**Significance of Devolution in the Current Society**

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According to a recent World Bank report, Kenyans voted to decentralize government, ushering in a new era of leadership with 47 governors and their teams taking up the reins of power in newly created counties. County governments negotiated a working relationship with the national government in terms of power and revenue sharing, and have encountered political, fiscal, and administrative challenges in the delivery of services to the people. If this report is anything to go by, then devolution should be more widely integrated into modern-day societies as it would be an avenue for a developing nation as each devolved government has its own set of powers and responsibilities, which vary on the specific arrangements agreed between the central government and the devolved administration. Devolution has its pros which include local representation, tailored policies, and increased public participation, in addition, it has cons such as the high cost of maintenance and unequal representation.

Local representation in devolution is important because it ensures that decisions are made closer to the local people, communities, and businesses they affect. According to Britannica (2023), the rationale of representative government is that in large modern countries, the people cannot all assemble, as they did in the marketplace of democratic Athens or Rome; and if, therefore, the people are to participate in government, they must select and elect a small number from among themselves to represent and to act for them. In modern societies with large populations, local representation is necessary as the elected officials will mostly voice the problems of the people they represent. This will in turn foster national unity by fostering diversity. It is thus concluded that local representation in devolution furthers democratic reforms in any modern society.

Devolution allows devolved governments to develop policies that are tailored to the needs of their areas thus encouraging policy divergence. The mentioned tailored policies could include economic development, health, and social policy. In the late 1990s, devolution was enacted in the UK by the Labor Government, taking a highly asymmetrical form in which different territories have been granted different powers and institutional arrangements (MacKinnon, 2015). This split the local government into three devolved governments: The Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, and the Northern Ireland Executive. The UK is a more democratic state, as devolution brought democratic accountability. Decisions have been brought closer to the people, which in turn better-improved policy creation and implementation. Thus, devolution in modern-day society easily facilitates policy creation and divergence.

Another significance of devolution is public participation. This allows for a particular group of individuals from a particular community to influence decision-making when it comes to governance processes at the county level. According to Opiyo (2017), Kenya’s 2010 constitution stipulates that all devolved governments should inculcate public participation processes in their governance systems. Public participation reduces corruption, as the citizens participate in government processes, they can monitor how public resources are utilized and also hold public officers accountable for service delivery. In addition, public participation empowers marginalized groups such as the poor and the underrepresented in political spheres like youth and women. As such, public participation is a vital pro of devolution.

Devolution though very vital to modern societies, has its cons. One such con is that devolution has a high cost of maintenance. According to WBG (2015), devolution and increased investment in infrastructure are improving Kenya’s prospects for growth. In addition, the government’s expansionary fiscal policy has increased growth opportunities also has constrained public expenditure management, particularly in how resources are allocated and used. This has resulted in large public debt and spending pressure to finance expensive infrastructure projects. With the ever-growing economies, the capacity to service debt has not changed, thus rendering maintenance of devolution very high.

Another less coming of devolution is that it brings about unequal representation. In most growing societies, there is an existence of a social class of people i.e. the rich, middle class, and the poor. According to Traber et al. (2022), the representational process in the United States is unequal. An example is how high-income constituents predict the voting behavior of their senators to a much larger degree than low-income citizens. An opinion poll was conducted and from the report, the opinions of the rich mostly influenced policy outcomes. It is only when the preferences of the rich and poor align, do governments seem responsive to the opinions of the poor. Thus, wealthier citizens carry more weight in decision-making processes.

Devolution has its pros which include local representation, tailored policies, and increased public participation, in addition, it has cons such as the high cost of maintenance and unequal representation. Local representation in devolution fosters national unity which creates a conducive atmosphere for devolution. Increased public participation in government activities facilitates better policy creation and advancement as the voices of the least represented individuals are heard. Corruption is the root evil of devolution and must be weeded out if any government seeks to succeed in devolution. Overall, the impacts of devolution on service delivery remain mixed, as ambiguities still exist in financing and provision.

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