

# WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVOLUTION IN OUR CURRENT SOCIETY? DISCUSS THE PROS AND CONS OF DEVOLUTION.

## INTRODUCTION

Devolution is the transfer of power, resources and representation from central government down to local governments. This means local government enjoy autonomy from central government. Local government is not under any obligation to seek authority from the central government to implement decision that fall under their jurisdiction however they must recognize they are part of a larger state. Each devolved set of government have powers and responsibilities depending on specific arrangement between the central government and devolved administration. The objective of devolution is to promote democracy and accountability in exercise of power, enable community to manage their own affairs and ensure equitable sharing of resources. Power decentralizes has been a debatable topic among scholars in our society because of its significant advantages and notable challenges.

## 2.0 PROS OF DEVOLUTION.

The current society is reaping big from devolution because it offers numerous advantages including;

### 2.1 BRINGING GOVERNANCE CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE.

Devolution gives powers to local people representatives which means government administrative services will be easily accessible by the people. This ensures efficient and effective governance as regional government will be responding more quickly to local issues.

Devolution ensures government is on grass root level to the people, this helps citizens to express their needs and what is required for easy governance for smooth running of daily activities.

Decentralization of government services saves the time of local citizens because they don't need to travel to the capital to receive government services.

Devolution promotes democracy by ensuring local people participates directly in decision making process. It encourages greater citizen participation in governance, boosting trust and cooperation between officials and common citizens

### 2.2 PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

Devolution makes decision making processes close to the people, local leaders are more accountable to their actions and policies. It provides more manageable, transparent arena to prevent eruption of corruption or control it if it does. The society is able to observe and monitor implementation and progress of local projects promoting transparency and accountability

Through devolution people scrutinize their leaders effectively, because they are able to participate directly into government operation becoming more aware about local government activities and decisions. Leaders are kept on check and if they fail, they will be punished in local elections. This ensures transparency in local government day to day operations.

### 2.3. IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY.

social-economic provision of goods and services has been made easy and simple by devolution. Health services, education and local social infrastructure is budgeted for by local devolved unit speeding up the rate of service delivery to the society. Devolution enables local governments to plan effectively for service delivery based on felt needs.

Devolution gives opportunity to the local government to prioritize their own development and needs. It allows implementation of more tailored policy decision that is precisely suitable to local needs and interests. This allows a suitable response to a specific problem.

### 2.4. IT TESTS AND SHOWCASE POLICY IN ONE AREA FOR THE BENEFITS OF THE ANOTHER.

Different local government use different policy to deal with their challenges meaning devolution encourages policy innovation and development. Devolved region uses their autonomy to introduce small innovative reforms that offer proof of the concept to the rest of the country.

Different solutions to a common problem can be put into practice simultaneously in different local governments, by evaluating the outcome of the intervention. The local government learn from each other to provide evidence-based solution to a common problem.

It acts as a laboratory to test new policy. Local authorities are often more flexible in experimenting with innovative solution to complex problems leading to more effective governance.

### 2.5 IT BALANCE RESOURCE ALLOCATON.

Economic, enterprise and employment tended to concentrate in urban areas, with devolution there has been gradual increase of change of the pattern to regional devolved areas.

Devolution makes sure a specific local government is a located resources according to its needs to boost national economy. it brings equity in resource allocation among different local governments. This makes sure the minority and areas with hardship are taken care off. In united the Kingdom funding allocations formula to devolved administration is based on size of population to ensure equitable allocation of resources.

The common criteria of allocating funds to regional government is based on poverty, population, land area and basic equal share. This ensures we have balance in resource allocation to all local government. Balancing resource allocation makes sure the national revenue is divided without favoring or oppressing certain regions.

### 2.6 CULTURAL PRESERVETION.

In Australia the house of representative standing committee on Aboriginal's affairs concluded that the essence of self-determination is the devolution of political and economic power of individual communities Devolution addresses cultural diversity and grievances better, because the local government understands its people more than outside leadership. This forges a strong bond within the society. Māori culture in New Zealand has been promoted by granting Māori power to govern themselves at local level.

Localizing governance makes the community living in the specific devolved region taking pride of their culture.

### 3.0 CONS OF DEVOLUTION

Devolution has its negative impact also despite being a popular model of governance. Below are some of its disadvantages.

#### 3.1.IT IS EXPENSIVE.

Government spending has increased to take care of devolution needs. Successful devolution processes require huge economic, human and political resources. Devolution involves creation of new institution and creation of many posts; this increases the burden to the tax payer pocket. Local government offices have to be built in every devolved regional government. Running the devolved bodies is expensive, considering same roles are performed by different bodies and different people in different local governments.

Devolution comes with a big number of elective posts; this increases the cost of conducting an election.

#### 3.2 MAY LED TO SECESSION.

Political tension in devolved units can intensify regional identity and political rivalries, potential leading to conflicts that undermine national cohesion. Devolution fuels separatist sentiments related to national identity, regions with strong identity may push for more independence. The establishment of Scottish parliament in 1999 sparked debate over its independence. Spain autonomous regions like Catalonia have led to a unique cultural renaissance regarding its independence and sovereignty. In Canada, Quebec devolved power led to preservation of France culture which has resulted to sentiments of independence. In India, central government as encouraged local identity based ethnic and linguistic division encouraged region like Kashmir to fight for their independence.

If the devolved unit perceive themselves abandoned by the central government, feeling for fully sovereignty and independence may arise.

#### 3.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISPARITIES.

There is no uniformity in economic growth because every devolved government has its different leadership and resources. Devolution may result into economic and social disparities within the country. The wealthier regions that were in place before devolution will have more accelerated development than the poor ones because of the good infrastructure that were there before. Some regions will be prosperous than others because of their strategic position, quality of leadership and available economic resources. This may result into unequal outcome from citizens indifferent parts of the country.

some local governments may lack technical knowledge required for effective budgeting and financial planning resulting to insufficiency and waste. Powerful actors in the society may manipulate devolution outcome to their advantage, leading to unequal distribution of resources.

### 3.4 COORDINATION CHALLENGES.

Confusion in regard to the interpretation of various pieces of legislation in dealing with devolution has created mistrust between different level of government resulting to poor coordination in implementing policies. Fragmentation of devolve units leads to complex approach of governance complicating coordination between different level of government. Central government policy may contradict local government policy hence bring in confusion. There is tension and confusion regarding the roles of elected representatives for different tiers of government.

In Kenya there has been power struggle between senators and members of national assemblies over the pecking orders due to uncertainty over seniority between senators and members of national assembly. Amendment to propose constitutional powers of the senate by members of national assemblies at a referendum forum in 2010 nearly rendered the senate worthless heaping major responsibility on the national assembly. Former national assembly clerk Patrick Gichohi, argues that the constitution gives two house equal powers further revealing the magnitude of confusion in understanding Kenyan bicameral house.

### 4.0. CONCLUSION

The significance of devolution varies across different context. We have witnessed breakthrough in devolution as well as setbacks in our society. If well implemented devolution will guarantee accelerated development and reduce level of inequalities and vulnerability. Based on devolution pro and cons, The effectiveness of devolution depends on nature of devolved power, constitution of a particular country cohesion within a particular society and methods of conflict resolution between central government and regional government. The challenges ailing devolution cannot be resolved overnight. However, a number of actions can be implemented to move devolution agenda forward.