

DECENTRALIZATION IN DELIVERING PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES: A CRITICAL REVIEW IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN TANZANIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the decentralization in delivering social services particularly in education sector, in the respect of shedding light on the determinants of efficient public administration, effective development together with good governance. In to obtain reliable and sufficient information the study employed both quantitative and qualitative approach whereby, a cross-sectional survey was used accompanied with 286 respondents from both rural as well urban settlements. Focus group discussion, structured questionnaires, key informants together with observation was used to collect information relevant for the study. Basically, the findings revealed that decentralization program contributed considerable impacts on public service provision of various categories. By taking the point of delivery of this service from the central administrations to local authority, this clearly contributed to improved operational efficiencies. However, decentralization has not been sufficient to meet citizens' expectations and fulfillment on quality education, perhaps due to shortcoming of new mechanisms for disseminated planning and strong coaching programs of the Public Institutions Perspective.

Keywords: Decentralization, democratization, secondary education, local government, devolution, school, service delivery

INTRODUCTION

For years, many economically developing nations are caught in a chain reaction of poverty, fragile institutions, bribery, dishonest and low organizational capacity, low levels of legitimacy, poor public service provision, and low economic growth rates as well sectarian violence. In this respect, decentralization program has been widely embraced as way of addressing of this trap, and was tremendously popular during the remedy era of the 1990s and since. Experience indicates that decentralization reform has considerable impacts public on service delivery, governance as well development more broadly. By taking the point of service delivery from the central authority to local administrations, it causes important changes in the budget allocations together with delivery of service (JICA, 2008). On the other hand, it is viewed that decentralization can support democratization, sufficient administration, impressive development as well sound management (Saito, 2001). In fact, decentralization program, permits for the review of local authority as more

than just as an administrative extension of the central administration and a official structure with new self-rule including functions.

In Africa particularly Tanzania, public participation, as a way of implementing decentralization, it is a conduct that has been endowed conspicuousness in the Constitution of by the 1984 Act 15.5.50 in the United Republic of Tanzania. Public involvement is a political practice, and may also be considered as a right. Public involvement suggests that the public's contribution will determine the decision. It should be noted that in a true democratic country, citizens work as partners with their government and participate in ways that promote good governance. If citizens fail to participate actively, there is a danger they will become subjects rather than participants in the decentralization process of governing (Government of Western Australia, 2006).

There are many advantages to people participating in their local government, namely: firstly, to ensure that the local government leaders do not abuse their powers.

Secondly, to keep the local government more informed of the wishes of the people within its jurisdiction. Thirdly, participation involves citizens in the governing of the country, starting with the local government. Lastly, participation by people means that more revenue and more informed as well as better decisions and people themselves (local government) make better decisions (TIE, 2002).

Method

The study sought to establish understanding on the decentralization program in delivering social services particularly in education sector. To score the goal of this inquiry, information was gathered through mixed methods involving quantitative and qualitative, before further exploration of phenomena. Methods used in data collection were documentary analysis, focus group discussion, questionnaires along with interviews. Systematic random and selective sampling approach were used for sampling. A minimum sample sizes listed had a total of 287 attesters. Data was assembled through an extensive review of compatible literature on the research theme. The recorded data was used to represent as well capture the contribution of decentralization program in delivering secondary education in Tanzania. A survey questionnaire was applied in the initial phase of the study for the sake of establish key insights of attesters on decentralization program before further exploration. The drive of interpretation was systematically performed under selected topics and sub-topics intended to address the remarkable aspects of the study's objective.

Results and Discussion

The discussion below focuses on the data analyzed according to the objectives, which was: To examine decentralization program in delivering social services, a critical review in secondary education in Tanzania.

3.1 Adaptation of Decentralization in Service Delivery

In 1950s and 1960s, several countries all over the world followed state-centered approaches to attain their agenda for development (Cheema and Rondinelli, 1983; Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee, 2004). No matter how, some positive endings, majority of these countries still had to face many problems, including decline in economic activity, incompetent and embezzlement, rising government expenditures, broadening social discrimination, and waste of resources, prompting in the stagnation of the overall

improvement procedure (Bangura and Larbi, 2006). Hereafter, later theoreticians together with development stakeholders of the early 1970s ended up probing the main reasons of such issues related with state-centered approach. In this instance, political leader in many countries aiming to arouse a development drive began to concentrate on governance reform by the 1970s. Such concentration was basically focused on formulating approaches to strengthen governance performance (Ebel and Yilmaz, 2003). Hence, in order to attain a development-oriented governance system while addressing the challenges of the existing state-oriented system, decentralization approved as a procedure to strengthen government performance (Shah, 2004). In addition, the flow of decentralization reform in Africa can be traced in 1980s and early 1990s, usually in the context of improving public service delivery related with structural adjustment programs. In the globe south, countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, Ghana, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya as well Tanzania, were one of the very first to involve decentralization reform in their improving public service delivery packages.

Figure 1 illustrates that the (40.3%) of the respondents admit that the adoption of changes was the reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education while (47.2%) of them agreed and, (9.1%) of the participants were uncertain. Meanwhile (2.4%) disagreed while (1.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the adoption of changes occurring was not among the reasons for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. The study shows that (87.5%) of the participants confirmed that the adoption of changes occurring was the reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. Similarly (9.1%) of the respondents were not sure whether adoption of changes was a reason or not for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. Hence, overall, (3.4) of the respondents disagreed that adoption of changes was not a reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. Therefore, the findings confirm that adaptation of changes is among of the criterion for involving the general community in the delivery of secondary education.

The inference drawn from Figure 1 indicates that the community was aware of emergence of decentralization policy in Africa and Tanzania in particular. Shah and Thompson (2004) point out that recently, a silent revolution in public service delivery has swept around the

world aiming to hence decision making for local authority. The countries embracing to this silent revolution diverse motives as well followed approaches that are diverse. In 1980, the government of Tanzania ordered to revive the Local Government System nationwide. Again, in 1982 legislations, the National Assembly enacted Acts No.7, 8, 9, 10 and 12. Constitutional revisions of 1984 that restored power to the people comprehensively to sound Local Governments under sections 8, 145 together with 146 emphasized this change. Local Council elections came into being in 1983 with Acts No.7 and 8 revived rural as well urban Local Government Administrations appropriately from January 1984 (TIE, 2002). However, the adopting of changes occurring is a reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. This was clearly observed in the focus group discussions with community members, as one participant was quoted giving the comment that;

"Because of pressure and the promise of funding from external donors, we have adopted the policy of decentralization, even if it is not active".

Hence, such a response from the member of community indicates that people were aware of what is going on their country. However, this should not underrate the rationale for decentralized policy that include but not limited to involving stakeholders in decisions that affect their lives (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983).

3.2 Rights of Community to Participate in Decision-Making

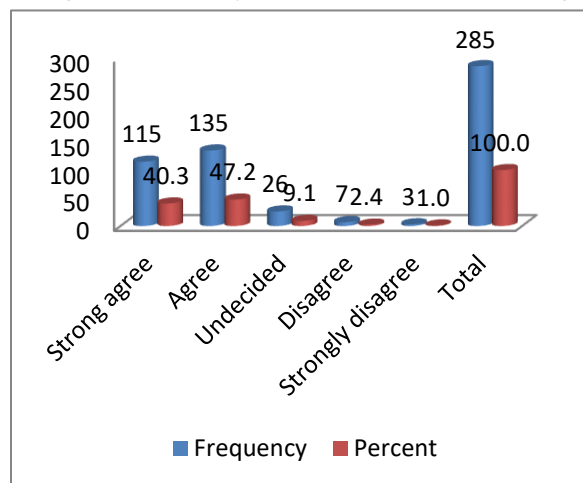


Figure 1: Adaptation of Changes as a Criterion for Decentralization Policy (N=286)

Sources: Survey Data, 2023

Decentralization of service is a perennially essential topic in the discourse on democracy as well constitution design. In the recent decades, there has been renewed interest in decentralization program, especially in the context of third world countries looking ways to promote accountability of government in the delivery of services. On the other hand, advocate of decentralization policy accepted that community improvement was achievable only if it was planned and enforced by the people who anticipated to well-being from such process transformation (Maro, 1990). Hence, consent emerged that progress procedure should follow inclusive process, which certify community engagement. As an outcome of dialogues in favor of decentralization program, it became a part and parcel of the international transformation agenda, supported by multinational organization, for instance, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, (Shah, 1997).

The analysis of the responses in the Figure 2, reveals that out of all 286 participants who assigned the questionnaires, 31% had the opinion that rights of community to participate was a reason to be strongly agreed for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. Data also, indicate that 37% respondents thought that rights to community were agreed. On the other hand, 18% of them thought that rights of community to participate was undecided, that is they did not display what they thought of whether the rights of community to participate was a reason or not for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. The rest 11% respondents thought that rights of community to participate were disagreed. While only 3% had strongly disagreed with the opinion about rights of community as a criteria for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education service. From these findings, it can be concluded that overall, 68% of the participants were of the attitude that rights of community to participate fully in community activities was another reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. These results imply that the majority supported the idea of rights of community to participate as a reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. Today, participation is considered as a fundamental aspect of most dialogue of decentralization program. Participation is trusted to make plans more applicable, grants people dignity, as well to assist validate the planning procedures with the entire state (Conyers, 1990). In fact, decentralization program is asserted for, on the

basis of public involvement and citizen engagement in programs is pretty in as well of itself (Meinzen-Dick and Knox, 1999). Webster (1992) is among of the later thinkers to contend that decentralization program is viewed as a means by which determines the authority can be higher active, more adjustable, to regional as well domestic needs than is the occurrence with a concentration of executive authority (Bish and Ostrom, 1973; Weimer, 1996). This is endorsed when one of the contributors in the group interviews had this to say:

"Yes, it is very necessary; we as tax-payer we need to know how our money is being spent by the government."

Similarly another participant had this to say:

"Community participation is a something which supports democratic value and community rights; therefore we believe that public participation is a means towards community development"

It is obvious from the comments of participants that these participants felt had obligation and right to be engaged in judgement-making and this might lead the government to adopt decentralization policy.

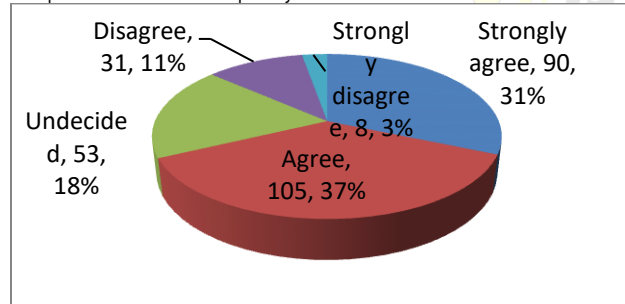


Figure 2: Rights of Community to Participate in Decision-Making (N=286)

Sources: Survey Data, 2023

Communication between Members and their Leaders

When decentralization program works well, democratic decentralization also facilitates information flows between government and community member in both directions. Such information is essential, as long as early warnings reach authority of problems in distant areas which might spread into calamities if they were not tackled immediately, for instance droughts, floods as well outbreaks of disease. In fact, information of relevance to community must be widely spread, accessible as well as user-friendly to enable community member for great deed

with effective role in judgement making. In good governance, people need to be included in the improvement of such clue in order to guarantee its suitability for community participation. Information is needed at all levels in decentralization governance (Conyers, 1990). It is not possible for community to make acquainted, significant contributions or to engage in fundamental discussion if they are isolated from the dialogues arise, the policies being evolved as well the approaches through which commitments are made.

The findings in Figure 3 indicates that 31.7% of the respondents declare that better communication between members and their leaders is a reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. While 40.2% of the respondents were in the position to agree. Again 10.6% they have opinion of undecided that is they did not display what they thought of whether better communication between members and their leaders were reason for community involvement in the delivery of secondary education. On the other hand, 12.9% of the respondents disagreed with point of better communication between members and leaders as a fact for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. Only 4.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed indicating that better communication between members and their leaders were not a reason for community to be involved in the delivery of secondary education. From the findings it can be stated that overall 71.9% of the respondents agreed that better communication was a reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. The result also imply that only 17.5% of the respondent had opinion of disagree means better communication between members and leaders was not a reason for engaging the general community in the delivery of secondary education. Therefore, communication between members and their leaders was factor for involving the general community in the delivery of secondary education.

Information sharing is among of the core principles for public participation. Under this circumstance, people are supplied with the information they require to be capable to partake and share in a meaningful way (State Government of Western Australia, 2006). Evidently, the findings also had confirmed that better communication between members and their leaders are essential for effective peoples' decisions that affect their lives. Furthermore, Decentralization policy requires that government policy reflect the preference of the governed,

at least in broad outlines over the long run. Gilens (2005) argues, decentralization requires that all citizens, not just the powerful or well off, have an influence over government policies. Similarly, it is argued by Gravingholt (2006) that information allocated to citizens by government authorities is feeble but essential form of participation. It details a one-sided relationship; these imply that government produces and delivers information for use by citizens.

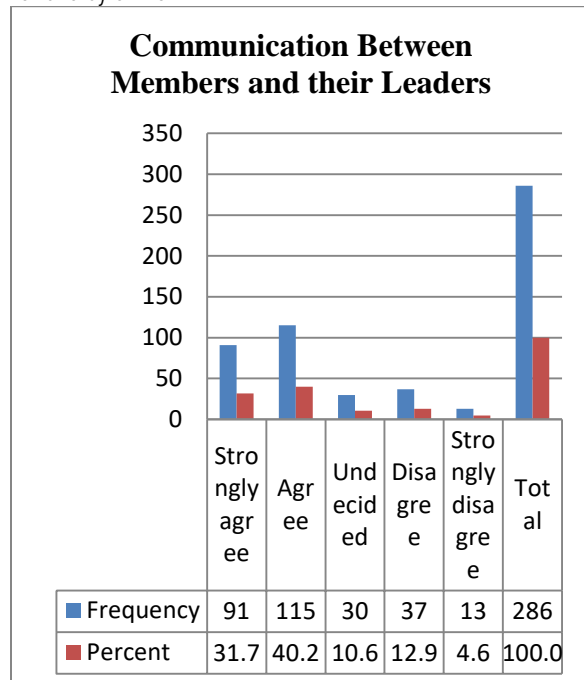


Figure 3: Communication between Members and their Leaders (N=286)

Sources: Survey Data, 2023

Community Participation in Decision-Making

Decentralization of public service may be considered as an essential condition for local as well civil society development.

Decentralization of public service is an integral part of the democratization procedure realized through the power of people to choose their own autonomy, to establish public policies as well public services. In the context of the local government reform program instituted in 1997, all powers to make as well impact decisions were delegated to lower levels. The local authorities take charge of management together with delivery of both together formal and non-formal education within their areas of capability. The engagement of different relevant parties in the decision-making procedure assists to improve transparency of local management on the one hand, lay out internal

checks, as well balances on the other. The findings of the reactions issued in Figure 4 depicts that 26.2% of the respondent had opinion that community are involved in decision making at the level of school meeting and 40.2% claimed that community participation does not exist at all. On the other hand 22.3% pointed out that community participation in decision making happen when are asked to contribute some money for school activities. While 11.3% proclaimed that community participation in decision-making seems to happen when asked to provide labor for community activities. This study, indicates that over 26.2% of the respondent were participating at the level of attending meeting only without involved in decision-making. Similarly 40.5% of the respondents confirmed that no community involvement in decision-making while 33.6% of the respondents declared that were involved in community activities just in form of money contribution and provision of labor but not in decision-making. Therefore, the findings confirm that community member were involved in money contribution and provision of labor but were not involved properly in decisions that affect their lives.

Studies have indicated that the effective engagement improves the user's proficiency to utilize the service, improves the possibilities that needs are being met, as well supports to reach collective benefits (Crouch, 2008). According to the perspective of efficiency, mutual participation takes place when member of community are asked to play part by government that is to say when a two-way communication is initiated. Secondly, when everybody who wishes, can participate. Thirdly, when the chance of representation is pledged for interests of entire community. Ultimately, when the shareholders can be included in managerial from the reflection of proposals to the end decision unconditionally (Bums, 2004). Either, to safeguard the participation of the native inhabitant, conditions for community involvement are being improved. School Boards as well Student Councils have been established, also community activities for academic support is being deepened. Sooner than, going through a channel administration, it appears that the formation of a new cash transactions, in which the central authority transfers funds straight to the accounts of every primary school, has ended in fewer delays than previously.

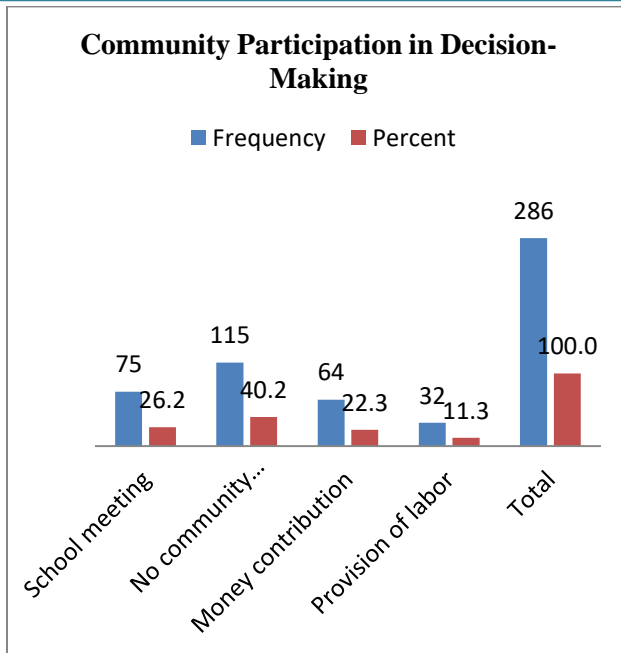


Figure 4: Community Participation in Decision-Making (N=286)

Sources: Survey Data, 2023

5.2.3.2 Students Involvement in Decision-Making

Nowadays, participation is considered as an essential human right. All people in community, involving the young, are entitled to express their opinions on decisions that affect their own lives. Either it is a matter relating to regulations prescribed at school, legislation on the least possible age for full-time employment, representation of youth in the media, or attention in government expenditure, young people are entitled to formulate their concerns, engage in policy formulation as well have their convictions given serious attention. A child's right to engage in decisions related to their welfare is a main idea of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Youngsters together with the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Also, it is preserved in Tanzanian law. The Law of the Child Act 2009 declares that a child be obliged the right to speak out their thought, to be entertained to and to engage in decisions which affect his wellbeing. Also children rights are involved in Zanzibar's 2011 Children's Act (Government of Tanzania, 2009).

As shown on Table 1, 27.8% of the respondent said 'Yes' to indicate that they were involved in decision-making while majority 72.2% of them said 'No' to indicate that were not involved in decision-making on the issues concerning their life. The results indicates that overall 72.2% of the respondents were not involved in decision, which does not

give good impression in the decentralized secondary education, because in decentralized governance People need to be empowered in settling matters that influence their lives. This finding signifies that in Tanzania decentralized secondary education governance had not fully involved students in decisions that affect their own lives.

Youths' participation in decisions that affect their lives help them to realize how to space for constructing divergent opinions, how to work out as well respond to striving sets of needs and how to become into citizens who assist to the welfare of the entire community and how to assist others to achieve their dues. In addition, it assists youth to grasp about their own dues together with responsibilities. Engagement is sadly sometimes wrongly grasped as a chance for children to establish selfish demands on grown-up. In fact, involvement is essentially about collaboration, about adults allocating decision-making with young people, in accordance with their maturity and ability to understand various matters (TDHS, 2010 in UNICEF, 2011).

The study indicates that brutality is often used in Tanzanian homes as well schools to manage children and teenage along with imposing discipline (TDHS, 2010 in UNICEF, 2011). Chances for involvement are relatively scarce, despite some important efforts are in progress to develop new models, strategies as well power to act through which grown-up can learn how to construct the space for engagement, and through which teenage can deepen to contribute more adequately to settle an issue at home, in school, in their society, as well at their most vulnerable location. Under this circumstance, the findings in Table1 above concur with the results reflected in 2010 TDHS, which indicates that youth are not given opportunity to have a power in settling issues that impact their lives. Such situation poses challenge to decentralization policy, which intends to build a society, which its people should have, a power in settling issues that influence their lives.

Table 1: Distribution of Students Participation in Decision-Making

| Opinion | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Yes | 20 | 27.8 |
| No | 52 | 72.2 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 |

Sources: Survey Data, 2023

Conclusion and Recommendations

Decentralization is not a monolithic concept and it is not inherently positive or negative. Basically, decentralization itself is not an aspiration but a means to attain outsized impact on delivering public service to the community. As we have learnt more from experience in recent years when local authority are permitted to prepare all policy as well program settlements on behalf of their native-voters represents an interconnected structure of political, managerial together with fiscal autonomy and related supervisory machinery to ensure responsiveness and assurance to voters. As a premise, in one such system is expected to have positive results on the competence and integrity of public service delivery, in practice, these end results depend upon the existing institutional framework with consistency of decentralization policies to generate the genuine environment for bottom-up liability. Moreover, evidence based presented here is widely supportive of a positive impact of decentralization policies in improving public sector in economically developing nations.

The formation of new structures for disseminated planning with deep training programs is the another strategy of action of the Public Associations Perspective. Decentralization seem to be a complex procedure demanding favorable environment in order to be strengthen. It demands a well-built on-going training program for labor force, citizens as well organizations that are assigned decentralized functions and responsibilities. Today, delivery of quality secondary education is essential in generating chances as well welfare of social and economic growth as predicted in the current Tanzania Vision 2025. One way of addressing such problem is through continuous assistance of rural as well arid zones, where the member of society which are too deprived to cost sharing. The authority should offer teaching as well learning resources with paying for school operating costs for disadvantaged communities to make secondary education unbiased and affordable to all members of society.

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