**DEVOLUTION**

**Definition of devolution**.

Devolution, as an aspect of devolution decentralization can be defined as the situation in which the government at the center relinquishes part of its power and funding to other bodies such as local governments. Decentralization can be defined as that system of government in which some administrative powers of the central government is knowingly transferred from a higher level of authority to a lower level of authority. In other words, power could be transferred from the central government to regional or district units.

**MERITS**

1. **Brings government to the doorstep of the people.**

One of the merits of devolution is that it brings the government from wherever it is to the people at the local level. The people are able to have easy access to the various services that are provided by the government. For example, to take a passport, one does not have to go to the capital city before he or she can do so. The person can take the passport in an office close to him or her.

1. **It minimizes tyrannical tendencies.**

Another advantage of devolution is that the tendency to become dictatorial is minimized. There is government at the local level and because people participate actively in the operations of the government at the local level, they become political wiser and are therefore able to check any political office holder from sliding into dictatorship.

1. **Allows room for taking initiative.**

Some problems are peculiar to some localities and therefore only local solutions can be applied to it. The fact that there is room for fining local solutions means that the people at the local are able to take initiatives to solve their own problems.

1. **Takes some burdens off the central government.**

Devolution allows for the central government to cede part of its responsibilities to the regional and district authorities. Once the load of government is shared the burden that would necessarily have been on the central government is take off and makes the burden less compounding.

1. **Enhances the efficiency of central government.**

As the units at the local level take some of the burden off the shoulders of the central government, it is able to concentrate on more pressing national issues. The result is that it makes the central government more efficient.

1. **Reduces delay in policy implementation.**

Unlike in a centralized government where policy alterations have first to be referred to the center, in a devolution, the people can vary the policy to suit local situations as long as it does completely deviate too much from the original policy. This helps to reduce the delay that is associated with the implementation of government programs.

**THE DEMERITS**

1. **Difficulty in getting qualified personnel**

One of the disadvantages of decentralization is that it is difficult to get qualified personnel who would accept posting to the towns and villages. This is especially so in developing countries where there is the lack of some very important social amenities in some districts. Everybody highly qualified person wants to remain in the big cities.

1. **May lead to inefficiency**

Where there is the absence of qualified personnel, the government is compelled to hire anybody who is willing to be posted to the hinterlands. The result is that the output of such people does not measure up to what is required for optimum success.

1. **Stifles uniform development**

Another disadvantage of decentralization is that some districts that are motivated tend to develop faster than others. Apart from that some districts get highly qualified people to work there so they are able to come up with policies that inure to the benefit of the locality and those with lowly qualified personnel suffer. In the end, the pattern of development is not uniform.

1. **Expensive to run.**

The institutions of state that help in the running of the country need to be deployed in all parts of the country to render similar services to the people at the grassroots. This calls for the building of structures and the hiring of personnel to man them. These personnel have to be remunerated appropriately. This makes the practice of decentralization a very expensive venture.

1. **Divide loyalty**

Though decentralization brings government to the doorstep of the people, what happens is that the people begin to see the government close to them as the only government to relate to. For this reason, their loyalties are to the government close to them and drop their level of loyalty to the central government.

1. **May lead to secession**

Where there is too much decentralization, the governments at the regional and districts may feel too independent and may begin to think they could stand on their own. This may lead to the tendency to break away from the center and if care is not taken, it may lead to all-out war.