this pattern constructive mutual efforts of the people with the governmental executive branches help them to proceed toward sustainable development. In many cases the coastal states are confronting with serious pollution both in the land and the sea. It is very natural that these pollutions are stemmed from a variety of sources in the countries around the sea. Coastal problems will not be solved, but via the public efforts, comprehensive programs, and participation of all interest groups. But these factors have not real influence on many coastal countries of the world. Unified management approach has been proposed from 1970s, on the base of the good governance principles, to remove these problems in coastal areas. In the largest lake of the world, which is confronted with serious environmental problems, this approach can help harmonize the activities of different administrative bodies, which are working in this region.

Materials and Methods

The Caspian Sea is one of the most polluted lakes of the world. There are different sources of pollution both from the land and the sea. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the number of coastal states increased around the borders of the lake. Instead of one country Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan Republic, Turkmenistan, and Iran are the coastal states of the Caspian Sea, with different management approaches. Very soon they showed different attitudes toward the Caspian Sea's legal Regime. The I. R. of Iran permanently focuses on the legitimacy of the Soviet era treaties between Iran and the Soviet Union. However, I. R. of Iran and other countries of this region have signed the Convention of Tehran to protect this sea's environment. This convention can help decrease the huge amount of pollution in this lake. The Caspian Sea has a unique ecosystem and it is the place of living for many special kinds of the migrant birds. Unified management of the coastal regions of the Caspian Sea has a positive relation with good governance, not ruling. In the complicated structures of these regions, coastal states are only one of the players, which have to harmonize all the other players, but they are active in the region. To achieve the goals of sustainable development, this kind of cooperation is necessary. This

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method can be analyzed in three stages: national, regional, and international. In the national stage, mobilization of all the civil society institutions that made them active to implement approved program, can help governmental bodies to make their works more efficient.

Harmonizing among the different parties of the governmental bodies and social groups can help them actualize their goals. In the regional level, cooperation among the coastal states helps stop the process of degradation of regional ecosystem. In the international level, the amount of the conventions and the agreements also shows the general consensus on the necessities of unified management of different matters of the world. However, there are different types of perceptions about the range of priorities in different regions. The authors have used the descriptive - analytical method for this research.

Discussion of Results

Based on the findings of this research and with regard to the pollution of the coastal regions, it seems that unified management of the regions using the good governance approach can help cease the damaging process of destroying the ecosystem of the Caspian Sea. All the national, regional, and international evidences make it necessary to expand collaboration among civil and political institutions of the coastal state on the path of revival of this region's ecosystem. There are real threats for the people of this region. This threat can only be removed by this critical cooperation. With increasing the population of the coastal region, the amount of difficulties of these region can also be accumulated. Based on numerous experiences, unified management of the coastal regions helps remove many critical ecosystems problems. It can be one of the best options to solve ecological pollutions. Demand to unified management of the coastal areas is increasingly recognized in many countries that witness the ecological crisis.

This approach has been expanded in the United States of America from 1970s and had been considered as a new pattern to manage environmental crisis. From the first years of this decade many countries had confronted with huge pollution in their coastal regions and had employed different methods to deal with these issues. The unified management of the coastal regions is a dynamic mechanism that by taking an over- sectoral strategy can create harmony among the socio- economic and environmental activities to reach the aim of environmental protection and sustainable development. The goal of unified management of coastal regions is to decline the contradictory activities of all the institutions and beneficial entities in the regions. In many conferences and meetings of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, the littoral states had been asked to consider suitable and consistent patterns of behavior to actualize this method. There are also many international documents to encourage this mechanism.

Unified management of coastal regions concentrate on these goals and standards: considering economic growth of coastal areas with protection of precious natural resources of the sea and the coasts, management of human activities in these regions to consolidate and keep the environment, maximizing usage of coastal resources with their protection, consolidating the sustainable development in these areas, and easy access of all the people to the coastal regions. In this regard all the state bodies should cooperate closely with civil society institutions. Unified management of coastal areas needs understanding connections between human activities and these regions environment, with all the interest groups in these areas. This is a comprehensive, multi disciplinary, dynamic and sustainable approach. The main goal is preventing devastation of the coastal areas and seas and stopping sectoral policies and behavior. The distinction between the unified management of coastal areas in these regions with coastal management is creating the capacity of a system of unified governance in these regions. The capacity can work through harmonized activities of different branches of the state organs.

This approach can successfully be confronted with unpredicted events and developments in coastal regions and the seas. This is with adjusting all the state and non-state organizations and has a very efficient and influential role in crisis situation. Civil society institutions cooperation is a very important element in this approach. It is very useful to use confrontation of ecological crisis in the coastal areas of the Caspian Sea. In 1992 about 188 projects of unified management of coastal regions had been implemented in 44 countries around the world. In 2005, about 622 projects of unified management of coastal regions had been implemented in 145 countries. Approval of the Ramsar Convention in 1971 was the first global act to start this approach. Since 1990s, unified management has become a common behavior in the international level and in many coastal countries that have followed its principles to contain environmental and security threats.

Conclusions

Unified management of the coastal region of the Caspian Sea should consider the entire ecosystem and social and economic aspects of this region. This has different interactions and creates harmony in national, regional and international levels of the issues. In national level all the formal and informal sectors must cooperate to prevent expansion of pollution in the sea and the coastal regions. There is no doubt that implementation of projects to engage civil society in protection of the ecosystem is a vital approach. However, in these countries the NGOs are

not very active and powerful and the ruling political systems in the region have not positive attitude about them. In regional level all the littoral states have signed Tehran Convention to protect the unique ecosystem of the Caspian Sea. They have understood that expanding cooperation with international organizations can help them to better deal with different threats in this sea and the coastal regions. But it seems that this process is not easy and smooth.

All these regional states need to organize systematic help and cooperation of private and public sectors. None of them can solve the ecological problem lonely; they need internal, regional and international programs to stop the process of degradation of the Caspian Sea ecosystem. Good governance principles, transparency, civil society cooperation, and unified management of the countries of the coastal region can lead to protection of the damaged ecosystem of this region. Many successful experiences of the coastal countries proved that this approach can help revive the polluted regions.

Keywords: Caspian Sea, environment, good governance, Tehran Convention, unified management.

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