



Decentralization of Governance: Current Status and Future Prospect

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Abstract

For decades, Decentralization has been a central theme in the debate on governance worldwide. It is one of the most imperative reforms of the past generation. Its paramount importance in the transition to democracy became a significant point of the deliberations in both developed and developing economics. The most important theoretical argument concerning Decentralization is that it can improve governance by making the government more accountable and responsive to the governed. This paper emphasizes providing conceptual understanding about governance, good governance, Decentralization, and forms of Decentralization. Moreover, the study tries to figure out the relationship between Decentralization and governance and highlight the present status, challenges, and prospects of decentralized governance. Finally, this paper also gives thought-provoking insights to the researchers and policymakers in governance.

Key Words: Decentralization, governance, good governance, and democracy.

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1. Introduction

Decentralization has been promoted around the world to improve government efficiency and responsiveness, and thus the quality of public services (Channa and Faguet 2012). The division and diffusion of central government authority, operations, rights, and duties to far-flung grassroots administrative entities through administrative restructuring. On the other hand, governance is the use of administrative innovation to ensure that organizational configurations and reforms are implemented effectively. Olowu and Wunsch (2004) defined governance as the process of making and implementing public choices. Both Decentralization and governance are proper administrative instruments for improving management skills and service performance. Decentralized governance is usually introduced to assist democratic state administration, whole-of-state affairs, grassroots governance, and improved public services. Decentralized governance ensures that power and authority are delegated to lower-level administrations. They contribute to the empowerment of local administrative wings and expand opportunities for active public engagement. The importance of decentralized governance in establishing sound and long-term governance cannot be overstated (Uddin 2018).

Decentralization and governance are fundamental in government strategies to facilitate regulatory approaches. Governance is an ancient term, which has been applied by organizations to launch effectiveness and operative services. However, Inefficiency and the absence of accountability and transparency make for bad governance, which spawns confusion, disruptions, procrastination, corruption, wastage, and under- and mal-development (Ahmad, 2018). The various states faced significant socio-economic barriers to their governance problem. The governance practices have been changed with the passes of time. The traditional governance apparatuses were being shifted to collaborative manifold arrangements, and the shifts are theorized as Decentralization (Bannink and Ossewaarde 2012). Decentralization is being widely supported to overcome various problems (Faguet et al., 2014). Decentralization is applied as an instrument of governance actions worldwide to establish the efficient functioning of administrative machinery. Faguet (2014) claimed Decentralization as the significant organizational change. Subsequently, Decentralization is the process of transferring reliable state power to the local bodies to ensure competitive services. Therefore, by considering administrative efficiency and better facilities, there are strong ties with governance and Decentralization.

The study aims to provide a conceptual understanding of governance good governance, Decentralization, forms of Decentralization, and decentralization features. Furthermore, to empower the objectives, the study aims to understand the relationship between Decentralization and governance, highlighting the present status, challenges, and prospects of decentralized governance. To conclude, this paper provides scholars and policymakers in the governance disciplines with thought-provoking ideas. Although, numerous studies were sought to ascertain the Decentralization of governance. However, very few of them were concentrated on the concept, literature, and the nexus between Decentralization and governance. Moreover, previous studies mainly were focused on the Decentralization of local governance. Therefore, it can be asserted that there is a research gap, and this study has mitigated the research gap.

This paper has been organized into several sections. Section 1 deals with the introduction and reveals the research gap between previous studies and this research. Section 2 focuses on the

objectives, whereas section 3 and section 4 deal with methodology and literature review. Section 5 represents the critical concepts related to governance and Decentralization. The nexus between Decentralization and governance has been argued in sections six and section 7 presents the practices, prospects, and challenges of decentralized governance. Finally, sections 8 and 9 deal with the careful implementation and conclusion, respectively.

2. Objectives of the Study

This study has been pursued the following objectives:

- I. To confer the concept and literature decentralization and governance.
- II. To examine the present status, challenges, and prospects of Decentralized authority.
- III. To provide some suggestions for the implementation of Decentralization.

3. Methodology

It is the purpose of this study to provide a conceptual understanding of governance and Decentralization. The study is based on secondary data sources that were extracted from different websites. In addition, scholarly articles from academic journals and relevant textbooks, international conference papers, dailies, annual reports were also used. The data are presented using statistical tools like descriptive statistics, tables, and bar diagrams. The study is explanatory and informative. It has also considered a case study to expire the current Decentralization and Governance of Bangladesh.

4. Literature Review

Decentralization is a significant contributor to rising economic inequality. There have been several scholarly contributions to Decentralization and governance. Most scholars, on the other hand, have dealt with them separately. These two principles are intricately intertwined and mutually beneficial (Engdaw 2021).The conception of Decentralization and governance are eminent in contemporary development discourse (Sarkar 2021). The terms decentralization and governance can be defined from numerous standpoints. Both concepts are associated with competent administrative functionaries and improved citizen services (Uddin 2018). In general, governance refers to an administration's ability to efficiently make and enforce rules and deliver services to citizens (Saito 2008). Furthermore, the regulatory authority of the government to establish and impose policies is characterized as governance (Fukuyama 2013).

However, It is now widely accepted that to be effective, governance should be pluralistic; authority should be spread across many levels and across 'multiple centers of power (Hooge and Marks 2003). Governance likewise recognizes and incorporates people's choices into the administrative process. There is a need to shift the governance process for smooth regulatory activity and service delivery. In this regard, Bannink and Ossewaarde 2012 argue that transforming the typical governance process to corporate governance is considered Decentralization. Hence, Decentralization is seen as the complete package for advocating better control. It transfers power and resources from the Central to local governments, comes with several theoretical promises (Sagoe 2020). Decentralization is being used extensively worldwide, from ancient states to current states (Faguet 2014). According to Bannink and Ossewaarde (2012), Decentralization is the conventional dimension between the central and delegated points of governmental assemblage. Decentralization is sometimes used to persuade individuals to support

the government. Decentralization makes governments more honest and efficient (Dreher 2006); as a result, the central government uses Decentralization to repair people's trust in the state (Aoki 2008). Decentralization is endowed with several qualities under its existence. In this context, Engdaw 2021 states, Decentralization has been rigorously applied as a policy instrument to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by making decision-making processes transparent, responsible, responsive, participatory, and predictable for better governance.

5. Key Concepts

5.1 Governance: Present Debates

Despite various attempts in recent years to define the term "governance," the concept's definition remains contentious (Olowu 2002). Nonetheless, there has not been any agreement on a particular definition. In the 14th century, governance was utilized and defined as an action, method, or governing function (Halfani 1994). For Landell and Serageldin (1991), governance denotes "how people are ruled, how the affairs of the states are administered and regulated, as well as a nation's system of politics, and how this functions concerning public administration and law." John Graham, Bruce Amos, and Tim Plumptre (2003) gave the following helpful definition. For them, "governance is the interaction among structures, processes, and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens and other stakeholders have their say." Therefore, it is about power, relationship, and accountability: who influences, who makes the decisions, and how decision-makers are held accountable.

According to Halfani and colleagues (1994), governance is a "system of government focusing on effective and accountable institutions, democratic principles and electoral processes, representation, and responsible government structures, to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between civil society and the state." They believe that the interaction between civil society and the state is critical in distinguishing governance from government study. The most crucial characteristic of this concept is the nature of the connection between civil society and the state. They think that power decentralization and sharing, citizen participation, accountability, openness, and responsiveness can help the government gain credibility and legitimacy. Similarly, the OECD (1995) defines governance as "public administration and the structures, methods, and instruments of governing, as well as the connection between government and citizens (including business and other citizen groupings) and the state's function."

International Aid Agencies and certain European scholars are two fundamental schools well-known in the contemporary discussion on governance rhetoric. Both of these schools have their definitions of governance. "The method in which power is exerted in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development," according to the World Bank (World Bank 1994). They focused on administrative governance components, such as civil service reform, downsizing in the public sector, service delivery and contracting out capacity building, and institutional strengthening (World Bank 1997 cited from Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2002). Moreover, the World Bank researchers addressed governance from three-dimensional perspectives (Kaufman et al. 2000), namely: a) the process by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored, and replaced; b) the capacity of the governments to manage

resources efficiently and formulate and implement and enforce sound policies and regulations; and c) the extent of participation of the citizens in the affairs of the state.

The proponents of the other school, such as Jan Kooiman (1993) and other researchers, define governance as how the public and private sectors work together to solve problems rather than independently. As a result, rather than involving simply state institutions, this school views governance as a form of multi-organizational action (Kooiman 1993). They have, in reality, redefining the state's function and distanced governance from ordinary public administration. The UNDP (1997) adopted a similar approach to define the notion of governance. According to the UNDP, governance is the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority in managing a country's affairs on all levels. This governance perspective comprises the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their conflicts (Hyden 2001).

5.2 Governance and Good Governance: Definitional Aspects

Today, academics, practitioners, and development stakeholders universally recognize the importance of good governance practices for alleviating chronic poverty and injustice. The issue of 'governance' and 'good governance' has gained a reputation among practitioners of public administration, international aid agencies (IAA), and the OECD countries due to rapid economic growth, remarkable breakthroughs in information technology, and as the role of the third sector in poverty alleviation in the developing countries has emerged.

Since the early 1990s, the World Bank has promoted the concept of good governance. It is therefore argued that the most common definition of governance, which the World Bank provides, is:

"...how power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development."

Engdaw 2021 argues in his paper that the World Bank refers to good governance as '*sound development management*' and sees it as:

".....central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is an essential complement to sound economic policies" (World Bank, 1992:1).

Some desirable criteria for assessing governance quality include Decentralization, citizen participation, democratization, accountability, partnerships (i.e., between the state, civil society, the private sector, and NGOs), equity, empowerment, competence and efficiency, sustainability, and transparency (World Bank 1994, Siddiqui 2000:1, Peters 2001, Leftwich 1994). Adding the adjective 'good' to governance (Siddiqui 2000) has given a sense of enchantment and almost become an obsession in the recent debates on international development and public administration in developing countries (Williams and Young 1994 in Jamil 1989). However, the fundamental principles of good governance include respect for human rights, political openness, participation, tolerance, administrative and bureaucratic capacity, and efficiency. It is also widely agreed that good governance necessitates the establishment of successful partnerships to ensure

that societal political, social, and economic agendas are based on broad consensus and that the views of the poorest and most vulnerable people are heard in decision-making.

5.3 Decentralization: Conceptual Discussion

While Decentralization has become increasingly popular in recent decades, it is not a new notion. The word gained popularity in the 1950s and 1960s when British and French colonial Governments devolved responsibility for certain programs to local authorities to prepare colonies for independence. Decentralization rose to the top of the development plan in the 1980s, accompanied by a renewed worldwide focus on governance and person-centered approaches to human development. Today both developed and developing countries are pursuing decentralization policies.

Merely, Decentralization is the opposite of Centralization, where Centralization is a concentration of administrative and economic decision-making powers in a single head or center (Bhattachan 1996, Kochen and Deutsch 1980). Cheema and Rondinelli defined Decentralization more clearly and precisely. According to them, "decentralization is the transfer of planning, decision making or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatals organizations, local governments or non-governmental organizations."

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines Decentralization:

".....as measures that transfer a range of powers, responsibilities, and resources from central Government to subnational governments, defined as legal entities elected by universal suffrage and having some degree of autonomy (OECD, 2019)."

Many other international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the United Nations, and the World Bank, employ similar criteria (Slack, 2009; CEMR, 2013; World Bank, 2019).^{3rd} In a decentralized system, subnational governments are governed by political bodies (with assemblies and executive bodies) and have their assets and administrative staff. Moreover, through Decentralization, attempts are made to provide citizens with the opportunities to become involved in decisions about the allocation of primary public goods (Saarelainen 2003).

Several types and subtypes of Decentralization have been recognized, such as political Decentralization, administrative Decentralization, and Fiscal Decentralization (Rondinelli, Nellis, and Shabbir Cheema, 1983; OECD, 2019). In practice, decentralization policies are often difficult to categorize because all these aspects (political, administrative, and fiscal) are usually present simultaneously. The forms and extent of Decentralization vary significantly from one country to another.

Political Decentralization requires a constitutional, legal and regulatory framework to ensure accountability and transparency. It also necessitates restructuring institutions and developing linkages with civil society and the private sector. Simultaneously, political Decentralization necessitates universal participation and new approaches to community institutions and social capital.

Figure-1: Political, Administrative, and Fiscal Decentralization



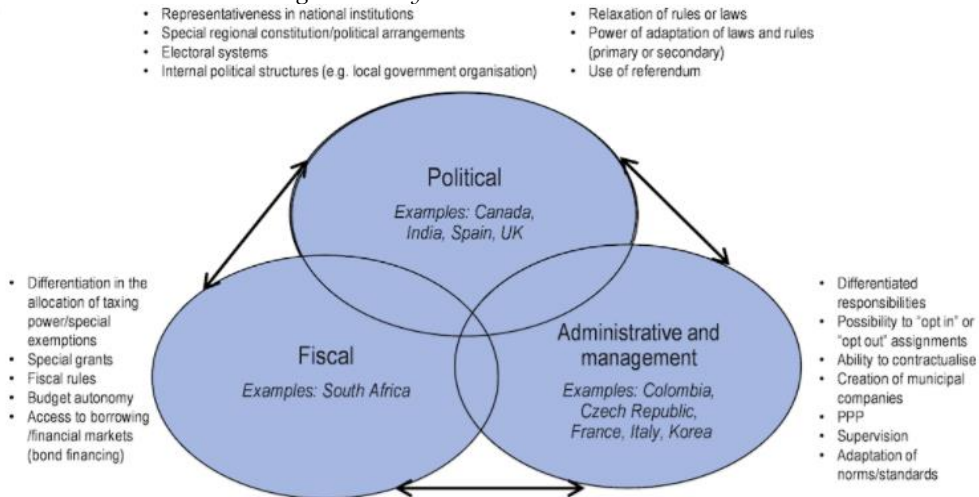
Source: OECD (2019)

Administrative Decentralization aims to transfer decision-making authority, resources, and responsibilities to deliver a select number of public services from the central government to other levels of government, agencies, and field offices of major government line agencies. It transfers operational responsibility from a higher level to a lower level of organization. Administrative Decentralization is often simultaneous with civil service reform.

Fiscal Decentralization is the most comprehensive and possibly traceable degree of Decentralization since it is directly linked to budgetary practices. Fiscal Decentralization refers to the resource reallocation to sub-national levels of government. Decentralization is principally concerned with the optimal division of expenditure and revenue responsibilities between levels of government. Arrangements for resource allocation are often negotiated between the central and local authorities based on several factors, including interregional equity, availability of resources at all levels of government, and local fiscal management capacity.

Yet another important trend in multilevel governance in OECD countries is asymmetric Decentralization. It is defined that the same subnational government levels have different political, administrative, or fiscal powers (Congleton, 2015). Asymmetric Decentralization can take various forms. These are briefly shown in the following figure:

Figure-2: Asymmetric Decentralization

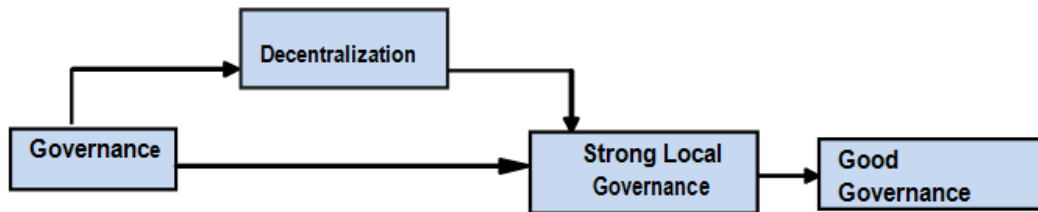


Source: Sources: OECD (2019)

6. The Nexus between Decentralization and Governance

Decentralization and governance are commonly considered closely related (Saito 2008). According to the UNDP, Decentralization is the logical application of the core characteristics of good governance at the sub-national and local levels. Moreover, it is also the widespread primary concern of good governance that has touched multilateral aid agencies, social scientists, and, subsequently, most third-world governments in the last three decades. However, the most important theoretical argument concerning Decentralization is that it can improve governance by making the government more accountable and responsive to the governed. Decentralization is considered an efficient program that can enhance the performance of local governance and efficient local government. It can provide more responsive and innovative services and, in turn, be held more accountable for operations by local voters than nationally provided procedures (Guess 2005). The following *figure-3* represents the nexus between Decentralization and governance.

Figure 3: The relationship between Decentralization and Governance



Here, Decentralization is the spread (ISUFAJa, (2014)ing of the thought of governance at the local level that leads to accomplishing the national level of governance well (referred to as good governance). The principal aims of governments are to manage state affairs well and deliver efficient services to the citizen. Subsequently, the term governance is introduced to strengthen government endeavors. In addition, the Decentralization of power from the center to the periphery is also considered one of the best tools of good governance that empowers people by enlisting their participation in the developmental process. This is how Decentralization contributes to fortifying the fleetness of governance agendas, and this means Decentralization and governance are strongly associated with each other. Thus, the abundant application of Decentralization and governance mechanism requires an advantageous circumstantial to implement their reform measures (Uddin 2018).

7. Decentralized Governance: Practices, Prospects, and Challenges

Decentralized governance bridges the market inequalities between different regions and people and structures a society's progressively ordered socio-economic transformation. As the UNDP states:

"Decentralizing governance is the restructuring of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and (ISUFAJa, (2014)d local levels according to the principle of subsidiarity, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance while increasing the authority and capabilities of sub-national levels".

The strongest theoretical argument in favor of decentralized governance is that it improves the accountability and responsiveness of the government by altering its structure (Faguet 2012). In this section, current practices and prospects of decentralized governance have clarified how Decentralization increases efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of central-local government, ensures efficient delivery of services, builds trustworthy and friendly relationships among the government representatives.

7.1 Present Status and Challenge

In his analysis of Decentralization, Robert Ebel (2001) points up that: "The western world sees Decentralization as an alternative to providing public services more cost-effectively. Developing countries pursue decentralization reforms to counter economic inefficiencies, macroeconomic instability, and ineffective governance. Post-communist transition countries embrace Decentralization as a natural step in shifting to market economies and democracy. Latin America is decentralizing as a result of political pressure to democratize. African states view Decentralization as a path to national unity."

There are various reasons why governments desire Decentralization, and Decentralization can take many different shapes and degrees. While there are several political and economic reasons for governments to pursue decentralization policies, scholars and practitioners have proposed that decentralization and size variables such as population, land area, and GDP are interdependent. Indeed high-income countries are relatively more decentralized than low-income countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest levels of local expenditure and revenue shares compared to the world (see below). Additionally, countries with more significant populations and areas are more decentralized. As the country's size and population increase, sub-national governments are expected to play a more critical role in service delivery.

In a nutshell, Decentralization is being applied all over the place. The significance of reform extends far beyond the number of experiments currently underway. However, in most developing countries, implementing these theoretical promises of Decentralization has been difficult. In this regard, Uddin (2018) states in his study that there are substantial challenges in the progression of decentralized governance. He mentioned some of the emotional challenges of Decentralization, i.e., Politicalized governance, Centralization of power (central authority is not willing to hand over the supremacy), Biased administration, Underprivileged local units, and *political instability*.

Additionally, Depending on the country, there are also varying degrees of upward and downward accountability and varying ranges of central government control. Comparatively, few studies investigate Decentralization's effects on the quality of governance. The reasons for this are not hard to fathom: (i) the data required to empirically examine Decentralization's effects on things like health investment or school enrolment is more commonly available than for governance-type issues like accountability, political competition, and participation in public decision-making; and (ii) the multilateral organizations that sponsor much decentralization research are more interested in service outputs than governance outcomes.

Moreover, critics also charge that Decentralization can worsen fiscal deficits and threaten macroeconomic, and even political, stability. Of this, there are many examples, particularly in Latin America. More recently, the region stands out for addressing these problems head-on by

implementing second-generation reforms that control subnational deficits and devolve more revenue-raising autonomy.

7.2 Future Prospects

Many scholars and practitioners examine how Decentralization affects governance, mainly how it might increase political competition, improve public accountability, reduce political instability, impose incentive-compatible limits on government power and threaten fiscal sustainability. However, there are many more prospects of implementing decentralized governance. Decentralization can reduce political instability. In institutionally underdeveloped democracies, elites fearing the unchecked power of unfriendly governments may resort to violence to protect themselves and their interests. Many such countries safeguard against this risk by granting special privileges to elites to keep them in the democratic game. But this undermines the substance of democracy. Decentralization can help by providing an incentive-compatible way to limit government powers by dividing them up amongst different hierarchical levels, each with a democratic mandate that must cooperate to maximize their outputs.

7.3 Decentralization of governance in Bangladesh: An Overview

Bangladesh is one of the world's least developed economies (Wise & Ali, 2014). Bangladesh has been carrying out trials with Decentralization for an extended period like many other developing countries (khan & Ferdous 2017). Bangladesh's government has taken several measures toward Decentralization over the years. Nonetheless, the country remains one of the world's most centralized big countries. In many aspects, Bangladesh has the right conditions for Decentralization to be helpful and to take place. A series of political Decentralization has taken place (The Local Government Commission in 1996 recommended specific steps which resulted in three new acts - the Local Government (Union Parishad) Act 1997, the Upazilla Parishad Act 1998, and the Zilla Parishad Act 2000. The government has approved direct funding of union parishads in 2004, which is a significant step to devolve fiscal power to local governments.)

7.3.1 Decentralization Practices in Local Government in Bangladesh

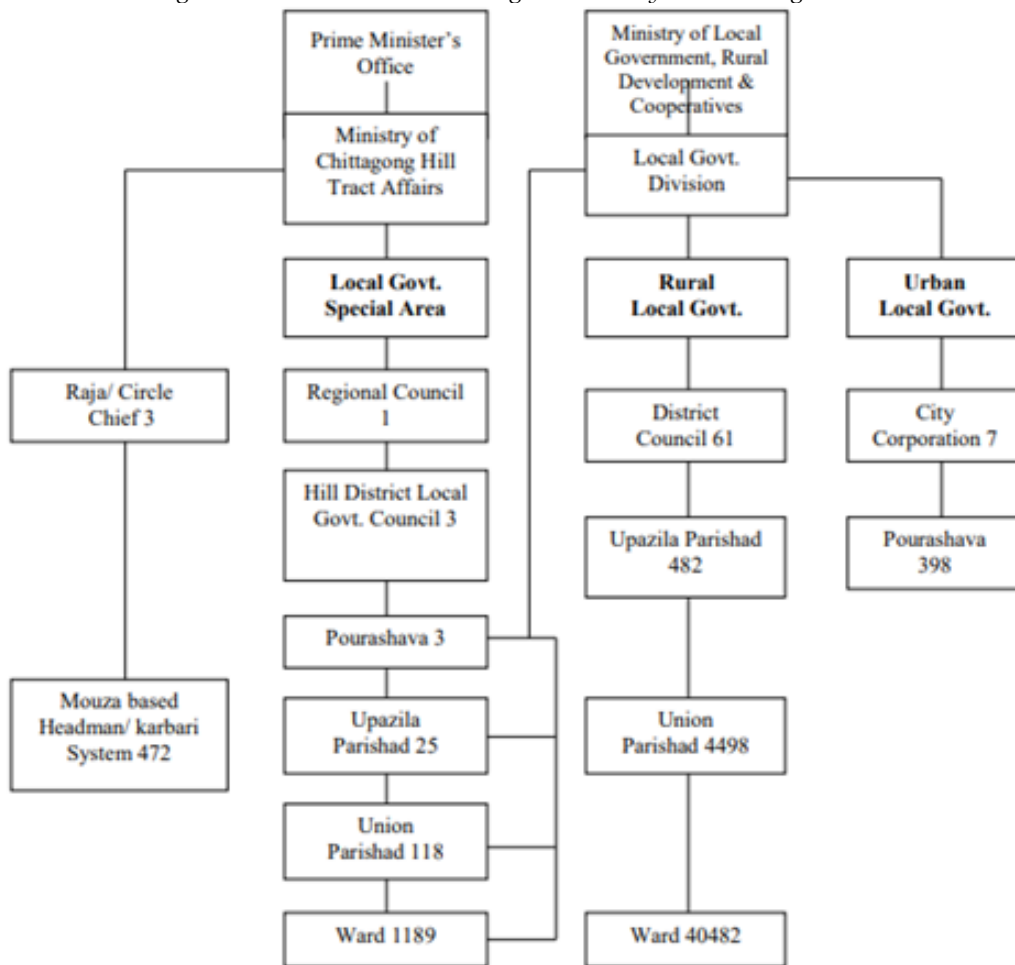
Bangladesh is a young country with a long history and practice marked by political turbulence and trials often overshadowed by ferocity, financial atrocities, and miseries caused by manipulative and delayed production practices, as well as numerous natural disasters. Subsequently, after more than 200 years of British Colonial rule and Pakistani rule, Bangladesh appeared as a sovereign nation in 1971 through a bloody war against Pakistani military rulers. Later then, the change of the new country was categorized by various drastic political and financial reforms and ups and downs (Ahmed, 1987). Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan share a mutual past of local government in view that they entirely had been British colonies for a long time. However, before arriving at its current state, the provincial Government of Bangladesh had its origins in British regulation, and it was distributed through the Pakistani neo colonial period. As a result, the progress of Bangladesh's local government can be measured in terms of these three periods: the British era (1757-1947), the Pakistani era (1947-1971), and the Bangladesh era (since 1971). (1971-2014).

7.3.2 Local Governance System in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a rich legacy of establishing and promoting local government institutions. Still, their actual roles and contributions to enhancing citizens' participation and consolidating democratic practices have often been marginalized - owing primarily to excessive central interference, as well as abuse and manipulation by authoritarian regimes seeking to maintain power.

The structure of the local government system in Bangladesh is summarized in Figure 4. The provincial government institutions are organized into three broad 'streams': Rural, Urban, and regional government for particular areas (Chittagong Hill Tracts). The mainstream rural local government system consists of three functional tiers: Union, Upazila (sub-district), and Zila (District).

Figure 4: The decentralized local governance system in Bangladesh



Source: Ahmed (2014)

7.3.3 An Analysis of Decentralization Situation in Bangladesh

Determining the degree of Decentralization is a difficult task. Nonetheless, a study of the level of power decentralization in Bangladesh's local government entities has been undertaken. According to the prior assessment of Decentralization, Bangladesh has a complicated system of local administration. However, it suffers from some inherent inconsistency and moves from time to time for political convenience. Devolution is the most effective type of Decentralization. When the central government decentralizes responsibilities, it gives local government bodies power over decision-making, finance, and administration.

In Bangladesh, however, the central government is believed to decentralize tasks to local government organizations by exerting control. The ideas of deconcentration and delegation heavily influence Bangladesh's decentralization program. The central government retains authority in these two forms to exercise oversight over the activities of local government units. When we consider the LG entities, it becomes clear that they have little decision-making authority. However, they are still accountable to central government local institutions if they have power. Decentralization tactics have gained traction due to a set of recommendations issued by a government-appointed commission. Even though such proposals are supposed to be developed following conversations with all relevant parties, such endeavors have been ignored in most cases. There is no symbol of the stakeholders, as can be seen. The commissions all made recommendations that took into account the government's intentions and preferences regarding electricity distribution to local entities. In these circumstances, the need for and outcome of decent. The critical matters and difficulties in the smooth functioning of LGIs are in the following:

- Colonial Maintenance Pattern of Local Government
- Political Leadership
- Dependency on Central Government
- Lack of Authority and Power
- Lack of Accountability
- Administrative Weakness and Lack of Political Will
- Lack of Competent Personnel
- Lack of Essential Discourse on Local Governance
- Patron-client Relationship
- Insufficient Infrastructure and Communication Facilities

7.3.4 Recommendations

In such instances, it is critical to overcoming obstacles that can help to alleviate suffering. "Nothing short of a 'political settlement' of the current impasse can put policymakers and LG functionaries back on their feet, or to a point from which fresh thinking can be integrated with existing development," Ahmed (2015) writes. As a result, the following suggestions are made to help you get out of this dilemma.

- Maintenance of Democracy in Political Process
- Administrative Reform

- Stronger Political Leadership
- Sound Planning of Decentralization Strategy
- Harmonization
- Proper Decentralization
- Consensus Building at National Level
- Planning and Implementation in Participatory Way
- Participation of Women in Decision-Making Process in LGIs
- Capability Development of the Elected Representatives
- Establishment a Local Government Commission

7.3.5 Conclusion

Decentralization in Bangladesh has revealed that the local government's stability depends entirely on successive rulers' political beliefs and approaches. Efforts to change local governance are geared more toward the rulers' advantage than the benefit of the ruled (Jahan, 1997). Despite its relatively long history of Decentralization, Bangladesh has been unable to develop a perfect apparatus of a decentralized scheme of governance, as evidenced by the above argument. Finally, it can be said that at the moment, no complete representative decentralization is found in Bangladesh. Relatively there is some existence of administrative Decentralization. It could be sustained if the government or relevant authority follows some proposed methods for implementing Decentralization as a guiding principle.

8. Careful Implementation

Decentralization's success is strongly dependent on how the process is planned and carried out, on sufficient subnational competency, and on the quality of multilevel governance, which includes effective cross-level coordination mechanisms. Decentralization should not be seen as a standalone goal but rather as a more prominent territorial development strategy component.

Decentralization is doomed to fail (especially in developing countries) if it is implemented without proper planning and accountability mechanisms. Short of these measures, Decentralization can reallocate power and resources in a way that leads to power struggles and renewed conflict, an occurrence that is counterproductive to the very essence of Decentralization. Careful implementation of Decentralization demands appropriate power-sharing arrangements and allocation of resources. In context, OECD (2019) prescribes the following ten guidelines that may help implement decentralization process to ensure effective governance:

- a) Clarify the responsibilities assigned to different government levels
- b) Ensure that all duties are sufficiently funded
- c) Strengthen subnational fiscal autonomy to enhance accountability
- d) Support subnational capacity building
- e) Build adequate coordination mechanisms among levels of government
- f) Support cross-jurisdictional co-operation
- g) Strengthen innovative and experimental governance, and promote citizen engagement
- h) Allow for and make the most of asymmetric decentralization arrangements
- i) Consistently improve transparency, enhance data collection and strengthen

- performance monitoring
- j) Strengthen national, regional development policies and equalization systems

9. Conclusion

Decentralization can improve governance by moving power from the central government to the local government, making the government more accountable and responsive. Decentralization introduces "checks and balances" in the government structure (Bardhan, 2002). As a result, this administrative change aids in the strengthening of governance processes. The lack of infrastructure at the local level, on the other hand, hampered the implementation of decentralization ideas. Governments fear losing control, authority, and superiority if they implement true Decentralization (Ayee 2008). Also, the decentralized unit competence level is not up to the mark to implement the strategies. Historical evaluation reveals that local governance institutions are under the control of public bureaucracy on the one hand and undue political influence on the other.

Moreover, Decentralization is still entrapped around the discourse of governance as a mere illusionary vision due to strong political and bureaucratic interventions. However, the limitations depend on how seriously the central government initiates the solutions. For decentralized local governance, a long-term policy framework is required, and the policy must be implemented in stages while being evaluated regularly. At the same time, residents must be well-prepared to deal with the issues of Decentralization (Huque 1988).

Despite significant challenges and criticisms in decentralized governance, administrative Decentralization is seen as an essential feature of governance structures.

Decentralization, however, is insufficient to produce an effective government. Other components of governance should be ensured as well. Visionary and effective political leadership may foster and ensure a partnership-based network at the municipal and national levels. It is widely assumed that effective political leadership has always been, and will continue to be, a critical factor in human affairs (Kotter 1990). The successful implementation of any reform depends 70% on efficient and good leadership and 30% on management (Kotter 1996). Thus, the outcome of Decentralization may lead to targeted consequences even in the early stage. The central administration should support the local people's benefits by decentralized governance. For an ideal and effective decentralized organizational management, the decentralization processes must ensure authorities' effective and sustainable transference and dictates from the center to the local levels.

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