

Study on Governance Uncertainties: Lessons from India's Quasi-Federalism and Somalia's Fragile Federalism

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Abstract

The case study compares the uncertainties in governance between India and Somalia, in terms of their federal governments, and their response to the global developments. We contrast the quasi-federal system of India, which is characterized by centralized coordination and combined with fiscal decentralization against weak federalism of Somalia which cannot cope with the clan-based system of governance and poorly-developed institutional structures. The work is grounded in the comparative design, in accordance with which the efficiency of the government is determined in terms of the following criteria: fiscal federalism, electoral integrity, and the tackling of crises. The Indian system is healthy because it has an orderly revenue sharing and technology based electoral transparency but, executive power is so much dominant that at times it can influence the judicial independence. Comparatively, Somalia is more susceptible to systematic failures like the ad hoc fiscal systems, and poor electoral systems, which have impeded the democratic stability. The findings show that the performance difference on governance is very large with current scenario giving a score of 62.34 with India against 19.07 in Somalia on the voice and accountability index. The adoption of model of fiscal federalism practiced by India and mechanism of responding to the crisis in accordance with the local security issue are some of the lessons that Somalia can learn. The paper presents realistic suggestions to institutional empowerment of weak states that are expected to re-emphasize the relevance of contextual reforms in the fiscal decentralization and the electoral system. A blend of theoretical and practical governance discourse, this research will give a nuanced understanding of why the federal systems can mitigate uncertainties of divergent political settings.

Introduction

The debate of the governance structure in different political environments has acquired a new sense of urgency as the world's uncertainties rewrite the state capacities and institutional strength. Whereas other mature democracies such as India have adaptive federal systems, the weak states such as Somalia experience institutional instability exacerbated by the presence of clan-based power politics and poor institutional systems. The paper fits the gap between the literature on comparative federalism and global governance literature that examines the reaction of the opposing governance models to the existing problems.

The tension between a centralized authority and decentralized flexibility is becoming more evident in the world governance literature [1]. "The concept that can be employed in analyzing both the quasi-federalism in India as well as the failed federal experiment in Somalia is multi-level governance where decision-making process is decentralized to the local, national, and international level [2]. However, the existing theories are inclined to overlook the influence of past legacies and informal power structures to mediate formal institutional structures that this paper fulfills through its empirical character.

There are three significant contributions to the study. It starts by providing a comparison between fiscal federalism in sound and weak states, of how Indian system of constitutional revenue-sharing (with

central revenues of 41 percent going to states) compares with the ad hoc fiscal systems in Somalia. Second, it evaluates the electoral integrity as a predictor of democratic stability, demonstrating that the Indian tech-based systems of electoral monitoring reduce electoral fraud and the Somali clan-based system of processes increase the exclusion. Thirdly, it reevaluates crisis governance in the context of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in India as a case of how these emergencies should be managed in Somalia, according to the principles of security. These observations shatter the traditionalization about the transference of institutions in the global governance [3].

During this study process, the following specific objectives were discussed:

- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of governance structures and democratic institutions in India and Somalia in managing these uncertainties.
- To identify what the Federal Government of Somalia can learn from the long-established federal system of India.

The key questions of this inquiry are: (1) How do fiscal decentralization models behave in different levels of state fragility? (2) How does electoral integrity contribute to stabilizing federal systems in the face of global uncertainties? (3) Are crisis management models of stable federations applicable to conflict-affected situations without strengthening the centralization?

The hypothesis that the structured fiscal rules and transparent electoral systems are related to the increase in the governance resilience is tested in the study, even under the fragmented political environments.

The design of the research is methodologically a comparative case study, based on primary data sources (government reports) and secondary analysis (governance indices). India is an example of institutionalized federalism although its tendencies are toward centralization whereas Somalia is a critical example of federalism that has arisen because of state collapse. Their difference is measured by the Voice and Accountability indicator (World Governance Indicators) as India has 62.34 as compared to the 19.07 of Somalia- this is what this study attempts to explain by applying the institutional analysis.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 is a review of the theoretical discussions about federalism and global governance, Section 3 describes the contexts of the cases, Section 4 presents the comparative evidence about fiscal, electoral, and crisis governance, and Section 5 provides an analysis about implications of the institutional design in fragile states. This research will contribute to policy discussions about decentralization by providing empirical evidence and combining it with the theory of governance during a period of systemic uncertainty.

Literature Review

Various theoretical perspectives of the problem of governance uncertainties in federal regimes have been developed to both the institutionalist school of thought and complexity-based theories. The

traditional institutionalist literature emphasizes the effect of formal structures in the governance outcomes with a special focus to stable democracies like India [4]. This literature highlights the importance of the constitutional arrangements in mediating the division of power between the central and subnational units, such as the quasi-federal system in India.

However, it does not emphasize on the fact that politics is informal and it determines the way the weak states are governed, whereby the clan-based systems like that of Somalia co-exist with the formalized systems of the federal [5].

More recent studies have tried to address this gap by examining the notion of hybrid political orders in which the interaction of formal and informal institutions and institutions is complex. One such instance of how non-state actors may fill a governance gap in the context of weak central institutions may be the example of Somaliland [6]. This perspective discontinues the state-centric approaches by showing how the processes of local governance might organically emerge within the post-conflict settings. Nevertheless, such hybrid systems are prone to legitimacy and scalability issues particularly to unify with the larger federal systems.

Fiscal federalism is another key element of uncertainty of governance. The Indian system of revenue sharing that allocates 41 percent of central revenues to states has been an extensively followed model of fiscal decentralization [7]. In comparison, the ad hoc fiscal system in Somalia illustrative of the challenges of implementing such systems in weak environments, where revenue collection and distribution remains controversial [8]. It is the distinction between these two cases that emphasizes the importance of institutional capacity in the success of fiscal decentralization.

It has also emerged that resilience in governance is one of the factors that have been instilled by electoral integrity. The use of technology in India to enhance electoral transparency can give some light on how stable democracies can help to decrease the uncertainties in the electoral process [9]. Contrastingly, the unpredictability of the electoral process in Somalia because of the power sharing alongside a clan basis and inability to be inclusive in the electoral process depicts the deficiency of fragile systems [10]. These two opposite illustrations are used to show how the electoral systems may be applied in order to reinforce or undermine the democratic stability of the federal systems.

Multi-level coordination that is introduced to the governance picture by the crisis management literature further complicates the picture. A case in point of how centralized coordination might be combined with a decentralized implementation and can be deemed a potential model of other federal systems is the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in India [11].

However, the reality that Somalia has been relying on the assistance of other nations to address the crisis, raises some concerns on whether external intervention into the weak states is sustainable [12]. This is a main agency-support dilemma of governance in uncertain environments.

In the literature, the two states of stability and fragility are divided without taking into consideration the possibility of cross-contextual learning. To give an example, the implications of the aspect of quasi-federalism in India have not been developed fully, as compared to the aspect of the same in fragile states like Somalia. Similarly, Somalia hybrid systems of governance offer some unique insights into what resilience-building is, yet are rarely applied in more stable contexts. These gaps will be addressed in the current paper through a comparative approach that focuses on divergences and potential synergies between the two cases.

The interpretation of these differences of view through the literature review is that the uncertainties in governance are carefully interpreted. It shows how the formal institutions, fiscal arrangements, electoral systems, and crisis management structures interact to affect the governance outcomes in various situations. In the sections that follow, it is based on these that the specific cases of India and Somalia will be developed on, elaborating on these theoretical ideas with empirical evidence.

Case Descriptions

The two different governance systems on which the comparison will be made include a quasi-federal democracy in India and a weak federal system in Somalia. Such cases are allegorical of divergent approaches to dealing with uncertainty in governance in federal systems, shaped by their respective historical experiences and institutional constructions.

The Indian system of governance is founded on the quasi-federal system which is constitutionally laid down and the separation of power between the central government and the 28 states is officially laid out. According to the Constitution of 1950, a dual polity with independent legislative authority of the union and the state governments is maintained under the Seventh Schedule yet retains the overriding central powers in instances of emergencies [13]. Fiscal federalism is systematic whereby Finance Commission suggests vertical (between center and states) and horizontal (between states) distribution of revenues with present distribution of 41% of central tax revenue to the states. The 73 rd and 74 th Amendments introduced constitutions of local governance institutions (including Panchayati Raj or village councils) and municipal authorities, yet the functional autonomy of these institutions is constrained by differences in devolution at the state level.

The Electoral governance system in India is institutionally sound in which since 2013, the Election Commission of India has been running e-voting using electronic voting machines and voter-verified paper audit trails. The Model Code of Conduct regulates the behavior during campaigns and the provisions of the constitution, including Article 324, to allow the Commission to realize free and fair elections. There is also the added responsibility of judicial oversight in the shape of special tribunals and public interest litigation, but more recent arguments concerning the role of the executive in appointing judges have cast doubt on this.

Somalia has a federal system which is an outcome of decades-long civil wars, formalized under the 2012 Provisional Constitution that introduced a federal republic with member states. Somalia has a

federalism in contrast to the central system in India, where power sharing negotiations between clans are crafted, and the National Consultative Council mediates intergovernmental conflicts. The constitution suggests two levels of governance, federal and state, but this is still to be completely realized particularly in the war-torn regions. The decentralization of governance outside the city centres has been a problem because out of planned district councils only 45% have been realized.

The fiscal resources in Somalia have not implemented the well organized structure of India but instead, it relies on the ad hoc revenue sharing arrangements between the central government and its member states. Domestic revenue collection remains low (5.8% of GDP, 2021) with custom duties in big ports as the biggest source of revenue. The absence of official systems of fiscal transfers has led to a number of crises, including the 2023 oil revenue conflict between Mogadishu and federal member states.

The Somali elections are quite different as compared to institutionalized elections in India. The 2016 and 2021 elections were indirectly conducted through electoral colleges based on the clan system, and the last parliamentarians were elected by just 14,000 of the delegates.

Security concerns and political interference have delayed universal suffrage plans to after 2024, and claims of vote-buying and intimidation still undermine the reputation of elections. It has an underdeveloped judicial system and most conflicts are simply resolved by the traditional xeer (customary law) and sharia courts due to a small formal court system.

The two instances are directed with incredibly different governance ecosystems, the Indian system being one of constitutional rigidity and operational adaptability, and the Somali system being one of aspirational formal federalism and informal long-standing clan governance. These organizational differences are also evident in how they react to crises: in India, the National Disaster Management Authority is tasked with decision-making on responses according to well-established guidelines, and in Somalia, the response to security threats is provided by a collection of African Union peacekeepers, federal and clan militias. The next discussion will consider the role of these institutional structures in producing various governance outcomes in fiscal management, electoral integrity, and in responding to crisis.

Findings and Discussion

Comparative analysis of the government system in both India and Somalia has some critical lessons on how federalism can work in various situations of stability and unrest. This section will illustrate the merits and demerits of both systems by discussing the fiscal decentralization, electoral integrity, crisis management and the institutional frameworks. Weak states, which would desire to enhance institutional resilience, are particularly identified in the comparative discourse as having lessons of important governance reforms.

Federalism and Decentralization

The comparison of the federal system in India and Somalia shows institutional differences on the design and effectiveness of the operations are elementary. The quasi-federal system of India which is the constitutional and functional decentralization of power, is the organized system of the power sharing. The 73 rd and 74 rd Constitutional Amendments which legally recognise local governments (Panchayati Raj institutions) that have brought about an elective post of more than 3 million in village, block and district levels [14].

But, their incorporation into the larger federal structure is not even and the states have a wide latitude as far as devolution of powers and resources are concerned. This difference between the actual and official status underscores the difference between the constitutional intent and workingness.

Indian fiscal federalism is founded on revenue sharing formula (vertical distribution) with recommendation of the Finance Commission regarding both the vertical distribution (between center and states) and horizontal distribution (between states). The present 15 th Finance Commission has a common pool of 41 percent of the central tax revenues among the states and other grants to local governments [15]. It is a planned and planned form of predictability in the fiscal transferral but opponents criticize it as stimulating the state to rely on the central allocations instead of developing the autonomy of the fiscal choices. This was worsened by the introduction of the regime of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017 which centralized the collection of indirect taxes and offset the state governments on the lost revenue- a scheme that is now going to become unsustainable when the compensation period runs out.

This is a sharp contrast of what is happening in Somalia where institutional design has given way to power sharing on the platform of the clans. The Provision Constitution (2012) introduces the two-level government structure that is yet to be implemented. Only 45 percent of the estimated number of the district councils are operational with all of them being in urban centres and rural areas depending on the olden time elders and custom structures [16]. Fiscal arrangements are not very transparent as the member states differ on the revenue sharing formulae on the custom and natural resources. The lack of an independent fiscal commission also contributes to these tensions and is the cause of many standoffs, such as the current oil revenue distribution issue between Puntland and Mogadishu.

Table 1
Federal Governance Comparison: India vs. Somalia

Aspect	India	Somalia
Federal Structure	Quasi-federal, strong center	Fragile, clan-based power-sharing
Local Governance	Panchayati Raj (3M+ local bodies)	45% functional district councils
Fiscal Federalism	Formula-based (41% to states)	Ad hoc revenue sharing
Conflict Resolution	Inter-State Council (underutilized)	Weak mediation mechanisms

Source: India/Somalia Federal system

In India, the Inter-State Council created in the year 1990 under Article 263 of the Constitution provides a formal center-state dialogue but this has not been availed of with much frequency as it has been in session 11 times since 1990. It is contrary to the National Consultative Council of Somalia which is founded on informal clan settlement as compared to institutionalized. Indian system of judicial federalism, with special tribunals and supervision of the Supreme Court offers a more efficient method of recourse to dispute than the hybrid courts applied in Somalia to combine formal and customary systems.

This is emphasized by the fact that the two paths move in opposite directions and in this case there is a very important point to make: the same investments in institutional capacity need to be made in the case of formal decentralization. Poor fiscal devolution (fewer than 5% of state budgets to local governments) and bureaucratic barriers are the problems of the institutions of Panchayati Raj in India [17]. Somalia is even more dire with the allegiances of the clan overriding formal accountability processes. A mix of the fiscal federalism used in India with revenue sharing independent commission and negotiated localized clan quotas can be used in the case of Somalia to enhance predictability and also enable local realities to have their way. However, such reforms must take into consideration the special security restrictions and the low administrative penetration of the nation beyond the urban regions of Somalia.

The other area of the comparative analysis is the contribution of historical legacies to federal outcomes. In India, federalism was created due to the creation of a centralized colonial bureaucracy and in Somalia, it was created due to state collapse. This path dependency is the reason why India has been able to achieve the tradeoff between central coordination and regional differentiation, but in Somalia, federalism has been in dispute between the top-down institution-building approach and the bottom-up approach of ruling by clans. It is mentioned that the organized fiscal policies and the separation of the powers (as in India in Seventh Schedule) are linked to a greater stability, yet this exportability to the unstable settings must be adjusted to the local politics of power.

Electoral Systems and Democratic Participation

The comparative analysis of the electoral systems reveals that the gross disparities in the democratic participation and institutional integrity in India and Somalia exist. India has a first-past-the-post (FPTP) system of electoral system supervised by the independent Election Commission of India (ECI), which has displayed great prowess of conducting free and fair scale electoral processes. The electronic voting machines (EVMs) with voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPATs) facilitated 67.4% voter turnout of 900 million eligible voters in the 2019 general elections [18]. Technological innovations like the ENCORE system can ensure that the electoral processes in real-time monitor the process, reducing the irregularities of the process and costs incurred by the candidates.

Table 2
Electoral Integrity Indicators

Indicator	India	Somalia
Voter Turnout	67.4% (2019 general election)	14,000 electoral delegates (2021)
EMB Independence	Constitutional autonomy (Art. 324)	Frequent executive interference
Fraud Risks	0.003% EVM malfunction rate	Clan-based vote manipulation

Source: India/Somalia Electoral process system

The elections in Somalia are completely different. The 2021 parliamentary elections employed an indirect electoral college system that is based on clan where 14,000 delegates elected 275 members of the Lower House. This more limited measure is a stark contrast to the universal suffrage in India, as the security restrictions of Somalia and absence of a robust electoral system. The international observers report that abnormalities in the 2021 polls in Somalia were rife, including the intimidation of the delegates and procedural breaches at 38% of the polling stations [19].

The Indian system of Electoral governance has an institutional significance and provides valuable lessons to the weak states. The collegium of three members of the ECI, elected by bipartisan consensus ensures autonomy of operation without executive interference. The Model Code of Conduct has been applied rigidly and it has sanctioned the area of campaign finance such that the sum of money an applicant uses is capped to \$110, 000 per parliament seat. In comparison, the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia lacks such independence, and the appointments in 2021 sparked opposition protests over alleged bias by the federal government [20].

The other notable deviation is adoption of technology. In India, the electoral management body has installed 5.5 million EVMs in 1 million polling stations which have registered 99.9% operational reliability since 2013. It uses Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) system to enroll 98 percent of the electorate and pilots of blockchain to enroll overseas voters have demonstrated endless creativity [21]. Even the biometric voter registration in 2020 in Somalia registers only 12 percent of potential voters due to security restrictions and logistical challenges in the rural areas.

Structural differences underlying do exist as evidenced by the effects of electoral systems on political representation. The Indian FPTP system creates single-party majorities, but creates regional disparities, with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) winning 37% of votes and 56% of seats in 2019. Power-sharing in Somalia is clan-based, so, having broader ethnic representation but lacking legislative cohesion, the 2021 parliament is composed of 22 party blocs. Such findings point to the fact that the balance between stability and inclusiveness in the electoral system should be struck particularly in weak states where a winner-takes-all system would only escalate the conflict.

The two instances also differ on the basis of judicial oversight measures. India The Supreme Court has been keeping its hand in electoral politics, necessitating verification of VVPAT and disqualification of criminals. The judiciary in Somalia is not as strong and the electoral disputes are normally resolved by use of clans rather than law. This institutional loophole has continued to recycle the cycle of controversial outcomes as was observed in the 2021 state elections in Galmudug when concurrent announcement of results prompted the mediation of the situation by the African Union.

The analysis shows that technical systems and political consensus are needed to enhance electoral integrity. The achievement of India can be explained by the fact that the institutions were built throughout decades as the first elections in the country were conducted in 1951-52, and the transition in Somalia has not yet been able to improve the situation. In the example of Somalia, gradual transitions might be applied such as an enhancement of biometric registration and improvement of electoral dispute resolution to win trust and transition to direct elections. However, these initiatives must be complemented with security and local government investments to provide enabling environments that are lacking in most fragile states.

Crisis Management and Intergovernmental Coordination

The comparative analysis of crisis management systems shows that there are some fundamental differences in approaches to managing the emergencies in India and Somalia. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in India is a model of a multi-level response system, which integrates the efforts of federal, state, and district governments based on a set of standard operating procedures [22]. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed both the advantages and disadvantages of this system centralized lockdown orders allowed implementing them nationwide quickly, but strict procedures complicated adapting the state-level to the local infection trends [23]. The data-driven crisis governance model is exemplified by the NDMA, which integrates technology, such as the SACHET alert system to notify of disasters and risk mapping using GIS.

The crisis response mechanisms in Somalia work with much more limited conditions, and depend heavily on international partners to provide security and humanitarian intervention. Since 2007, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has retaken the control of about 80 percent of the territory which had been occupied by Al-Shabaab within collaborative efforts with Somali National Army troops. Nevertheless, they have systemic challenges such as 40% attrition rates among security staff and regular inter-agency delays [24]. Federal Government of Somalia response to crisis is still reactive, i.e. not preventive, there are no early warning mechanisms and there is ad hoc coordination of Mogadishu with the federal member states during crisis.

Table 3
Crisis Management Capabilities Comparison

Indicator	India	Somalia
Institutional Framework	NDMA with 12 disaster-specific divisions	Fragmented security-clan response networks
Early Warning Systems	SACHET alerts covering 95% population	Limited to major urban centers
Coordination Mechanism	Unified command structure (NDRF)	Ad hoc AU-SNA joint operations
Response Time	4–6 hours for national disasters	72 + hours for complex emergencies

Source: India NDMA/Somali Crisis response plan

Another opportunity the disaster response in India enjoys of the federal system of the country is the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) which has 12 battalions that are strategically located in the high-risk areas. It was deployed to evacuate 100,000 in a 48 hour operation that was a coordinated state-federal effort to roll out as quickly as possible in the 2023 Cyclone Biparjoy and evacuate people living on the coast [25]. However, the COVID-19 experience also revealed the flaws in the health crisis management, and some states, including Kerala, adjusted the containment approach to the local situation, and other had issues with centralized one-size-fits-all requirements [26].

Crisis management is particularly challenged by the hybrid security governance in Somalia. The National Security Council is the theoretical control of the integrated response, and the operational control remains fragmented between the Somali National Army, the clan militias, and AMISOM units. The 2022 response to drought identified these gaps: humanitarian assistance was provided to 60% of the affected communities due to access problems in the territories of Al-Shabaab influence [27]. Contrary to the standardized relief systems in India, relief distribution in Somalia is often determined by negotiated accessibility with local power brokers, compromising effectiveness and fairness.

International relations in the two systems contribute differently. India also believes in multilateral diplomacy in disasters by joining such forums as Bay of Bengal Initiative of Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in which it shares technical expertise with other countries [28]. Foreign relations in Somalia remain largely security-driven with 90 percent of crisis funding depending on humanitarian appeals as compared to institutional capacity building [29]. This kind of dependency has a pernicious impact on long-term sustainability as it is seen in the cyclical aspect of famine in which emergency aid substitutes the structural investments in food security.

Technological integration is also a characteristic of the two methods. The Crisis Management Plan of India would need the real-time exchange of information between NDMA and Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the state authorities with the help of satellite images and AI-based damage

assessment technology. The new National Disaster Management Agency in Somalia lacks such technical capacity, relying on the UNOSAT to analyze the satellite image and retrieve the data by hand in areas with access. The divide underscores the compounded challenges of fragile states to adopt smart governance solutions without digital infrastructure underpinning them.

The analogy offers valuable insights to weak-setting governance. The Indian model demonstrates that a centralized coordination and decentralized implementation are not mutually exclusive to the presence of explicit protocol hierarchies and shared technological platforms. The selective implementation of the principles i.e. the establishment of the standard operating procedures in joint security-humanitarian operations in the example of Somalia could enhance the effectiveness of the response and adaptability to the local power realities. However, these reforms must take into account the specifics of Somalia, including the impossibility to enter the conflict regions with the state and reliance on informal structures of the government. The evidence suggests that incremental improvement can be achieved with hybrid systems that can be achieved by introducing formal crisis institutions into the current community-based mechanisms of responding rather than attempting the wholesale institutional transplants.

Democratic Institutions and Rule of Law

There exist vast differences between the well-established system of judicial institutions in India and the poorly established system in Somalia as evidenced in the analysis of democratic institutions and rule of law. Even though judiciary is constitutionally independent, it is being put under a lot of pressure because of executive overreach within the rule of one party. In 2015, the Supreme Court passed a landmark ruling that reaffirmed judicial independence in appointments by restoring the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act [30]. But the current stalling of politically sensitive cases like the protracted operation of adjudicating electoral bonds unveils, reveals, demeans the procedures safeguards that are shattered under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regime [31].

The civil society organizations in India are strong regardless of whatever limitations that are on the regulation side. An example is the Karnataka Private medical establishments act protests where health provider associations are able to manipulate the complex policy environments, via the mediums of the judicial system and media campaigns to affect the policy [32]. This activism is in the wider context of Indian constitutional rights, by the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) systems that allow citizens to directly appeal to the higher courts to redress anyone of government inefficiencies, which in Somalia would not be possible as the access to the judiciary is limited.

There are some structural flaws and the systems of dispute resolution that are based on clan systems, which have been systematically disadvantaging the Somali judicial systems. By, the formal court system is available to 30 percent of the population, primarily in the urban areas where the rural areas are left to the courts of the xeer (customary law) and the sharia tribunals [33]. The 2012 Provisional Constitution includes a bill of rights, which cannot be enforced and the Judicial Service Commission is poorly staffed

and funded. This institutional vacuum allows extrajudicial operations like in the 2023 reports of arbitrary arrests by security forces in Mogadishu [34].

Table 4
Rule of Law Indicators Comparison

Indicator	India	Somalia
Judicial Independence	6.5/10 (World Justice Project)	1.2/10 (UNSOM Assessment)
Case Clearance Rate	87% (Supreme Court, 2022)	12% (Formal Courts, 2021)
Legal Pluralism	Uniform Civil Code debates	Xeer, Sharia, and statutory law coexistence
Access to Justice	18 judges per million population	0.7 judges per million population

Source: India Rule of Law Indicators/Somali Rule of law

Key Insights

Several critical implications of this comparative analysis to the theory of governance and institutional design are whether the concept of governance can be transferred in both stable and fragile states. A good example is the quasi federalism of India that highlights how structured fiscal regulations and technological combination can facilitate resilience of governance despite having a multifaceted multi-level system. The 41-percent revenue-sharing system between state and central governments provides a predictable fiscal system and electronic voting systems and disaster management technologies show how digital governance can reduce uncertainties [39]. Indian experience is however cautioning of the undue centralization, of which it is evidenced in the unequal exercise of the Panchayati Raj institutions, and in the executive domination over the judicial autonomy which is occasionally practiced.

The opposite scenario is experienced in Somalia whereby weak institutional voids due to weak formal governance are filled by informal clan systems. The inefficiency of the district councils (45% functional) and the improvised fiscal system depict the structural troubles in the creation of the state capacity on the ground [40]. But there is also adaptive resilience in the hybrid form of governance in Somalia, with xeer courts and clan mediation, providing dispute resolution in places where there is no formal judiciary system. This means that weak states may require transitional hybrid systems of governance that will gradually institutionalize the existing system of governance rather than bringing in fully institutionalized blue prints.

Of particular learning is the diversity of electoral governance. The Indian experiences in technologies-based electoral integrity, including EVMs with VVPATs and blockchain-based voter registration, demonstrate that technological innovation can be successful in augmenting democratic engagement on mass scale [41]. The clan based electoral colleges in Somalia, despite the fact that they enhance a broad

representation of the clan, indicate the risks of the exclusionary process that does not allow a direct turn up of the citizens. Gradual electoral reforms, such as biometric enrolment and civic education at local levels, could be trusted in case of Somalia, and India could adopt technological solutions that could be adjusted to local security constraints.

Crisis management comparisons indicate that both decentralization in implementation and centralization in coordination are not mutually exclusive. In India, the NDMA model has succeeded in integrating disaster response plans at the national level with State-based disaster response teams, yet the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need to be flexible in responding to a health crisis [42]. A different type of balance is required in Somalia security-related crises as the international community (AMISOM) helps to stabilize the situation and the local clan networks ease humanitarian access. This indicates that weak states might adhere to the principles of crisis governance within India such as standardized operating procedures and early warning systems but may be open to negotiation locally within conflict areas.

The rule of law analysis stresses that reforms in institutions have to be sequenced. Indian judicial system has over the decades grown independent with landmark cases like the basic structure doctrine and formal courts in Somalia are still fledging [43]. Realist alternatives that might be offered in place of immediate nationwide judicial reforms in the case of Somalia would be commercial courts in urban centers and institutionalization of the interfaces between xeer, sharia and statutory law. It is also suggested in the history of public interest litigation in India, how the marginalized groups can avail the judicial process in order to re-mediate the failure of the governance- a potentially repeatable process once the formal judiciary of Somalia can do the same.

These institutional disparities are measured by the governance scores comparison (India: 62.34 vs Somalia: 19.07 on Voice and Accountability) but also hides some of the key nuances. The higher scores in India can be attributed to the constitutional protection and government capacity, but the failure of Somalia to a government can be attributed to decades of state failure, and not incapacity to govern. The findings do not support deterministic views of fragility in showing how the hybrid systems in Somalia are continuing the basic functionality despite the bare-minimum formal institutions. This would mean that in weak states, there should be informal governance indicators alongside traditional measurements in the governance evaluation.

The biggest cross cutting observation is on the importance of the time in institution development. The Indian federal system has been built up over the course of 7 decades of constitutional practice and incremental reforms, but the federal experiment of Somalia has been less than a decade. This time lag cautions against unrealistic expectations of rapid institutional transfer, and emphasizes on patient, context-specific application of principles of governance. The comparison is concluded to suggest that though organized fiscal policies, electoral technologies and crisis policies in stable federations can influence the reform of weak states, the success of their work is determined by the fact that they are calibrated to the local political economies and the existing traditions of governance.

Governance Scores Comparison

The quantitative assessment of governance performance through the World Governance Indicators (WGI) reveals stark disparities between India and Somalia, providing empirical validation of the qualitative findings discussed in previous sections. The “Voice and Accountability” metric, which measures perceptions of citizen participation and government responsiveness, shows India scoring 62.34 compared to Somalia’s 19.07 on a 0-100 scale [44]. This more than threefold difference encapsulates the institutional gulf between an established democracy and a fragile state emerging from decades of conflict.

Figure 1. Governance scores for India and Somalia (1996)

Figure 1 indicates that the difference in the effectiveness of the governance in the extreme is indicated by the comparison of the scores. India having a moderate level tells about the fact that there is a moderately good institutional foundation of participatory governance, i.e. frequent elections, fairly free media and an enormous access to the mediums of civic mobilization. The fact that Somalia has underperformed in these dimensions is a sign that the nation has come far in these aspects with the power systems founded on clanism and security problems still to destroy the formal accountability systems. The scores are linked to the general findings of the research on organised fiscal federalism in India and ad hoc revenue sharing war in Somalia, its reverse strategies to electoral integrity, and crisis management.

WGI can be broken down to its constituent and this is more informative. Government Effectiveness (58.42) and Regulatory Quality (54.67), the capacity of the bureaucracy and the mechanisms of policy implementation [45] are the best in India.

These scores relate to the ability of the nation to execute some complex processes, including the Goods and services tax (GST) and conduct countrywide elections with minimal irregularities. The lowest score of Somalia is preceded by the Political Stability (3.19) and Control of Corruption (8.76) that indicate the vices that have been reported (the clan-based system of governance) and anarchy security machineries of Somalia [46].

The trend of these indicators over a time series portrays deviations. A score of 5 has been recorded in India since the year 2002 and this means that despite political transitions taking place, the institutions have been stable and the indicators in Somalia are volatile with a score of 10–15 points being the measures between measurements [47]. This instability reflects the transitional nature of Somalia, whereby incremental progress in areas like public financial management (as demonstrated by Somalia 2023 IMF Staff-Monitored Program) is paralleled by a regular failure due to the clan war and the terrorism attacks [48].

The three policy implications of the comparison of the governance scores include the following. To start with, the evidence proves a close relationship between structured fiscal rules and mechanisms of

electoral integrity (as it is in India) and the outcomes in the form of better governance performance. Two, the scores clarify the compounded nature of the problems faced by weak states like Somalia in all facets of governance, which means that limited improvements in one domain of reform (e.g. elections) will hardly be effective if security and institutional capacity is not improved. Third, the time-related effects indicate that the governance construction in weak situations involves long-term commitments due to the fact that short-term gains can be quickly inverted without long-term investments.

These quantitative indicators have limitations that are to be accounted. The application of expert surveys and secondary data by the WGI may be unjust to informal institutions of governance that are performing well in the Somalia context such as the application of the use of clan-based dispute resolution [49]. In the same manner, the Indian scores may over-represent the actual state of governance in the marginalized regions where implementation gaps exist although there are good formal institutions. The specified measurement concerns suggest that global indicators need to be complemented by local governance assessments when formulating institutional reforms by policymakers.

The comparative analysis ends by demonstrating that although the governance scores are handy benchmarking tools, they must be applied in context. The existing institutions in India assist it to absorb the political and economic shocks and smooth its performance in the governance, whereas in Somalia, its weaknesses leave it to the extreme fluctuations in the score. The message to the international actors that champion the state-building of Somalia is that they are to concentrate on interventions that are capable of catalyzing and sustaining concurrent changes in the governance dimensions that is, security sector reform efforts along with fiscal decentralization and electoral integrity efforts, rather than ad hoc technical assistance efforts. The scores also affirm the notion of adapting and not merely transferring the governance models of the stable states, and the context of Somalia is unique and requires a hybrid of both formal and informal institutions.

Conclusion

The paper has made a comparative study on the issue of governance uncertainties in India and Somalia, and given some important insights on the functioning of federal regimes under various conditions of fragility and stability. This discussion reveals that formal fiscal federalism, technological unification of elections and multitieralized coordination of crisis like the case of quasi-federal system in India can bring resilience to governance. That of Somalia, however, highlights the issues of institutional capacity building in the post-conflict environment in which informal governance can be provided by informal clan-based society. The findings are inconsistent with the old assumptions about the transferability of institutions, which emphasize the need to adapt to the situation locally, considering the local political economy and the reliance on the historical trajectory.

The research has contributed to the broader theory of governance by demonstrating how hybrid systems can serve as transitional mechanisms in weak states and codify the current practices rather than provide

new designs. Future studies should be focused on the longitudinal effects of incremental reforms, in particular, the relationship between the evolving federalism in Somalia and the clan governance in the long-term. Similarly, comparative studies can also be carried out to establish whether the decentralized model of crisis management in India has something to be transferred to other weak states having complex crises. The paper will finish by stating again that to improve governance there is a need to strike a balance between universal and localizations, a very subtle approach that leaves the potential and limitations of institutional learning alive in the face of divergent politics.

Declarations

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from publicly accessible secondary sources, including media reports, official government statements, United Nations documents, and scholarly publications referenced in the paper.

The process tracing analysis relies on these open sources. Specific quantitative financial flows, detailed platform analytics from social media, and granular actor-business linkages were not extractable from available public archives due to limitations in source granularity.

The security fragmentation index was derived from reported events and qualitative indicators in these sources. No primary data were generated for this study. Requests for additional source clarification can be directed to the authors.

Declaration A

Funding Declaration

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. However, the article processing charges (APC) for this publication will be fully covered by Authors.

Declaration B

Authors' Contributions Declaration

Mr. Hassan Mohamed Yusuf and Dr. Moitree Bhattacharya contributed to this study in complementary capacities. Mr. Hassan Mohamed Yusuf was responsible for the conceptualization of the research, formulating the research questions, developing the theoretical framework, and designing the comparative research structure. He developed the methodology, establishing the comparative case study approach and creating the analytical criteria for evaluating governance systems across fiscal federalism, electoral integrity, crisis management, and rule of law dimensions. He conducted the investigation, performing primary data collection from government reports and secondary analysis of governance indices, and carried out the formal analysis of fiscal federalism, electoral systems, crisis management mechanisms, and rule of law indicators. Mr. Yusuf prepared the original manuscript draft, including the literature review, case descriptions, and findings sections, and was responsible for data curation, organizing and managing the governance indicators data, tables, and reference materials. He also designed the comparative tables and governance scores figure for visualization, and coordinated the research process and submission logistics as project administrator.

Dr. Moitree Bhattacharya provided supervision throughout the research process, offering academic oversight, guiding the research methodology, and ensuring scholarly rigor. She validated the analytical findings and verified the accurate interpretation of governance indicators. Dr. Bhattacharya critically reviewed and edited the manuscript, ensuring theoretical coherence, appropriate academic tone, and strength of argumentation. She facilitated access to institutional resources and academic databases, and contributed to refining the theoretical framework and research objectives during the conceptualization phase. She also assisted in developing the comparative analytical framework and ensuring methodological soundness.

Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Declaration C

Ethics, Consent to Participate, and Consent to Publish

Ethics Declaration

This comparative study on governance uncertainties in India and Somalia has been conducted in strict adherence to ethical research standards and principles. The research methodology employed a comparative case study design utilizing exclusively secondary data sources, including government reports, United Nations documents, governance indices (World Governance Indicators), media reports, and peer-reviewed scholarly publications. As no primary data collection involving human participants,

surveys, interviews, or field research was undertaken, this study did not require ethics committee approval from institutional review boards.

The study recognizes the sovereignty and unique political circumstances of both India and Somalia, providing scholarly analysis of governance structures without advocating for any political position, with the aim of contributing to constructive policy discourse.

The authors declare no competing financial, professional, or personal interests that could influence the research findings. Mr. Hassan Mohamed Yusuf is affiliated with Somali National University and pursuing doctoral studies at Delhi University, while Dr. Moitree Bhattacharya is associated with Daulat Ram College, Delhi University; this dual affiliation has been transparently disclosed and does not compromise the objectivity of the research. The study relies on publicly accessible secondary sources, and the Data Availability Statement explicitly notes that no primary data were generated, with all quantitative indicators derived from verifiable official sources. The research makes culturally sensitive comparisons between two vastly different governance systems without essentializing or stigmatizing either context, recognizing the historical specificities of both cases—India's seven decades of constitutional practice and Somalia's post-conflict state-building trajectory—and analyzes governance outcomes within their respective contexts.

Consent to Participate

This study did not involve direct interaction with human subjects, nor did it collect primary data through surveys, interviews, observations, or experimental methods. Consequently, individual informed consent from research participants was neither required nor obtained, as no persons were directly engaged in the research process. The research exclusively utilized secondary data from publicly available sources, including official government documents and constitutional texts (such as the Constitution of India and Somalia's Provisional Constitution), governance databases (World Governance Indicators, Transparency International reports), United Nations publications and assessments (UNSOM, UNDP reports), international financial institution reports (IMF Article IV Consultations), peer-reviewed academic journals and scholarly books, and media reports and publicly disseminated policy documents. All sources are appropriately credited in the References section, and the Data Availability Statement provides further clarity on data provenance.

The analysis of these secondary sources does not contain any personally identifiable information, nor does it involve sensitive data requiring special protection. The researchers have ensured that the study adheres to the principles of non-interference, as no individuals, communities, or institutions were approached for information or involvement; no risk of harm, as the research does not involve human subjects and there is no potential for physical, psychological, social, or economic harm to any individual or group; and privacy protection, as no personal data were collected, processed, or stored, with the research focusing on institutional and systemic analysis rather than individual experiences. Should future phases of this research involve primary data collection, the authors commit to obtaining full ethics

clearance and informed consent from all participants in accordance with institutional guidelines and international research ethics standards.

Consent to Publish

The authors, Mr. Hassan Mohamed Yusuf and Dr. Moitree Bhattacharya, hereby provide their full and unconditional consent to publish this research paper titled "*Study on Governance Uncertainties: Lessons from India's Quasi-Federalism and Somalia's Fragile Federalism*" in a peer-reviewed academic journal or other scholarly publication platform. The authors confirm that this manuscript represents original work created by the listed authors, with all intellectual property rights associated with the research findings, analysis, and textual content belonging to the authors unless otherwise indicated for third-party materials properly cited. All authors have reviewed the final manuscript and unanimously approve its submission for publication, with Mr. Hassan Mohamed Yusuf, as the corresponding author, authorized to act on behalf of the co-authors in all publication-related communications.

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The authors consent to making the data sources and references available to readers and researchers upon reasonable request, consistent with the Data Availability Statement included in the manuscript. The authors grant to the publishing journal or platform the right to reproduce, distribute, and display the manuscript in print and electronic formats, including archiving in institutional repositories and databases, provided that proper attribution is maintained. The corresponding author, Mr. Hassan Mohamed Yusuf, affirms that he has obtained all necessary permissions and consents required for publication, including from co-authors and any institutions named in the research.

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Figures

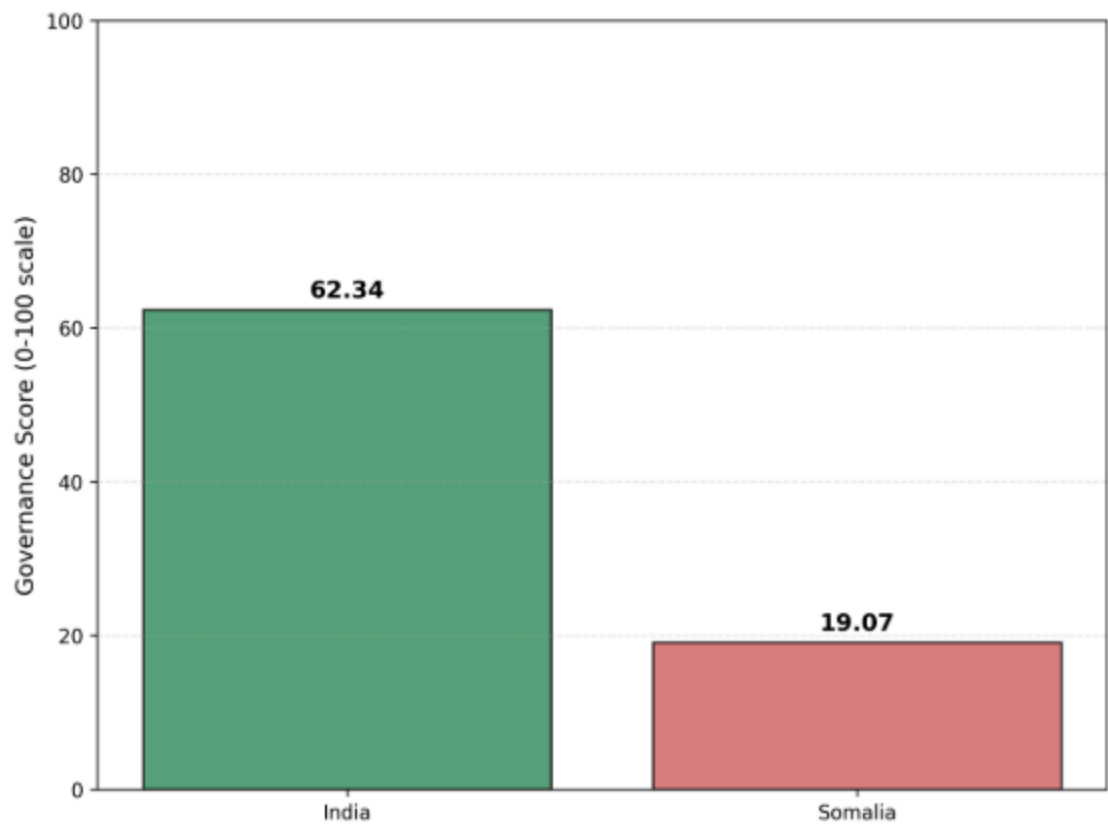


Figure 1

Governance scores for India and Somalia (1996)