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**“ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONS TO LOCAL COUNCILS IN THE TONKOLILI DISTRICT WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE YONI CHIEFDOM”**

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**ABSTRACT**

The concept of decentralization has been very much crucial in both developed and developing countries serving as a stimulant in finding solutions to the numerous problems of governance especially in local council communities. Decentralization is not only a administrative value, but also a civic dimension purposely to increase the opportunities for citizens to take interest in public affairs. For far too long, the Sierra Leone Local Government at independence was in a deplorable state and badly in need of reforms that necessitated this research study. The aim of this study is "To Assess the Effect of Decentralization of Education Functions to Local Councils in the Tonkolili District with special attention to the Yoni Chiefdom". The research methodology adopted was a Case Study design. The target population interviewed for the research work was

Thirty (30) respondents from both the district and Yoni Chiefdom. The method used to collect the data cannot be described as neither a simple random nor a Systematic or Stratified Sampling.

This was based on the fact that, the focus has been on a specific district and the chiefdom precisely. Data collected from the research field were oblique, edited for uniformity and easiness and later analysed through pie charts, bar charts and graphs to give meaningful interpretation of the research work. The research findings revealed that it is evident that 74 percent of the respondents from the District council and Yoni Chiefdom revealed that government practices both political and administrative decentralization. However, while 17.4 percent represented those who stated administrative decentralization, 8.7 percent responded that the system practiced is political. The study revealed that, there are inspectorate offices in every chiefdom and as a result the appropriateness of such offices in the chiefdom. However, 27 percent revealed that the offices are absolutely inappropriate. On the whole, it is necessary to have the offices in the chiefdom as revealed by the findings.

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (23) present of the sample indicated “Yes” which means that, schools have the right calibre of teachers. The researchers recommends that inorder to improve education in the district to be specific and the country as a whole, there should be an effective, efficient and sustainable decentralization system in Sierra Leone that has to be in full and not haphazard as it is now. Lower level should be provided with all that is needed for the process to succeed devoid of political influences. This research finding serve as a proxy to regulators and policy makers for reviewing existing policies and also making new policies that will make decentralization thrive well in aiding nation building in enhancing human livelihood and better standards of living.

## **Introduction**

In recent years the topic of decentralisation has received great attention. The increased interest is not only because of its theoretical appeal, but it is related to the rising number of countries adopting a more decentralised system. The widespread economic liberalization along with political change towards openness and democracy is one of the driving forces. In transition economies, including the transition countries in Europe and Central Asia (ECA)<sup>2</sup> such trend was largely driven by the limited administrative and financial capacity of the center, while in some other regions the policy shift may be prompted by the collapse and erosion of central control. However, decentralization is not about weakening central authority. The important goal is to make the local government more responsive to the needs of local population. Most discussions about decentralisation accordingly centre on attempts to improve the delivery of services.

The countries in ECA region started the transition process with wholesale restructuring of their political systems. The discontent with welfare state institutions and the challenges that globalization processes triggered have modified the professional discourses on state, governance and democracy. The need for decentralization and devolution of power from central to local authorities has become one of the priorities in changing the state in these countries. The devolution of power necessarily intervenes with service delivery responsibilities, public finances arrangements, rebuilding central state capacities and institutions. While reasons for decentralization in the region vary, decentralization reform has been one of prevailing common prescriptions for addressing a wide range of other issues, including economic inefficiencies, macroeconomic instability, governance deficiencies, and poor delivery of public services.

Interrogating some of the basic definitions on decentralization, decentralized governance and good governance and their significance for the ECA region, this paper focuses on the recent

decentralization efforts made by the transition countries in ECA, concentrated around the implementation of the current decentralization agenda. It further explains why there are different approaches on the decentralization processes in these countries. At the same time, it recognizes that the decentralization everywhere is considered as a necessary mechanism to address a number of critical issues, including delivery of services. The section on legal, institutional capacities and financial resources at local level, attempts to underline the problem of limited capabilities that exists in local governments in these countries. The paper also addresses the importance of accountability and community empowerment in enhancing and improving service delivery. It suggests establishment of institutions and mechanisms to promote accountability in order to control governments' abuses and increase governments' responsibility.

Recognizing the predominant role of the public sector in delivery of services in ECA countries, the paper also explores the potential of different forms of public-private partnership, as well as the role of the civil sector in providing service delivery. Finally, while some of the challenges these countries are facing with in improving their governance systems are addressed in the concluding remarks (e.g. the fight against corruption), they are not further elaborated in this paper. The Free Dictionary.com and the Marian Webster dictionary defined decentralization as the process of distributing or dispersing functions, powers, people or things away from a central location or authority. While centralization, especially in the governmental sphere, is widely studied and practiced, there is no common definition or understanding of decentralization. The meaning of decentralization may vary in part because of the different ways it is applied (UNDP1999). Different forms of decentralisation have existed over time and can be in three forms. De-concentration as one type involves the process of reallocating the decision making processes within the educational system/ministry. Delegation, another type of decentralisation, is

where in responsibilities are transferred to elected or appointed bodies of the school such as the school management committee or the board. The third type of decentralisation is the devolution which involves the permanent transfer of responsibility to local authority in this case the councils. Decentralization has, not only an administrative value, but also a civic dimension, since it increases the opportunities for citizens to take interest in public affairs; it makes them get accustomed to using freedom. And from the accumulation of these local, active, pernickety freedoms, is born the most efficient counterweight against the claims of the central government, even if it were supported by an impersonal, collective will (A. De Tocqueville). According to Parry T.R (1997), both developed and developing countries have considered decentralisation and privatisation as the vogue of governments in finding solutions to the numerous problems of governance. So many benefits of decentralisation have been highlighted and include but not limited to responsiveness, equality, effective participation and delivery of services and efficiency in the use of resources available. Several questions are most times asked about the processes involved, how they are designed and implemented. This is because if decentralisation is carried out properly, it can improve the delivery of services, promote transparency and accountability, and improve performance and the quality of education. Therefore, questions of power and representation, which are the most contentious issues especially in the decentralisation of educational functions, need to be given serious consideration to ensuring that the aim of such process is maintained. Therkildsen O.(2000) argued that to make participation more inclusive, sounder decision making at local levels on a broader scale, to make local people more committed to change, decentralisation of education to local councils will increase enrolment and quality of education.

## **Background to the Study**

The Local government at independence was in a deplorable state and badly in need of reforms. The SLPP Government of Sir Milton Margai suspended the district councils in 1962, but they were restored in 1966 by Sir Albert Margai only to be suspended again by the National Reformation Council (NRC) military regime in 1967 (Abraham 2003).

The present day local government in Sierra Leone consists of the western area and the three administrative provinces of the north, south, and east. In the western area, there is the Freetown City Council, the rural Administration, and Tribal Administration. Local government in the provinces is provided for in Cap 61 volume 1 of the laws of Sierra Leone, through the Chiefdom Administration and Local Court Act. Local governments in the provinces are the 12 districts in the councils, 149 chiefdom councils, and 4 city Councils (Sierra Leone Local Government in the Chiefdom 1991 Constitution)

The rationale behind the creation of local government units was to make governance effective by bringing decision making closer to the people and facilitating development in the rural areas of the country making sure the socio-economic and environmental needs of citizenry are met. This hasn't be the case because over the years, it failed due to numerous problems such as financial management, corruption, and political instability. By 1962 there were many complaints of corruption and mismanagement by the district councils, which led to the suspension of most of the councils. The councils were reinstated in 1966 only to be suspended again by a military junta (Alie 1990). One of the most problems that characterized the district councils was that they did not have an independent source of income or revenue; they had to depend on precepts from chiefdom councils grants from the central government. Grant constituted the second major source of finance for the district councils. The British provided the sum of five thousand pounds

sterling in 1946 as an annual grant towards the development of the district councils, the central government gave out the money for development. When the APC government took over in 1968, it set up a local government committee and obtained international assistance to evaluate local governments in 1969. The committee reported in December 1970 that the district councils had performed useful roles despite their shortcomings, but they were in need of reform. The APC government took the decision to suspend the elective aspect of local government in 1972 until reforms could be made, not until the then government of the SLPP led by late president Ahmed Tejan Kabba to rebuild or reform councils in 2004.

Sierra Leone is constitutional parliamentary republic with three spheres of government: central government, local councils and chiefdom councils. There is no constitutional provision for local government Act 2004 provides the main legal framework for local councils. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has responsibility for implementing decentralization and local governance reforms. There are 19 local councils, made up of five city councils and one municipal council in the urban areas, and 13 district councils in the predominantly rural areas. The local government Act of 2004 gives both the local councils and the chiefdom councils powers to raise revenue including local taxes, property rate, licences, fees, and charges, and to receive mining revenues, interest and dividends.etc.

Transfers from central government include recurrent and development components. There are three broad types of transfers: administrative grants, grants for devolved functions and local government development grants. Under the Local Government Act 2004, 80 functions were devolved to local councils. To date, 56 of the 80 have been devolved in practice.

The Local Government Act 2004 is the legal framework for the effective running and administration of local councils. It makes provision for the re-establishment of local councils as

they existed before 1972, when they were suspended (five town councils, 12 district councils and Freetown council). It also creates the new Western Area rural district by merging the four former rural districts of Koya, Waterloo, Mountain, and York. Through statutory instruments introduced in 2006, city status was granted to the former towns of Bo, Kenema, Koidu-New Sembehun and Makeni, and municipal status to Bonthe Town Council.

The Local Government (Assumption of Functions) Regulations 2004 guide the process of devolution. This legislation specifies 80 functions to be devolved from central to government, designates the devolving central ministry, department or agency, and sets a timetable for when local councils should assume each function. About half of these of functions were devolved within the timeframe set (2005-08) in the regulations. A programme to speed up devolution of the remaining functions has been underway since 2009

Local government operates in a single tier with 13 district councils and six city councils. All 19 local councils are governed by the local Government Act 2004, which gives councils legislative, financial and administrative powers. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) has responsibility for implementing decentralization and other local governance reforms. This includes specifying functions to be assigned to local councils, and coordination and implementation of the programme of devolution from central government to local councils.

Under the Local Government Act 2004 the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development is responsible for:

- Monitoring and inspecting local council activities to ensure that they conform to legislation.
- Mediating and resolving disputes between councils, or between councils and government ministries.



- Promoting participatory processes and encouraging citizens' involvement in governance
- Certifying local council by-laws and standardising by-laws (by statutory instrument)
- Approving loans to councils
- Certifying that proposed delegation of functions or any agreement between a council and national or international organisation satisfies the requirement(s) of the inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization (see section 7).

### **Structure and Educational Functions of the Tonkolili District Council**

Tonkolili District Council is located in the northern region of Sierra Leone and is among the six councils in the region. Tonkolili District council has eleven (11) chiefdoms including Yoni Chiefdom a case study of my research. Tonkolili District Council has twenty eight (28) wards and Yoni Chiefdom has the largest number of wards which is seven (07) out of the twenty eight wards, and it comprises of committees including education committee which comprises of five (05) members headed by a chairperson and a secretary.

### **Structure of the Tonkolili District Council:**

Tonkolili District Council is made up of the following structure:

#### **(A) Political Wing**

Chairman of council who is elected by the electorate

- Deputy Chairman who is also elected by the electorate, and the councillors on the first meeting of council
- Elected councillors from the twenty eight wards(28)
- Councillors are allocated to committees of five headed by a chairperson and secretary, and the three (03) are members. E.g. Education, Health, Social welfare, rural water, Finance, Audit, Establishment etc.

### **(B)Members of the Core Staff**

The Members of the core staff headed by the chief administrator and assisted by the deputy chief administrator followed by the Human Resource Officer; Finance Officer; Accountant; Procurement Officer; Development Officer; M&E Officer; Valuation Officer; The gender desk Officer; Information Communication Officer; Engineer of Council; Environmental Social Officer; Internal Auditor and lastly support Officers who are also labourers. It's worthy to note that all of these core staff has their mandate and terms of reference together with roles and responsibilities to execute in the Council.

### **(C) Ward Level**

Ten (10) elected ward committee members to help the ward councillor in daily running of the ward. In this committee, five or six should be women

The chairperson of the committee is the councillor, and the paramount chief is a member

The committee normally holds open monthly meetings. During this meeting, they discuss developmental project and issues that affect the word and the councillor will report this to council at Magburaka.

#### **1.1.3 Educational Functions of the Tonkolili District Council**

The rapid increase of citizenry across the country stimulated the necessity of creating the right policies and principles to make the participation of local government in governance eminent. This serve as a platform in addressing the problems of local communities. As a result of the aforesaid deficiencies, below are some of the functions the central governments mandated the district and local councils to do following the local government Act of 2004. The Act created the Avenue and ensure that local councils service delivery to the communities constitute should constitute the following functions; education, health care and agriculture. The focus of this

research is on the educational function been devolved to the Tonkolili District Council with clarity as shown below.

### **Educational Function**

The educational functions been devolved to the Tonkolili District Council are:

- The supervision and monitoring of Primary and Junior Secondary Schools
- Supply of school teaching and learning materials through the supervision of the education committee
- Payment of school subsidies through council
- Supervising the payment of performance base finance (PBF) through the word councillor.

### **Statement of the Problem**

“The most important theoretical argument concerning decentralisation is that it can make governments more accountable and responsive to the governed”, Faguet J. P (2013). In Europe, England to be specific, local council started during the Anglo-Saxon in 700-1066. Development of modern local government began with the great reform Act of 1832. In Africa, local government started in Tanzania and Nigeria.

In Sierra Leone, the districts councils were established in 1946 and continued until middle of 1951. At that time it had become clear that both their functions and composition had to be altered if the councils were to meet the increasing needs for modern social services and a more representative local government. Many years before 2004 successive governments have been operating a centralised system of government. Most activities of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and key decisions were being taken in the capital Freetown, with little work for those in the provinces to carry out. The concentration of processes in the capital made it too difficult for those in the provinces to participate in the governance and administration processes

of the state. Some of the major drawbacks were; decisions made at the central level were very difficult to implement by those that have not participated in the planning and other processes involved in adequately meeting the needs of the community based citizens, delay in communicating information, lack of the willingness on either side of the central body or local, and also ineffective and inefficiency in the implementation of processes. The massive growth and expansion of communities nationwide demanded that, policies and principles be developed in tandem with the participation of local communities. This therefore necessitated the devolution of some functions of central governments to local councils following the local government Act of 2004 as indicated in section 1.1.3.

### **Aim and Objectives of the study**

#### **Aim of the study**

The general aim of the study is to assess the effect of decentralisation of educational functions to local councils in the Tonkolili district with special attention to the Yoni Chiefdom

#### **Objectives of the study**

Though the research has its main aim, below are the specific objectives of the study:

1. Identifying the decentralisation's educational functions devolved to the Tonkolili District Council
2. Determining the level of decentralisation on the educational functions in Tonkolili District
3. Determine stakeholders/community participation in the decentralization educational sector in Yoni Chiefdom
4. Determining the level of monitoring processes
5. Identifying the challenges and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the process of decentralisation in promoting quality education.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study will also be useful for policy making and will suggest ways of improving the process and the educational functions. This study will also raise awareness at different levels in the decision making process and stakeholders in the educational process about the functions devolved to councils and their role in promoting quality education in Sierra Leone.

This study would be considered wanting if there is no significance evidence to justify the significance of the study. In light of this, these are some of the significance of the study;

- The results will serve the Tonkolili District Council and Yoni Chiefdom by providing vital information at local council level which might not readily available to the people of the community or society
- Provide useful information for council administration with regards to the establishment of the institution
- Provide useful information to Non-governmental Organisations and other partners helping in educational activities in Tonkolili district.
- Be of vital importance to the ministry of local government, Ministry of education as it could refer to it formation not only in the district and yoni chiefdom, but Sierra Leone at large
- The results of the study will be used as reference material by other researchers interested in the decentralisation of educational activities in Tonkoli in particular and the country as a whole.

## **Hypothesis of the Study**

The decentralisation of educational functions to local councils will increase community participation which in turn will impact student enrolment, the quality of education (teaching and learning process) and therefore the performance of students in public examinations.

## **Research Questions**

1. To identify to what extent the Tonkolili District Council's educational functions devolved?
2. Does decentralisation improve the quality of education of students in Tonkolili District?
3. In Yoni chiefdom? Does decentralisation improve community participation in the educational sector
4. Is there any system to determine the Monitoring and supervisory level of the decentralisation's educational process?
5. Are there challenges and methods of evaluating how effective and efficient the process of decentralisation is in promoting quality education?

## **Delimitation and Limitation of the Study**

### **Delimitation of the study**

In any difficult situation or constraint in life, with the help of proper strategies implemented there will be success ascertained. Despite the constraints faced by the researcher here are the strategies implemented by the researcher to overcome these challenges and ascertain positive result.

**Finance-**The strategy that the researcher implemented to overcome this difficulty, the researcher decided to seek for financial assistance from family relatives, and also focus on key department to conduct the research at Yoni Chiefdom, Tonkolili District Sierra Leone.

**Time-**The researches look at the insufficient time ahead in relation to the completion and submission of the research work at the due date of submission, searching of materials, typing and printing of materials and implement a strategy of designing a working agenda to meet all those obligation at the actual time.

**Data collection-**In the process of obtaining the required information needed from the research case study and location, the researcher implement a strategy of convincing the respondents by telling them that the information are only needed for academic purpose but it will serve as benefit to the entire country

This study focused mainly on the educational functions devolved to Tonkolili District Council and a case study of Yoni Chiefdom.

#### **Limitations of the study**

In writing a research project such as this, one is sure to encounter a number of constraints. Worth noting amongst them were the following:

- One major constraint faced was the inadequate availability of various materials such as textbooks, journals, magazines, articles and internet on the topic under review.
- This research was very expensive in terms of cost and time. This was because the researcher has to travel far and wide within the district and the chiefdom
- The collection of questionnaires from the respondents was another limitation
- To get the people supply the needed information for the topic under review on the basis of personal interview posed yet another constraint. This was because some of them were not readily available or willing to do so
- Another major constraint faced was the council in question. Workers in the council are afraid to supply the necessary information for fear of political threat.

## **Definition of Terms**

**Decentralization:** refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional, and local levels according to the principles of subsidiary.

**Devolution:** this type is autonomous lower-level units, such as provincial, district, local authorities that are legally constituted as separate governance bodies. This transfer of authorities to such units is often referred to as devolution and is the most common of genuine decentralization.

**Delegation:** refers to the transfer of government decision-making and administrative authority and/ or responsibility for carefully spelled out tasks to institutions that are either under government indirect control or semi-independent.

**Deconcentration:** it involves very limited transfer of authority. It involves the transfer of authority for specific decision-making, financial and management functions by administrative means to different levels under the same jurisdictional authority of the central government.

**Centralisation:** the action of bringing activities together in one place.

**Diversity:** the condition of having or being composed of differing elements or an instance of being diverse.

**Persnickety:** fussy about small details or having the characteristics of a snob, or requiring great precision

**Council:** an assembly of persons summoned or convened for consultation, deliberation, or advice. A body of person's specially designed or selected to act in an advisory, administrative, or legislative capacity.



**Equality:** a statement, usually an equation, indicating that quantities or expressions on either side of an equal sign are equal in value, or the state of being equal.

**Asymmetry:** existing or occurring between two incommensurate entities, especially to detriment of one or uneven in the distribution.

**Effective:** producing an effect of striking, operative effectively.

**Efficiency:** producing results with little waste of effort efficiently.

**Government:** a system of governing group or organization in a country, state as an agent of governmental policies. A body or machinery set aside to control the day-day affairs of a state or nation.

**Development:** it means to make or become larger or mature or organized, bring or come in to existence to make usable or profitable things, so as to make a picture visible.

**Management:** a system of managing in a certain institution or organization or people engages in managing a business.

**Society:** it is an organized community or system of people living in the same locality. People of the higher classes mixing with other people for a common purpose.

**Education:** education according Nyerere (1982) is the transmission of accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society from one generation to the next and also to prepare the young people for their future membership of the society in which they themselves.

**Bureaucracy:** a system of government in which most of the important decisions are taken by state officials rather than by elected representatives.

**Power:** possession of control, authority, or influence over others.

**Statutory:** a law enacted by the legislative branch of government.

**Fiscal:** of or relating to public revenues (taxation), public spending, debt, and finance.

**Participation:** the fact that you take part or become involved in something.

**Goal:** an observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved within a more or less fixed timeframe.

**Cycle:** a series of event that are regularly repeated in the same order.

**Initiation:** the introduction of someone to a particular activity or skill, or formal admission or acceptance in to an organization or club, adult status in one's community or society.

**Constitution:** the system of fundamental laws and principles that prescribes the nature, functions, and limit of a government or another institution or the supreme law of the land.

**Legislative:** the branch of government that is charged with the powers of making laws.

**Economy:** the state of a country or region in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money.

**Conflict:** a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one. Competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons)

### **Definition of Acronyms**

**MLRGD** – Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development

**UNDP** – United Nation Development Programme

**EU** – European Union

**PBF** – Performance Base Finance

**SLPP** – Sierra Leone Peoples Party

**APC** – All Peoples Congress

**MDAs** – Ministry Departmental Agencies

**EGRA** – Early Grade Reading Assessment

**MDGs** – Millennium Development Goals

**BECE** – Basic Education Certificate Examination

**WASSCE** – West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination

**NPSE** – National Primary School Examination

**NRC** – National Reformation Council

**CADE** - Convention against Discrimination in Education

**CESCR** - Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**CRC** - Convention on the Rights of the Child

**CSO** - Civil Society Organisation

**ECCE** - Early Childhood Care and Education

**EFA** - Education for All

**ESR** - Education Sector Reform

**FCPE** - Free and Compulsory Primary Education

**HRE** - Human Rights Education

**IIEP** - International Institute for Educational Planning

**LEP** - Local Education Plan

**NGO** - Non-Governmental Organisation

**OECD** - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PRSP** - Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

**PTA** - Parent Teacher Association

**SMC** - School Management Committee

**UDHR** - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**UN** - United Nations

**UNDAF** - United Nations Development Assistance Framework

**UNESCO** - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

**UNESS** - UNESCO National Education Support Strategy

**UNICEF** - United Nations Children's Fund

**UPE** - Universal Primary Education

**VEC** - Village Education Committee

**WPHRE** - World Programme for Human Rights Education

This chapter reviews the various literatures that have been written concerning the effect/impact of Internationalization on the performance of firms. The chapter explains the various theories of decentralisation, the strategies that are used, the process and the benefits that communities gain from the educational function of decentralisation. There are several obstacles that are explained in the chapter that the district and local councils face as they try to execute decentralisation educational function.

### **Decentralization, decentralized governance, and good governance**

Decentralization is defined and interpreted in several ways. Sometimes it is considered a term, sometimes a concept, a process, a theory, a methodology, or a policy, even a trend (Katalin Tausz). One of the most common definitions is that it is a process through which authority and responsibility for public functions is transferred from the central government to local governments, civil societies and other non-government organizations. It is a spectrum rather than a single state, ranging from decencentration, delegation to devolution, and delocalization. But, decentralization should not be seen in over-simplistic manner, as a movement of power from the central to the local government. It is rather a process of redefinition of structures, governance procedures and practices to be closer to the citizenry.

Decentralization is a generic term which covers a number of models such as the following: deconcentration which refers to the process of administrative decentralization whereby the central government designs a structure that enables its field agents and offices to work in close proximity to the local people; delegation which is the transfer of responsibilities from central government to semi-autonomous bodies that are directly accountable to the central government; devolution which is the process of transferring decision-making and implementation powers, functions, responsibilities and resources to legally constituted, and popularly elected local governments; delocalization which is the spatial distribution of central government socio-economic development facilities and activities such as schools, hospitals, etc. in peripheral regions. Today, throughout the world there is a broad-based movement towards greater decentralization. Decentralization and local governance are recognized as basic components of democratic governance as providing the enabling environment in which decision-making and service delivery can be brought closer to local people. Due to the historical, socio-economic and other diversity, the reasons for introducing decentralization in the transition countries in ECA are different. In most of them, particularly those from Central and Eastern Europe, the process of decentralization appeared as a necessity after the collapse of the authoritarian regimes. There was a clear need for devolution of power from central authorities to local levels, which necessarily intervenes with service delivery responsibilities, public finance arrangements, rebuilding central state capacities and institutions etc. In others, decentralization has been promoted as a way to assist countries with diverse populations and multi-ethnic settings, as it allows greater political representation for various stakeholders.

In some countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, and Latvia), traditional centralized structures of controlled state owned companies, large networks of service providers, extended social infrastructure for public employees still have to be transferred to more efficient forms of operation. Nevertheless, in general, decentralization everywhere was considered as a necessary measure to address some of the critical issues – starting from macroeconomic instability to improving the delivery of public services. It is also important to note that the process of decentralization and governance reforms in all transition countries have been strongly promoted and supported by foreign governments, and donor agencies. One of the very important role of decentralization in transition countries is that it can improve governance by helping to remove bottlenecks (often caused by central government planning and control) and red-tape that delay decision-making; allowing greater political representation of diverse political, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in decision-making; empowering citizens to hold government decision-makers and service providers to account; relieving top managers in central ministries of “routine”, tasks to concentrate on policy; and it may also increase political stability and national unity by allowing citizens to better control public programmes at the local level<sup>5</sup>. Decentralization strengthens citizen participation by bringing governments closer to the people they are intended to serve. The success of decentralization as a tool for citizen participation, however, critically depends upon the strength of local government institutions (Heymans, 1996). Decentralized governance is commonly regarded as a process of transferring powers, functions, responsibilities, and resources from central to local government and other entities on local level. From the organizational point of view, it is a process of restructuring of authority, so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and local levels, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and

capacities of sub-national levels. Decentralized governance provides the legal, administrative and fiscal frameworks for the empowerment of people and their institutions at sub-national levels, from regional to local. UNDP defines decentralized governance as a systematic and harmonious interrelationship resulting from the balancing of power and responsibilities between central governments and other levels of government and non-government actors, and the capacity of local bodies to carry out their decentralized responsibilities using participatory mechanisms”. UNDP also uses “decentralizing governance”, believing that decentralization of the public sector, in itself, will not be effective unless support is also provided to strengthen local governance, involving the public, private and civil sectors. In developing countries and particularly in least developed countries the concept of decentralized governance often is using as an instrument for democratization and poverty reduction. Transition countries in Europe and Central Asia are not exception from this, although the socio-economic and especially political conditions are different. As part of the overall governance system of any society, decentralized governance offers opportunities for enhanced service delivery. Nevertheless, while decentralization and

Decentralized governance is necessary; it is not a sufficient condition to enhance delivery of services. Similarly, enhanced delivery of services may contribute to, but does not guarantee successful decentralization. Other aspects which are important for decentralized governance to play successful role in enhanced and efficient service delivery are as follows: the relationship between decentralized governance and participatory development management; financing decentralized governance for service delivery; local government cooperation; monitoring and evaluation of service delivery in decentralized governance; capacity building and human resources development in local governance performance, as well as the role of the leadership and

the public trust which is extremely important. Leadership and how it works on local level is one of the key elements for the overall success of the decentralized governance. For transition countries and their complex processes of decentralization and public administration reforms, it is even more important. Public trust is an indicator for the successful development of local government reforms in transition countries. In many of these countries, including those in Central and Eastern Europe, it is a newly established mechanism. Public opinion surveys in these countries during the past decade suggest that local governments seem to be more trustworthy organizations, than the most powerful political institutions<sup>6</sup> (including the parliament or the president of the country). Societies recently liberated from authoritarian party states often prefer weak state systems with strong delivery capacities. Furthermore, in some of the ECA sub-regions, there are still state regimes with the authoritarian and highly centralized governments which fall short of the universally accepted democratic principles. As a result, the pace of democratization in these countries continues to be slow. These governments have failed to identify the country's priorities and development strategies in all spheres and need support for further empowerment in identifying and addressing their priorities. The consequences of such centralized policies are evident. Due to lack of reforms processes, including decentralization, and administrative reform, they are weak in service delivery, but strong in controlling the civil liberties, means of production, and not frequently violating human and political rights<sup>7</sup>.

Good governance is of crucial importance for effective governance at all levels – central, regional, and local. It implies that decisions (at all levels) are taken and implemented in a manner that is free of abuse and corruption, and with regard for the rule of law, it is participatory, transparent, responsive, consensus-oriented, equitable and inclusive, effective and efficient, and accountable. Decentralization's major contribution to good governance is thought to be positive



impact on service delivery. This is achieved through broader citizen participation on local level or their elected representatives in planning and decision-making processes, which should improved capacity to deliver services to all (local) units. In many cases the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery are the most highly ranked characteristics of the autonomous local governments. Citizen participation ensures that public goods and delivery of services are consistent with voter preferences and public sector accountability. The potential for improving service delivery throughout decentralization depends, among other factors, on accountability. Without a strong system of local accountability, devolving authorities and financial resources to local governments can lead to waste of misuse of public funds, and the potential for political capture at the local level can distort the benefits of decentralization. On the other hand, where corruption is systemic at the central level, devolution may enhance service delivery.

### **Stakeholders/citizens participation in decentralization process**

Governments at sub-national levels are increasingly pursuing participatory mechanisms in a bid to improve governance and service delivery. Citizens' participation in governance and public service delivery is increasingly pursued in a bid to improve the performance of governments. This is particularly the case at the local level where services need to be differentiated according to local preferences. As a result recent focus of decentralization reforms has been on the government's relationship with the citizens (Brinkerhoff, et al., 2007). In this context, decentralization is seen as a conducive means of achieving principles of good governance, by what Cheema (2007, p.171) calls, 'providing an institutional framework at the sub-national level through which groups and citizens can organize themselves and participate in political and economic decisions affecting them'. This requires local government units that have the political

space and capacity to make and effect decisions. Despite the theoretical underpinnings and advocacy for citizens/stakeholders participation in decentralized service delivery, evidence on the resulting impact is mixed at best especially in a developing country's context. Available studies look at how decentralization enhances participation (Von Braun and Grote, 2002; Ahmad, et al., 2005; Kauzya, 2007; Brinkerhoff, et al., 2007); design and emerging mechanisms of participation in sub-national governments (Azfar, et al., 1999; Kauzya, 2007; United Nations (UN), 2008; John, 2009; Matovu, 2011; Joshi and Houtzager, 2012); and, factors influencing citizen participation in local governments (Esonu and Kavanamur, 2011; Yang and Pandey, 2011; Bay, 2011; Michels, 2012). Notably, few studies have examined the direct impact of participation on decentralized service delivery outcomes especially in the developing countries (Putnam, 1993 cited in Azfar, et al., 1999; Fiszbein, 1997; Isham and Kähkönen, 1999; Devas and Grant, 2003; Oyugi and Kibua. Citizen participation, according to Devas and Grant (2003:309), is the 'ways in which citizens exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them'. Citizen participation is increasingly becoming a core aspect of decentralization reforms which according to Rondinelli (1999:2) entails 'the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi independent government organizations or the private sector'. In this context, participation can be directly or indirectly. Direct participation, the focus of this study, occurs where citizens - individually or in various forms of self-organization - are actively engaged in the decision-making processes on matters affecting them. Indirect participation is where citizens express their preferences through their elected and other representatives. Citizen participation can be both a goal of and a means to effective decentralization. As a means to effective decentralization, citizen participation improves service delivery by affecting its key determinants including

allocate efficiency, accountability and reduction of corruption, and equity (Azfar, et al., 1999; Robinson, 2007). It enhances allocate efficiency by providing the means for ‘demand revelation thus matching of allocations to user preferences’ (Azfar, et al., 1999, p. 13). On accountability and reduction of corruption, citizen participation facilitates information dissemination and increased public awareness on the actions of government.

This is particularly so where it ‘increases the political cost of inefficient and inadequate public decisions’ (ibid, p.13). Inclusion of the marginalized and the poor in decision making would lead to pro-poor policies hence assuring equitable service provision. In light of these, citizen participation in decentralized service delivery has been increasingly supported so as to provide the necessary impetus to keep the local governments focused on the objects of decentralization.

Mechanismsiii of citizen participation can largely be categorized into vote and voice (Kauzya, 2007). Vote is the means through which citizens select their representatives at the local level. Decentralization facilitates this by putting in place structures that allow citizens to exercise their voting power with limited ‘hindrance or interference from the central government’ (ibid, p. 76). Voting can be limiting as participation is only interpreted as elections, which in many countries happens once in every three to five years, in the case of Sierra Leone it happens after every four years. Stakeholders/Citizens participation in terms of voice is where citizens have the opportunity to influence ‘the making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions that concern their socio-politico-economic wellbeing and to demand accountability from their local leadership’ (ibid, p. 78). Theory suggests that the benefits of citizen participation are optimized when both vote and voice mechanisms are institutionalized in decentralized systems (Azfar, et al., 1999, 2004). Commonly used mechanisms include elections, surveys, town hall meetings, public hearings, hotlines, direct community involvement, participatory planning and

budgeting, and monitoring and evaluation. In assessing the influence of citizen participation on local public service delivery, it is worth noting that there are other factors that may be equally influential, hence attributing the local service delivery outcomes singly on citizen participation becomes a difficult task. Infact, Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:9) observe that the relationship between citizen participation and decentralization is 'conditioned by complex political, historical, social, and economic factors' which differ in magnitude and importance from country to country. Secondly, there is a dearth of data on the relationship between participation and service delivery outcomes. Robinson (2007:7) observes that 'there is no systematic or comparative evidence on whether increased citizen participation in decentralized local governance generates better outputs in provision of education, health, drinking water and sanitation service. Notable in the above studies is that the influential potential of citizen participation is only unleashed when other enabling factors are addressed. These according to Robinson (2007:13) are a combination of 'political, institutional, financial and technical factors' at play within the local government. The education, socio-economic status, and networks that citizens have are key factors in determining whose voice gets heard and what decisions get adopted (John, 2009). Information – its quality, accessibility, accuracy – is also a key determinant in ensuring an effective influence (Devas and Grant, 2003). Yang and Pandey (2011:889) establish that 'public management factors matter in citizen participation'.

Particularly they establish that red tape and hierarchical authority are negatively associated with participation outcomes. Positive outcomes are associated with elected official support, transformational leadership of the chief executive officials, and, the participant competence and representativeness. The above variables were found to be significant even when 'participant competence, representativeness, and involvement mechanisms' (ibid, p.889) are controlled for.

These factors point to the need for intentional action and will of both the government officials and the citizens in making participation work. In fact, Bay (2011 citing Avritzer, 2009) observes that participation is only likely to work where government officials (especially politicians) and citizens agree. It is only in such an environment that citizen's preferences are likely to be taken seriously.

The increasing support of citizen participation in decentralized local governance warrants a closer look. This is particularly so in the face of limited empirical evidence to support the theoretically based positive effects attributed to direct citizen participation. Thus the question is, how does citizen participation influence decentralized service delivery? And how can such influence be determined? To carry out this inquiry this study assumes the argument that citizen participation influences service delivery outcomes through impacting its determinants or characteristics that include efficient allocation of resources, equity in service delivery, and, accountability and reduction of corruption (Azfar, et al., 1999; Von Braun and Grote, 2002).

Citizen participation, the independent variable, is operationalized in terms of the mechanisms or instruments through which citizens have a contact with decentralized service delivery. In this study it narrows on one mechanism of voice relating to the stages of service delivery, that is, planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. This is in terms of how and where in the service delivery cycle the citizens participate. An important element of decentralization involves communities taking part in decisions that affect them. Stakeholders now acknowledge that when local initiatives bring a school and its community closer, the experience generates a sense of ownership.

Not only does it enhance accountability, but it also ensures that those in charge have a say regarding content, scheduling, and requirements; they can adapt these elements to the community's circumstances

A community's support is central to efforts that increase people's involvement in the school and in improving retention and learning outcomes (Watt, 2001). Recent research on social capital, moreover, emphasizes the importance of mobilizing communities as a means of tapping into their cultural, social and political capital (Woolcock, 2000); school-based management is a platform from which to draw on these resources. Community participation ranges from familiar forms of support - such as an involvement in construction - to involvement in management, planning, and learning. The impact is often uneven because of its multi-faceted nature; communities do vary in their ability to participate in and support education. Some well resourced, highly motivated, and cohesive communities are single-handedly financing and managing local education. Other communities, hampered by their lack the resources, make little. The dependent variable, decentralized service delivery, is operationalise by indicators of allocate efficiency, accountability and reduction of corruption, and equity in service delivery. These are picked as key indicators of whether service delivery has improved or not, in line with the common objectives of decentralization. In this study these indicators and the corresponding hypothesis are conceptualized as follows:-

(a) Allocative efficiency: This is the extent to which the services delivered match the preferences of the citizens. It is assessed by the extent to which citizen needs expressed in proposals are reflected in the decisions and final services provided. It is expected that through participation by citizens, local governments have better knowledge of the preferences and hence can vary services to suit demands (Azfar, et al., 1999:2). In this study allocative efficiency is measured as

the degree to which services provided match citizen preferences and the satisfaction level of citizens with it.

(b) Accountability and reduction of corruption: Accountability is the practice where service delivery agents make public, and are responsible for their actions. In this case it is the extent to which officials of the local government give account to the citizens on the resources at their disposal and how they have been used in service delivery. Reduction of corruption is the extent to which abuse and misuse of public resources for private gain has been controlled and minimized. Where those charged with decentralized service delivery apply all resources for the intended purposes. It is also seen as the measure to which transparency through information sharing is practiced.

According to Devas and Grant (2003), enhanced citizen participation can strengthen accountability. In so doing 'citizens should have accurate and accessible information about local government: about available resources, performance, service levels, budgets, accounts and other financial indicators' (ibid, p. 310). This indicator is assessed based on records of information accessibility, level of information asymmetries in the local government, and existing structures of demand and supply of accountability.

(c) Equity: This has to do with geographical and demographic targeting of services especially to the neediest groups in the society. This includes targeting the poor and marginalized who have previously been ignored. It implies that citizens contribute according to ability but are allocated according to need. Although Azfar, et al., (1999) observe that genuine decentralization results in inequity, they do argue that local initiative (participation) coupled with equalization transfers can remedy the problem. In this study equity is assessed as the extent to which the voice and preferences of the marginalized are incorporated in decision making.

## **The Aim of Educational Governance at Local Council levels**

At the World Education Forum, Dakar 2000, the international community pledged itself to develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management; and to ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development.

As follow up to the Dakar Framework for Action, UNESCO initiated a programme to identify main issues, identify challenges, and assess country priorities in the area of educational governance, the aim being to address the over-riding question of how educational governance at local levels can serve as a lever to meet the challenges of EFA, improving the quality and equity of education? As a result of this research, the present Educational Governance at Local Levels has been developed to inspire and help strengthen national capacities to formulate, implement, and evaluate policies and strategies in local educational governance. In following up on the World Education Forum, Dakar 2000, where the international community and Member States pledged to achieve Education for All by 2015, UNESCO has a role in providing international frameworks for education policy and practice on key and complex issues. Educational decentralization, a key strategy for the management and governance of education systems, is one such issue. Across the world, decentralization of fiscal, political, and administrative responsibilities to lower levels of government, local institutions, and the private sector is being attempted as a panacea to solve broader political, social or economic problems. In parallel, governments are proposing educational decentralization, as part of the sector wide reforms.

Implicit in these approaches is the assumption that increased participation in local schools would lead to democratic governance, increase accountability, and empower communities (Bryk et al, 1998; Hanson, 1997; Khan, 2001; World Bank, 2000). In the education sector this belief has led



to such policies as transferring decision making authority from central to local governments, increasing autonomy for schools, enabling communities to participate more effectively in school management and resource mobilization, and offering incentives for private providers.

Underlying all this work is the assumption that when the provision or financing of education is less centralized, benefits will follow: education will become better, more efficient, more responsive to local demands, and more citizens will participate. In practice, however, we have little conclusive evidence of such benefits. Moreover, few systematic reviews have been conducted on the processes and consequences of educational decentralization in developing countries (Hanson, 1997; Khan, 2002). Drawing from practice in developed countries, some critics argue that decentralization may generate inequities, or greater disparities in the quality of services provided across different regions, or that public funds will hardly be spent more efficiently (Whitty and Power, 2000; Armove, 1997; Prawda, 1993). Others question whether decentralization enhances academic achievement and learning (King, Rawlings et al, 1997; Hanson, 1997). Despite this criticism, evidence from some developed countries suggests that community participation, a core strategy in decentralization, can be a lever for change in schools (Sergiovanni cited in Hargreaves et al., 1998).

### **The Principles of Educational Governance**

For a long time now educators and policy makers have understood that complex structures, notably ministries of education, cannot meet the demand for human, financial and material resources, in regards to the goal of education for all (EFA).

They have found it necessary to look for other ways to manage and to administer. In tandem with the international community, ministries have decided to establish an alternative form of governance that has as its core an educational and social transformation.

This approach is in line with universally recognized and ratified UN instruments that protect human rights. It supports the right of people to take part in governance, and to do so without being discriminated against.

They have the right, moreover, to a system of education that is not only transparent but also accountable. Governance refers to a system of making decisions that is wider than government itself. Although there is no universally accepted definition, it is understood to include ‘not only control of decisions about the operations of educational organizations, but also control over decisions about the dimensions along which that performance will be evaluated’ (McGinn, 2002; p.13). It refers to the way groups of stakeholders negotiate, and to the way a society distributes power between those who govern and those who are governed, as well as between duty-bearers and rights-holders. Decentralizing the authority and functions of government to a local level is central to the practice of governance. Its principles include:

- Devolving and transferring authority
- Integrating local and central governments
- Making decisions that all stakeholders take part in
- Creating links between areas of policy
- Building dependencies between stakeholders
- Shifting development strategies from ‘supply-side’ to ‘demand-side’
- Involving communities in planning, implementing and evaluating
- Demonstrating accountability and transparency

In the face of calls for reform, countries are now showing a willingness to consider radical solutions across the education sector.

They want to be more accountable, to expand access to education, to improve results, to use public resources more efficiently, and to guarantee social and gender equity. For this reason their goal is to change the way they manage education by introducing principles of local governance, thereby gradually decentralizing authority so that the wider communities takes part in making decisions about education. Schools and other institutions can be governed locally only when they are accountable to local stakeholders, who evaluate them by using criteria of their own choosing. In spite of their acknowledging this need for accountability, in practice most reform efforts hold local managers accountable to national or central level authorities, rather than to those at a local level. This means that the community is left with little voice in choosing criteria to judge the performance of its own institutions.

### **Why Decentralize?**

Decentralization in any area is a response to the problems of centralized systems. Decentralization in government, the topic most studied, has been seen as a solution to problems like economic decline, government inability to fund services and their general decline in performance of overloaded services, the demands of minorities for a greater say in local governance, the general weakening legitimacy of the public sector and global and international pressure on countries with inefficient, undemocratic, overly centralized systems (Johnson Norman L 1999). The following four goals or objectives are frequently stated in various analyses of decentralization. Each country has its reasons for choosing to decentralize education; all of them are shaped by historical, socio-economic and political realities, among them the following:

### **Participation**

In decentralization the principle of subsidiary is often invoked. It holds that the lowest or least centralized authority which is capable of addressing an issue effectively should do so. According

to one definition: "Decentralization, or decentralizing governance, refers to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at the central, regional and 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 capacities of sub-national levels (Holger Dann 2007).

Decentralization is often linked to concepts of participation in decision-making, democracy, equality and liberty from higher authority (UNDP 1991). Decentralization enhances the democratic voice (Diana Conyers 1983). Theorists believe that local representative authorities with actual discretionary powers are the basis of decentralization that can lead to local efficiency, equity and development (Robert Charles Vipond 1991). Columbia University's Earth Institute identified one of three major trends relating to decentralization as: "increased involvement of local jurisdictions and civil society in the management of their affairs, with new forms of participation, consultation, and partnerships. Decentralization has been described as a "counterpoint to globalization" which removes decisions from the local and national stage to the global sphere of multi-national or non-national interests. Decentralization brings decision-making back to the sub-national levels. Decentralization strategies must account for the interrelations of global, regional, national, sub-national, and local levels (Robert J).

### **Diversity**

Norman L. Johnson writes that diversity plays an important role in decentralized systems like ecosystems, social groups, large organizations, political systems. "Diversity defined to be unique properties of entities, agents, or individuals that are not shared by the larger group, population,

structure. Decentralized is defined as a property of a system where the agents have some ability to operate "locally." Both decentralization and diversity are necessary attributes to achieve the self-organizing properties of interest (UNDP 1991). Advocates of political decentralization hold that greater participation by better informed diverse interests in society will lead to more relevant decisions than those made only by authorities on the national level (UNDP 1991). Decentralization has been described as a response to demands for diversity (World Bank 2003).

### **Efficiency**

In business, decentralization leads to a management by results philosophy which focuses on definite objectives to be achieved by unit results (Theresa A McCarty 1993). Decentralization of government programs is said to increase efficiency – and effectiveness – due to reduction of congestion in communications, quicker reaction to unanticipated problems, improved ability to deliver services, improved information about local conditions, and more support from beneficiaries of programs (UNDP 1991). Firms may prefer decentralization because it ensures efficiency by making sure that managers closest to the local information make decisions and in a more timely fashion; that their taking responsibility frees upper management for long term strategies rather than day-to-day decision-making; that managers have hands on training to prepare them to move up the management hierarchy; that managers are motivated by having the freedom to exercise their own initiative and creativity; that managers and divisions are encouraged to prove that they are profitable, instead of allowing their failures to be masked by the overall profitability of the company (Jerry M Silverman 1992).

The same principles can be applied to government. Decentralization promises to enhance efficiency through both inter-governmental competitions with market features and fiscal discipline which assigns tax and expenditure authority to the lowest level of government possible. It works best where members of subnational government have strong traditions of democracy, accountability and professionalism (Diana Conyers 1983). Decentralizing decision-making authority to parents and communities fosters demand and ensures that schools provide the social and economic benefits that best reflect the priorities and values of those local communities (Chen, 2011). Concerned with such issues as granting greater power and authority to local communities as well as diffusing state authority and increasing organizational efficiency, the decentralization movements saw the devolution of authority as an end to meet political and administrative goal (Walker, 2000).

#### **Conflict Resolution**

Economic and/or political decentralization can help prevent or reduce conflict because they reduce actual or perceived inequities between various regions or between a region and the central government (World Bank 2003). Dawn Brancati finds that political decentralization reduces intrastate conflict unless politicians create political parties that mobilize minority and even extremist groups to demand more resources and power within national governments. However, the likelihood this will be done depends on factors like how democratic transitions happen and features like a regional party's proportion of legislative seats, a country's number of regional legislatures, elector procedures, and the order in which national and regional elections occur. Brancati holds that decentralization can promote peace if it encourages

statewide parties to incorporate regional demands and limit the power of regional parties (Dawn Brancati 2009).

### Processes of Decentralisation

The process of decentralization redefines structures, procedures and practices of governance to be closer to the citizenry and to make them more aware of the costs and benefits; it is not merely a movement of power from the central to the local government. According to the United Nations Development Programme, it is "more than a process, it is a way of life and a state of mind." The report provides a chart-formatted framework for defining the application of the concept 'decentralization' describing and elaborating on the "who, what, when, where, why and how" factors in any process of decentralization (UNDP 1991).

Initiation: The processes by which entities move from a more to a less centralized state vary. They can be initiated from the centers of authority ("top-down") or from individuals, localities or regions ("bottom-up") UNDP(1991), or from a "mutually desired" combination of authorities and localities working together (ArunaaLkhagvadorj 2010). Bottom-up decentralization usually stresses political values like local responsiveness and increased participation and tends to increase political stability. Top-down decentralization may be motivated by the desire to "shift deficits downwards" and find more resources to pay for services or pay off government debt (UNDP 1991). Some hold that decentralization should not be imposed, but done in a respectful manner (Karin E Kemper et al 2010).

Analysis of operations: Project and program planners must assess the lowest organizational level at which functions can be carried out efficiently and effectively. Governments deciding to privatize functions must decide which are best privatized. Existing types of decentralization must be studied. The appropriate balance of centralization and decentralization should be

studied. Training for both national and local managers and officials is necessary, as well as technical assistance in the planning, financing, and management of decentralized functions (UNDP 1991).

**Appropriate size:** Gauging the appropriate size or scale of decentralized units has been studied in relation to the size of sub-units of hospitals and schools, PACE project (2006) road networks, Robert J. Taylor et al (1994) administrative units in business Frannie Frank Humplick et al (1991) and public administration, and especially town and city governmental areas and decision making bodies Abbass F Alkhafaji (2003). In creating planned communities ("new towns"), it is important to determine the appropriate population and geographical size. While in earlier years small towns were considered appropriate, by the 1960s, 60,000 inhabitants were considered the size necessary to support a diversified job market and an adequate shopping center and array of services and entertainment. Appropriate size of governmental units for revenue rising also is a consideration (Aaron Teffaye 2002).

Even in bioregionalism, which seeks to reorder many functions and even the boundaries of governments according to physical and environmental features, including watershed boundaries and soil and terrain characteristics, appropriate size must be considered. The unit may be larger than many decentralist bioregionalisms prefer (Harry Ward Richardson 1978).

**Inadvertent or silent:** Decentralization ideally happens as a careful, rational, and orderly process, but it often takes place during times of economic and political crisis, the fall of a regime and the resultant power struggles. Even when it happens slowly, there is a need for experimentation, testing, adjusting, and replicating successful experiments in other contexts.



There is no one blueprint for decentralization since it depends on the initial state of a country and the power and views of political interests and whether they support or oppose decentralization (Allen G. Noble et al 1999). Decentralization usually is conscious process based on explicit policies. However, it may occur as "silent decentralization" in the absence of reforms as changes in networks, policy emphasizes and resource availability lead inevitably to a more decentralized system (UNDP 1991). A variation on this is "inadvertent decentralization", when other policy innovations produce an unintended decentralization of power and resources. In both China and Russia, lower level authorities attained greater powers than intended by central authorities (H.F.W Dubois et al 2009).

**Asymmetry:** Decentralization may be uneven and "asymmetric" given any one country's population, political, ethnic and other forms of diversity. In many countries, political, economic and administrative responsibilities may be decentralized to the larger urban areas, while rural areas are administered by the central government. Decentralization of responsibilities to provinces may be limited only to those provinces or states which want or are capable of handling responsibility. Some privatization may be more appropriate to an urban than a rural area; some types of privatization may be more appropriate for some states and provinces but not others (UNDP 1991).

**Measurement:** Measuring the amount of decentralization, especially politically, is difficult because different studies of it use different definitions and measurements. An OECD study quotes *Chanchal Kumar Sharma* as stating: "a true assessment of the degree of decentralization in a country can be made only if a comprehensive approach is adopted and rather than trying to simplify the syndrome of characteristics into the single dimension of autonomy, interrelationships of various dimensions of decentralization are taken into account (UNDP 1991).

**Finance:** this refers to how a country raises money for education. Some countries expect that decentralization will generate extra revenues because it takes advantage of local taxes, reduces operating costs, and shifts some of the financial burden to regional and local governments, community organizations, and parents. It is worth noting that financial stringency should not be a country's primary reason; in fact sometimes central governments try to evade their responsibilities with respect to providing services by devolving responsibilities to lower tiers or non-government bodies (Bray, 2003).

**Cultural Differences and Linguistic Pluralism:** refers to the way countries make sure education is relevant to the local context. Alternatively, it might advocate centralization on the grounds that it sets standards with respect to central elements in curriculum and instruction for the purpose of achieving intra-national diversity (Bray, 2003).

### **Evaluating/Monitoring Decentralisation Process**

The trends above reflect the range of issues and concerns implicated in local governance. They indicate what is needed if a country is to initiate devolution (input), the way governance takes place (process), and the results at school level (output). Not surprisingly the task of evaluating the progress of decentralization across the board calls for a range of strategic approaches.

When a ministry's policy-makers formulate and implement large-scale reforms they often make the assumption that schools will apply the changes in a uniform manner. Practitioners, however, rarely achieve a universal momentum of this kind. Internal dynamics and the institutionalized nature of environments or sectors all influence the evolution and impact of change.

A school's history, its social and economic conditions, or the relative coherency of its management structure may all exert influence over the viability of reform.

It is generally agreed that the real impact of decentralization can be measured only after some years. There is also a consensus regarding the necessity for benchmarks that will assess the extent to which initiatives are in line with the principles and practices of devolution, Performance indicators that are sensitive to local context, and are drawn up in consultation with all stakeholders, offer information that is current and versatile. It allows stakeholders to assess the transition from a centralized to decentralized system.

An assessment of this kind helps planners to redefine the rights and duties, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and institutions, and to identify the constraints and input that will influence and inspire further reform. It is a framework flexible enough to help with tasks such as:

- Providing empirical evidence on obstacles to implementation at district and local levels
- Monitoring and evaluation that is continuous
- Identifying indicators and approaches to the tasks of monitoring and evaluating
- Assessing an MOE's roles and responsibilities (and those of local government and departments) with respect to communities taking part in planning, in making policy, and in designing and evaluating programs
- Assessing the role of school councils and other local bodies

Practitioners from a range of administrative levels can adapt the framework according to context and priorities. Policy-makers and planners should be aware how certain elements pose a risk to successfully assessing decentralization.

### **The Impact of Educational Decentralisation on Educational Output:**

Decentralization in education can range from the deconcentration of Administrative authority to more comprehensive regulatory and financial control, and it can extend across all education functions. A number of researchers suggest that human capital—in the form of quantity of Schooling and quality—plays an important role in economic development and per capita Income growth. Education not only helps to improve the income-earning potential but it Also has the ability to empower individuals; education enables individuals to participate in local and national government, it provides skills and knowledge to improve quality of education and to become more productive (World Bank 1995a). Therefore, investigating whether education decentralization might improve the outcomes associated with the Provision of education is of primary importance in order to obtain better governance, Quality of life and overall economic growth. Although Lee and Barro (2001) developed a production function model to investigate the factors that affect education output across countries, their model does not incorporate education decentralization as a determinant of education output. We argue that the failure to develop a model that is adaptable to different types of education decentralization and to include behavioral effects on the inputs of the education process has inhibited researchers' ability to perform cross-country comparative studies of decentralization's influence on education outputs. One of the objectives of this dissertation is to develop a theoretical model of decentralization that investigates the potential effect of education decentralization that is adaptable to different forms of education decentralization policies to take full advantage of cross-country experiences. The impact of education decentralization on education output has been on individual country analysis. This approach makes sense; characteristics of education decentralization and the output of education are affected by social, cultural, economic, and political determinants which are country-specific. There remains a need to expand the possibility of generalizing results through

comparative case studies. Although specific country analysis of education decentralization can provide policymakers with significant insight on a type of reform and its influence on education outputs, cross-country studies can provide planners with guidance on a balance between centralized and decentralized decision-making of education functions. Examining the distribution of decision-making authority in different countries with respect to the educational functions can also help determine a plan about an optimal level of government decision-making power sharing that is best suited in any given set of circumstances based on countries' characteristics, experiences, and outputs of education.

### **Evaluating/Monitoring Educational Decentralization Process**

Often policy-makers make tacit assumptions that under educational decentralization local stakeholders lead wisely because they have all the information they need to enable organizational efforts to blossom (Fuller and Rivarola, 1998). Of course in many cases this does not happen; the evolution and impact of change is conditioned by the internal dynamics and institutionalized features of the sector. The additional force of a school's prior history, the surrounding economic conditions, and its coherent (or chaotic) management structure, all affect the implementation of decentralization reforms. Any evaluation of decentralization takes account of these complexities. It is generally understood that the impact of decentralization can be measured only after some time, often five years. Others hold that some benchmarks are needed to assess whether policy, plans and program align with vision. Performance indicators that are sensitive to a local context provide current quantitative and qualitative data that allows educators and others to realistically assess progress in the transition from a centralized system. This assessment helps in redefining the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and institutions; it also helps identifying both constraints and interventions that support or hinder further reform.

As an evaluative model comprising certain tasks, it:

- Provides empirical evidence on issues and obstacles to implementation at district levels
- Facilitates continuous monitoring and evaluation
- Assesses the role of a school management council and other associations
- Assesses the MOE's roles and responsibilities and also those of local government departments so that district education's office take part in policy, planning, and program design and evaluation
- To determines what authority is transferred and to whom; who makes decisions across levels, and about what; and what indicators and approaches are needed for monitoring and evaluating.

Stakeholders at different administrative levels can adapt the evaluative model to own needs and priorities. The model assesses how well the policies, plans and programs for which they are responsible reflect a ministry's vision of devolution. Assessing decentralization also calls for circumspection and sensitivity with respect to wider issues.

Placing countries on a continuum for means of comparison is risky, though beneficial. Local can mean different things in different countries. Some functions are more important than others, and therefore cannot be ranked at the same level. Source: Bray, 2003).

My goal in this dissertation is to analyze, theoretically and empirically the effect of decentralisation of educational functions to local councils in the Tonkolili district with special attention to the Yoni Chiefdom. The researcher believes that this dissertation is timely and pertinent given the lack of consensus in the Literature about the effect of educational decentralization on education outputs. While there is a possibility that there is improvement in education outputs due to education Decentralization, others argue that centralization of education

systems should be Preferred in developing countries where there is considerable instability, often immature Democratic systems, and where weak fiscal and technical capacity of sub-national Governments may hinder equitable and efficient provision of education services. Whether Education decentralization has an effect on the performance of education systems and what is the magnitude of this effect are yet to be determined.

Furthermore, the literature is abundant with specific country case studies on the Impact of education decentralization on education output, but there is less evidence, if any, on comparative studies of education decentralization across countries over time. Considering that no two countries are the same, it is essential that the literature provides evidence of this impact across countries and over time. Understanding the factors that contribute to the production of education and exploring the link between education decentralization and the outcomes of this policy on the education system is important for the following reasons:

- (1) It will contribute to the literature explaining the effect of education decentralization on education output across countries and over time, and
- (2) from the policymakers' point of view, if education decentralization leads to improved outcomes of education provision in terms of greater access through higher enrolment rates; greater efficiency through lower repetition and dropout rates, as well as better student test scores, then international financial institutions, bilateral donors and governments should focus on decentralization reforms that enhance the responsibilities of sub-national governments in delivering education services.

#### **2.4 Efficiency of the Decentralization process**

The key words in an education policy must be the quality, efficiency, equity and internationalization. Education is a factor for competitiveness in our modern world. The current

priorities in educational development are to raise the level of education and upgrade competencies among the population and the work force. Efficiency of the education system, to prevent exclusion among children and young people and to enlarge adult learning opportunities, Decision-making is regarded as the most important process among the management process (Gulkan, 2008). Decision making problems are very common in a lot of disciplines, including educational management. Most of the decisions carried out in an educational problem are taken from an intuitive point of view or only with some very basic information (Merigo Lindahl, Lopez-Jurado & Gracia Ramos, 2009). Decision making is a process of making a choice from a number of alternatives to achieve a desired result (Eisenfuhr, 2011). Governments around the world are introducing a range of strategies aimed at improving the delivery of education services. One such strategy is to decentralize education decision making by increasing parental and community involvement in schools. Decentralizing decision-making authority to parents and communities fosters demand and ensures that schools provide the social and economic benefits that best reflect the priorities and values of those local communities (Chen, 2011). Concerned with such issues as granting greater power and authority to local communities as well as diffusing state authority and increasing organizational efficiency, the decentralization movements saw the devolution of authority as an end to meet political and administrative goal (Walker, 2000).

A school administrator may include others in a decision involving an issue that is relevant to them and that they have the expertise to make, instead of making the decision unilaterally. Such action is referred to in the research literature as participatory decision making. Participatory decision making, also referred to as shared, collaborative, or group decision making, focuses on decision processes that involve others. In education, participatory decision making is based on



the idea that active involvement of teachers, parents, or community members in school decisions will lead to improved school performance (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). Scholars, government experts and international organizations are searching for the best alternatives to improve the education system in terms of financing, curriculum and stakeholders implication. Researches done on real problems and needs of the education system have become more and more closed to the practice, even though the information sent as feed-back from the level of schools, classes etc. does not reach the policy- and decision-makers through its institutional way, namely through county inspectorates. On the other hand, some of the civil organizations, such as committees of the parents, pupils and local authorities have day-by-day more implied in solving all kind of problems of the schools (Kosa, 2008). An education system must be always connected with the local community and less controlled from a distance through decisions of some institutions, such as scholar inspectorates and the Ministry of Education.

### **Challenges of Decentralization Process**

There are several key challenges of decentralization in transition countries which are important for successful implementation of the local governance reforms in the region:

- (a) Enabling environment for decentralization;
- (b) Institutional capacity to lead and implement reforms;
- (c) Legal and institutional frameworks for decentralization; and
- (d) Accountability, human rights and community empowerment. They are all interrelated, though there are differences among the sub-regional groups of countries (for example, the

environment for decentralization in Central Asia and Western Balkans as post-conflict environments is very different than in Central European States, now EU members).

A common problem in these countries is the weak policy making capacity at central and local levels. Because of insufficient policy-making capacities the development of the decentralization strategy is often entrusted to the outside experts or specially created units.

Traditionally, most attention is given to the strengthening of policy-making capacities at the central level, leaving the policy-making skills at local levels at the periphery. In many of these countries there is no clear mechanism of cooperation between regional and local-self government, which would provide a possibility for local governments through their associations to consistently and actively represent and defend their interests.

Also, during the decentralization process, regional and local governments are expected to be able to assume decentralized responsibilities and to provide high quality services to local communities. Therefore a wide range of managerial capacities such as planning, financial and human resources management skills, project development and other abilities must be developed. Priority capacity needs differ significantly from region to region<sup>10</sup>. As experience suggests, innovative approaches and the expansion of the range of instruments to develop capacities are necessary, as the traditional ones (such as training and consulting), prove insufficient to achieve sustainable results. Despite the progress made in improving capacity building, main challenges remain. These include: administrative/civil service reform, which often fails to include local administrations; the goals of capacity development programmes and projects do not always correspond to the objectives of reform strategies; legal framework does not ensure the sustainability of capacity development policies; the approach to capacity development of local government administration is usually ad-hoc or based on partial needs assessments; there is a

need for better coordination between donors and government institutions; local capacities are not properly and sufficiently utilized and there is a tendency to establish new institutions instead of strengthening existing ones. Another challenge of the institutional capacities at local level is the issue of retaining professional and qualified local government staff. In many countries it is a serious problem, mainly as a result of the fact that central governments try to ensure sufficient professional standards only at central, and not at local level in a number of these countries local government units are small size and it is often used as argument against decentralization (many countries have numerous communities with municipal status and a population below 1000 inhabitants). They do not have necessary administrative, technical, financial, human and organizational capacities to perform their duties and to carry out service delivery, including in some of the essential areas (primary education, waste disposal etc.). At the same time, most of them depend on the state support which enhances further the centralist tendencies, particularly in those countries where already have existed centralist structures<sup>11</sup>. Thus, the opponents of decentralized governance have an argument to claim that decentralization reforms will not benefit for better governance system in the country.

Local governments in transition countries have not only very different and limited capabilities to deliver, but also to finance services, which frequently impede the process of fiscal decentralization. There is a need to set up a system where different local governments are given different financing powers and expenditure responsibilities. Also, in many instances, these countries possess very limited revenue-raising capacity – thus making them highly dependent on the central government subsidies. It inevitably limits the capacity of local governments to provide and enhance services their citizens require and diminish their responsibility. Very low local revenue autonomy across the region is one of the great difficulties for successful delivery

of services. One of the common problems in most of transition countries in the region is their weak ability to monitor the development of the local government finances, mainly due to absence of fiscal analysis unit (in the Ministry of Finance) to continuously monitor local government finances, and information system with detailed data about the finances of sub-national governments. Also, there is not developed municipal finance markets.

### **Accountability and community empowerment**

The notion that decentralization leads to a more efficient delivery of government services rests on the premise that local governments can be held accountable, in that they have the obligation to answer public questions regarding their decision-making processes and actions.

Governments' service delivery should reflect the interests of citizens and respond to their needs and concerns. However, due to government unresponsiveness which occurs regularly in these countries, there is a mismanagement of public funds, corrupt allocations of public contracts, etc. Because of a multi-ethnic and post-conflict nature of the region, governments' accountability should be one of the priorities in designing and implementation of decentralization reforms.

The potential for improving service delivery throughout decentralization depends, among other factors, on accountability. Without a strong system of local accountability, devolving authorities and financial resources to local governments can lead to waste of misuse of public funds, and the potential for political capture at the local level can distort the benefits of decentralization.

On the other hand, where corruption is systemic at the central level, devolution may enhance service delivery. Accountability can be promoted through the establishment of particular institutions and mechanisms to control governments' abuses and increase their responsibility (one of the possible ways is trough application of sanctions).

In improving the accountability in transition countries, both the model of horizontal accountability and vertical accountability should be introduced and implemented. State institutions that monitor and control abuses by other public agencies must be strengthened, by fostering their autonomous position vis-à-vis the state and their links to other public institutions. Also, the demands of the civil society organizations, including the media, and the private sector, which compose the main structure of the vertical model, should be more articulated. The efficiency of these accountability models largely depends on the capacities of civil society organizations and watchdog institutions to strengthen accountability and accountability mechanisms. Civil society organizations formed at local level are easy to observe and facilitate widespread participation through running for office, advocacy with local government officials, or directly participating in leadership selection. If civil society monitoring mechanisms are strong, the downward accountability of local staff will tend to encourage a closer connection between public services and citizen demands. Community empowerment is one of the important challenges in transition countries. The activities of civil society, particularly NGO's and independent media are critical, and the government should create environment that are supportive to civil society growth. In only few countries the level of activities of civil societies and the media is more advanced, than in the others. However, in most of the countries in the region the process of community empowerment is very slow. There are many reasons for such situation, including lack of adequate mechanisms and instruments for better local community participation in the decision-making and insufficient grants funds to support community initiatives.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The primary purpose of this project is to identify the educational functions been devolved to the Tonkolili District Council especially in Yoni Chiefdom through the decentralization process

### Research Design

The research design shows the actual framework or plan of the entire study in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting the collected data. In order to study and analyze the effect of decentralization of educational functions to council in nation building using Yoni Chiefdom as a case study, primary data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative techniques such as interview and standard questionnaires to assess the level of decentralization of the educational functions in the district particularly Yoni Chiefdom. Qualitative research involves the exploration of people's attitudes, feelings, experiences and opinions about a particular idea, while quantitative research is used to generate statistics through the use of survey research, Dawson C. (2002), both methods were considered necessary because, to know and collect data on functions devolved to councils, staff of the council, teachers, other stakeholders, would have to express their feelings, experiences in some scenarios while areas like enrolment require quantitative reports. Focused group discussions were also organised in order to collect vital information from the other set of the population not sampled. .

### Study Area

This research was carried out mainly in Yoni Chiefdom in the Tonkolili District Northern Sierra Leone. Yoni Chiefdom is the largest chiefdom in Tonkolili District, an amalgamated Chiefdom with twelve (12) sections and is located along the Masiaka, Bo high way. Hills are located in

some parts of the chiefdom and such hills are Seberih hill, Magbosie Hill and the Rokimbi hill. Presently, in the chiefdom there are local and International Non- Governmental Organizations (NGO's), and a forestry company called MIRO. The people of the chiefdom are of different cultural and religious background. Moreover, there are various economic activities that are undertaking by the people of Yoni. A good number of the people in the chiefdom engaged in subsistence agriculture, as there are many swamps and boli lands suitable for the practice, while very few are engaged in commercial farming. While some are engaged in small business enterprises trading on local and foreign products for building purposes and construction of roads, other sets of the population in the chiefdom have been engaged in petty trading for a long time, and it has become a culture with high social effects. Some of the people involved in palm wine tapping. There are so many nursery, primary and secondary schools with few tertiary institutions in the chiefdom, thus accounting for over 40 percent of the young population. There are also other people with different occupations like, teachers, lecturers, lawyers, and even those working for Non- Governmental organizations. They engaged in these types of economic activities to promote the development of the chiefdom.

### **Population and Sample**

The targeted population for this study are school administrators in the selected schools for primary and secondary, some core staff and three councillors working on education in the council and three community stakeholders. The methods used in the selection of the Tonkolili District and Yoni Chiefdom cannot be described simple random nor systematic or stratified. This was based on the fact that, the focus has been on that specific district and the chiefdom precisely. A total of thirty (30) persons were interviewed both from the district council and from Yoni chiefdom. In the chiefdom, the selection of schools involved simple random sampling given the

fact that the schools in the major town in the chiefdom, Mile 91 are many and as a result all cannot be studied in this research work. In that vein, a total of ten (10) schools, five primary and five secondary schools with two teachers interviewed from each school were randomly selected. While in the district council, a total of seven(7) staff were interviewed; three (3) councillors working on Education, the finance officer, one Valuation and one Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and the Chief Administrator were selected based on their roles in the administration of the council other than the district council chairperson who is the political head. one head of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) of one school was selected, the honourable member of parliament and the section chief were also interviewed.

### **Instrument**

The main research instrument used in this research project are; questionnaires, observation, personal and focus group discussions.

### **Questionnaire**

Two separate set of questionnaires were designed. One for the council staff and another for the community which involved the teachers, parents and some other authorities involved in the educational activities of the schools considered. Questions relating to the objectives set in chapter one was designed and each objective was captured as a separate section.

### **Observation**

Several visits were made to the different schools selected to collect first hand information on what obtains in the schools and the environment



### **Focus Group Discussion**

Apart from the teachers selected from each of the sampled schools, others were engaged differently on separate discussions in relation to the questions designed and responses were recorded separately.

### **Documentary Evidence**

Several documentary evidences were consulted in order to produce comprehensive and unique research results. This includes office files, maps, journal, text books, magazines, newspaper etc.

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

The research was carried out in two phases; the first was seeking the consent of those to be interviewed while the second phase involved distribution of the questionnaires, engaging group and individuals concerned on discussions around the objectives, site visits and collection of the completed questionnaires.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

The data collected was discussed and represented using charts.

## RESULT FINDINGS

### Introduction

This chapter discusses findings from the data collected in the field from both the staff of the Tonkolili District Council, teachers, parents and community people in the yoni chiefdom.

### Demographic distribution of the population

Figure 4.1a below clearly shows that, of the total staff interviewed from the council, 43% of them were councillors, working on different educational programmes in different wards in the district but under one council as head of education at council. While 14.3 % each represents assistant monitoring and evaluation officer, valuation officer, and Development officer. Figure 4.1b on the other hand shows the designation of the respondents from Yoni Chiefdom which clearly shows that 44% of them were teachers. While, 4% each represent Member of Parliament, Parents and Section Chief, 26 percent represent senior teachers and nine percent each of principals and head teachers.

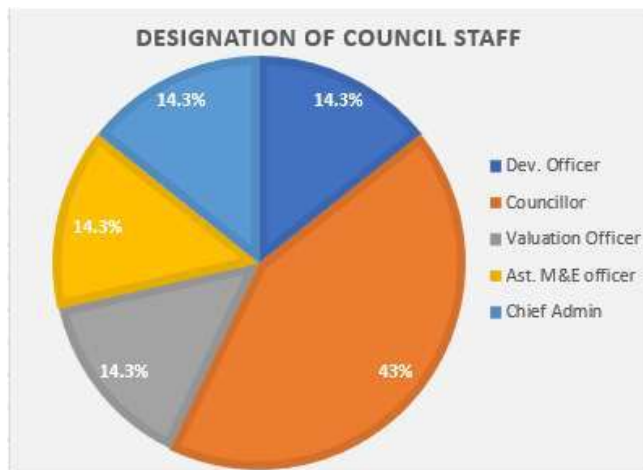


Figure 4.1a

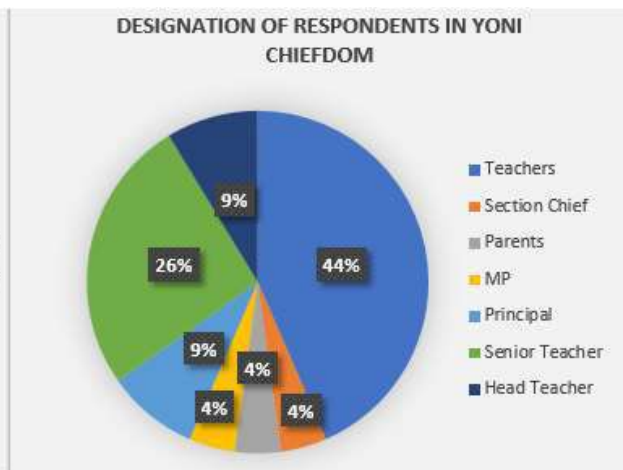


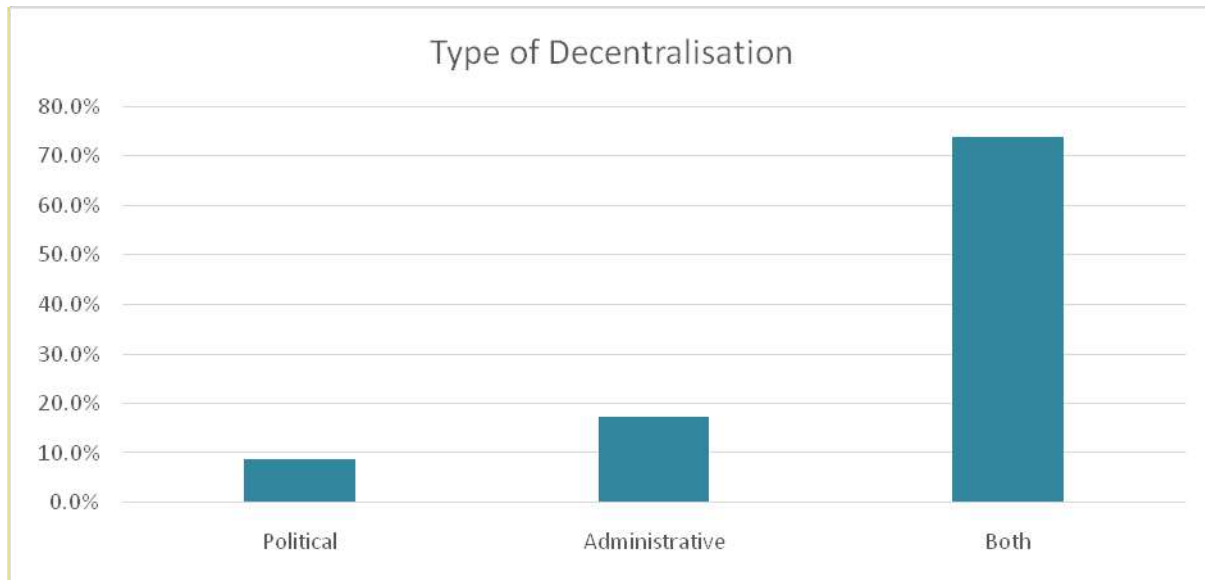
Figure 4.1b

### Figure 4.1 Designations of the Respondents

**(Source: Research Findings, 2017)**

### **Educational functions devolved to the Tonkolili District Council**

While it was agreed by all the respondents that educational functions have been devolved to councils, it was clear from the interviews that not all functions have been devolved but pre-primary, primary and junior secondary school's activities have been devolved to councils. This research went further to assess the type of functions transferred to councils. The respondents revealed that, a lot of activities like construction of buildings, statistics of primary, junior and senior secondary school examination records, school fee subsidy payment, supply of teaching and learning materials, payment of performance based finance, monitoring of all Non-Governmental Organisations working on education in the district and library activities in the district are left in the hands of council. This study further revealed that, 50 percent of the council staff **strongly agreed** that one reason for decentralization is the transfer of power to the most capable level of government while the same percentage agreed same. This provides evidence that councils can deliver more if full decentralization is undertaken by government and that efficiency in the use of resources can be achieved with decentralisation especially of educational functions. On the type of decentralization practiced, the figure below shows the outcome of the respondents.



### **Type of Decentralisation practiced.**

**(Source : Research Findings, 2017)**

From the figure above, it is evident that 74 percent of the respondents from the district council and Yoni Chieftdom revealed that government practices both political and administrative decentralization. However, while 17.4 percent represented those who stated administrative decentralisation, 8.7 percent responded that the system practiced is political.

### **Levels of decentralisation of the educational functions in Tonkolili District**

On the basis that, some functions have been transferred to councils, there was need to investigate the level of this transfer, and as a result questions on how these functions transferred to councils are cascaded to chieftdoms or even ward levels. Also, the study investigated if actually the same activities on education performed at central level are the same as those transferred to the council and also if activities to be undertaken at council level are subject to central government's approval. While it was revealed by all the council staff that, the same functions performed at central level on education have been transferred to the council, it was also clear that all the

activities are subject to central government's approval. The research also revealed that, first, the activities approved by central government to councils are further transferred to the chiefdoms and ward levels through the councillors. However, activities to be undertaken at the chiefdom and ward levels are subject to council's approval and the process is facilitated by the councillors. This research revealed that, because different committees like chiefdom development committee and ward development committees were formed, the process of disseminating, performing and providing feedback on activities undertaken at either level became simple.

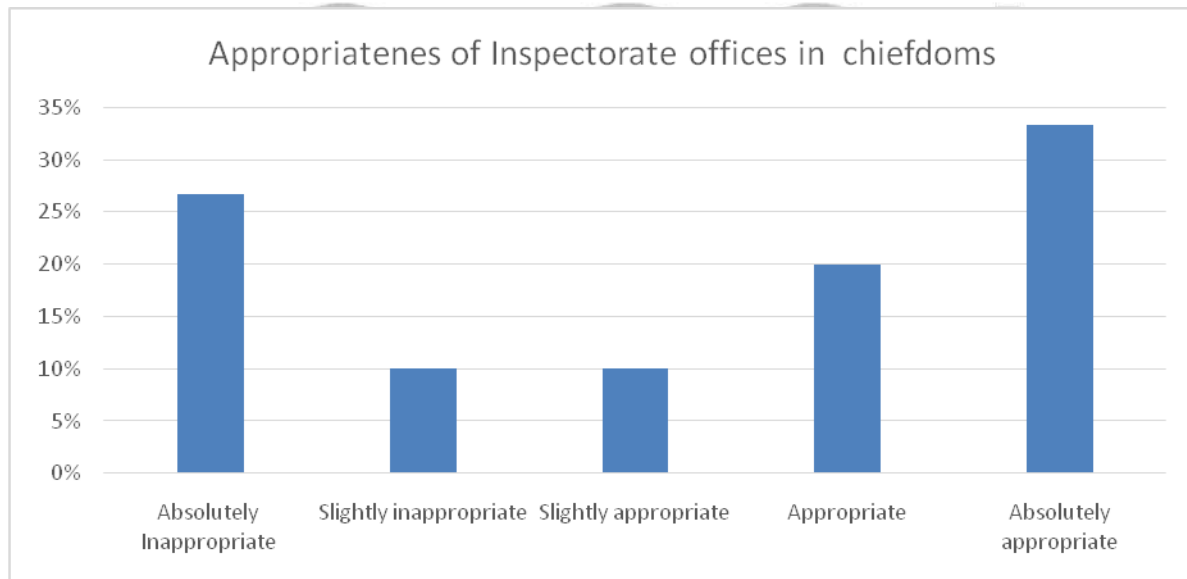
**Decentralisation promoting equal access, community participation and opportunities for all.**

In order to assess community's participation, accessibility and opportunities for all, questions relating to activities undertaken by community people, pupils enrolment, and increase in the facilities provided as a result of decentralisation were asked. This research revealed that, the community mostly participates in the building of schools as part of their contribution, by providing the needed labour, stones, sand and even sticks. According to the findings, they are more confident in working with their community people like the councillors in developing their communities. This willingness from the community backed by the government's support together with other organisations has led to the gradual increase in the number of schools constructed since the local government Act 2004 was enacted. The study further revealed that more educational facilities are made available with decentralisation and more pupils are enrolled annually in schools and equal opportunities are provided to all as the distance from different locations where schools can be accessed has been reduced over the years. Of the total number of respondents, 97 percent strongly agreed that the decentralisation has increased the number of schools and facilities in the district.

The provision of compulsory free primary school education by the government has also lead to an increase in school enrolment thus promoting education for all.

### **Level of monitoring and supervision of the decentralisation educational process**

To ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services in relation to functions transferred to councils on education, this study investigated the offices established at the chiefdom or ward level, inclusion of political and local authorities in the school systems, parents and frequency of monitoring and feedback mechanisms involved. This was based on the fact that, if decentralisation of educational functions could yield the required dividend, quality monitoring involving local people in the area, how they can intervene and what information should be made available in schools to ensure the process succeeds should be considered.



**(Source: Research Findings, 2017)**

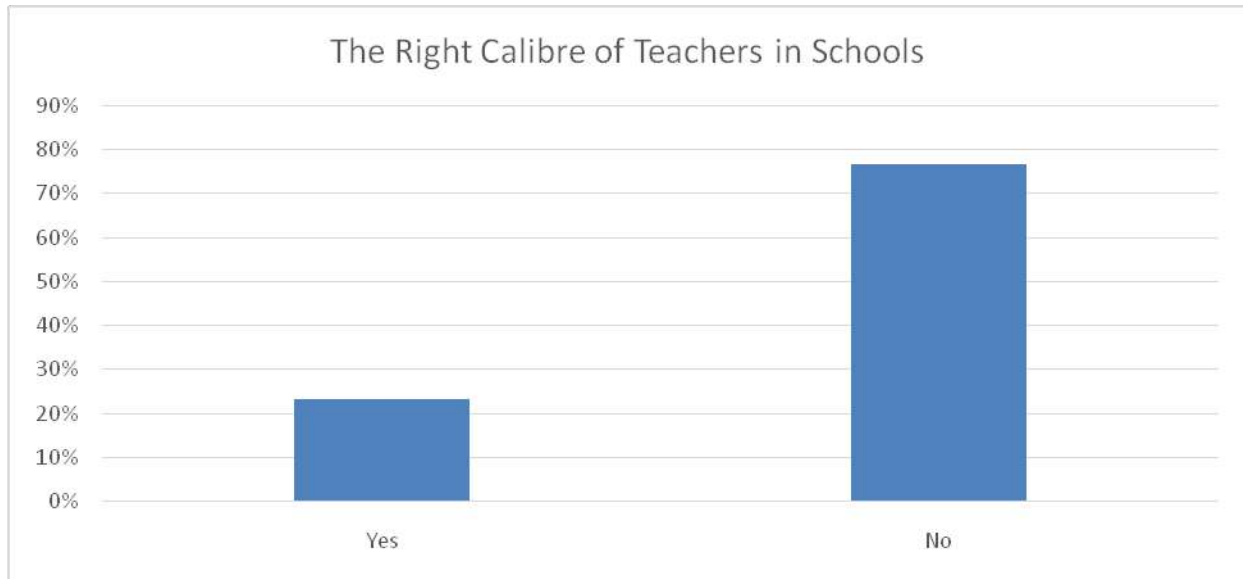
#### Appropriateness of the inspectorate offices in the chiefdoms

The study revealed that, there are inspectorate offices in every chiefdom and as a result the appropriateness of such offices in relation to their functions were examined and the bar chart

below revealed that over 30 percent of the respondents indicated that the establishment of inspectorate offices is absolutely appropriate, 20 percent revealed the appropriateness, and ten (10) percent revealed that it is slightly appropriate to have the inspectorate offices in the chiefdom. However, 27 percent revealed that the offices are absolutely inappropriate. On the whole, it is necessary to have the offices in the chiefdoms as revealed by the findings. It was also revealed that to ensure monitoring is effective, political and local authorities including the chairperson of the parent's teachers association in the locality are part of the schools committee/system. Monitoring is said to be done, either monthly or on terminal basis. In providing justification of the frequency of monitoring, it was revealed that, the availability of funds is key in executing the exercise regularly. The study further revealed that, each time a monitoring exercise is conducted, given the fact that inspectorate staff are attached in zones and do visit the schools at least every term, a report is always written, sent to the district for onward transmission to the capital Freetown. It was also clear from the findings that, the zonal inspectors do hold meetings with other community people in community which constitutes the ward committee.

Assessing the challenges and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the process in promoting quality education. In the process of finding out the challenges faced both from the council and the Yoni community in terms of the educational functions devolved to councils, numerous challenges were discovered. Also, in order to assess the quality of education, questions relating to the classroom climate and class coverage, means of monitoring classes, teaching and learning periods and materials, the school environment, parents participation and also the curricula from the different schools were asked calibre of teachers in schools

The figure below shows the result from the respondents on the caliber of teachers both from the council's perspective and from teachers in the various schools interviewed.



### **Caliber of Teachers in schools.**

**(Source: Research Findings, 2017)**

From the figure above, while the overwhelming majority of the respondents (23) representing seventy seven (77) percent clearly indicated “**NO**” which means that, schools do not have the right calibre of staff, seven(7) people representing twenty three (23) percent of the sample indicated “**Yes**” , which means that, schools have the right caliber of teachers .This is a cause for concern as quality in education among other factors also rely on the quality of teaching provided for the pupils which points to the quality of teachers recruited in the schools. As majority of the schools lack the right caliber of teachers, the quality of education is at stake.

### **Schools accessibility to parents**

From the study conducted, it was revealed by all the respondents that, the schools are accessible to all parents or guardians of pupils in the schools. This makes it easy for parents to monitor the



activities of their children and also of the school authorities in terms of performing their duties and implementation of projects.

### **Challenges faced in ensuring quality education**

The findings revealed a list of challenges faced by the council and teachers in the schools with regards the execution of their mandate on education. It is worth mentioning that one of the key challenges faced both by the council and schools is the lack of funds and delay in the disbursement of school fee subsidies by government. The challenges from all the respondents clearly points to the issues of over-crowding in schools due to lack of enough classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials, non- payment of school fee subsidy to community primary schools, understaffing at the inspectorate division which leads to poor monitoring activities, children walk long distances to school, extra charges in schools, lack of rural incentive for teachers, lack of qualified teachers and child labour in most rural communities which affect the pupils greatly.

### **Summary of Findings**

The study which was carried out in the Tonkolili District with special attention to Yoni chiefdom was on the decentralisation of educational functions to councils in the district. The findings revealed that;

- Following the Decentralisation Act 2004, some aspects of education mainly all activities of pre- primary, primary and Junior Secondary Schools have been devolved to councils. Some of the activities undertaken by the council include; payment of school fee subsidies, supply of teaching and learning materials, payment of performance based finance, library department activities and monitoring all educational activities of either government or Non- Government institutions in the district.

- The study also revealed that, even these functions from central government to councils require approval from central government for implementation.
- In the same vein, council, in trying to further spread the process to the chiefdoms through the inspectorate offices and the ward committees, have to approve every activity to be undertaken at the community level.
- This point to the fact that, the decentralisation process as it is transferred from central government to the councils, it is also transferred to the chiefdoms and wards from councils.
- It was also revealed that, the process of decentralisation of education to the councils has over the years lead to increase in the number of schools in the district, educational facilities have been increased and that the number of pupils enrolled in schools has increased tremendously

### **Conclusion**

The Tonkolili District Council still has some challenges in the decentralization process as a whole because not all the functions have been devolved to council, even the devolved educational functions to council is still facing challenges in terms of monitoring the process in the various chiefdoms within the district as a result of inadequate staff to supervise and monitor the process. Transition countries have big opportunities to improve further and enhance the delivery of services both on central and local level. In that regard, searching for the right balance between central government control and decentralized governance is of great importance. As it has been underlined in this research, decentralization is a very complex and political issue.

Political decentralization has advanced in many of the transition countries however the process is far from complete. In number of these countries, the central government is still involved in the

delivery of local services; local governments have few sources of own-revenues; local governments have limited access to borrowing for capital projects, and the design of intergovernmental transfers does neither address regional fiscal equity nor convey appropriate incentives for fiscal discipline, improved service delivery performance, and accountability to citizens. On the other hand, decentralized governance, as part of overall governance system of any society, including transition countries, offers important opportunities for enhanced service delivery. One of shared challenges these countries (including new EU members and accession states) are facing the notion how to improve governance (at all levels) in fighting against corruption. In many of these countries there is a determination to slow the growth of corruption. Although the progress in transition countries in fighting corruption is evident and it is a continued process, it will require persistent attention to weaknesses and to new challenges as they arise. Greater attention needs to be paid to judicial and procurement reforms; better regulation of conflicts of interests; further improvements in financial audits and control; etc. In fighting corruption, the role of country's leadership remains of great significance in all transition countries.

### Recommendation

Given the fact that the study concentrated on the Tonkolili District and yoni Chiefdom mainly, the finding of the study and recommendations might not be the same as what obtains in other councils. However, the following recommendations are made:

- In order to improve education in the district and the country as a whole, decentralisation has to be in full and not half hazard as it is now. Lower levels should be provided with all that is needed for the process to succeed devoid of political influences.
- There is an urgent need for the increase in school buildings that would make provision for enough classrooms, and other facilities needed to match the growing pupil's population.
- Government needs to provide incentives for teachers in the rural areas to ensure that they are attracted to teach in the rural areas than in the big towns. If appropriate incentives are

provided for teachers especially in rural areas, teachers will definitely stop asking pupils for money.

- There is the need to ensure funds are released in time for the schools to be able to function properly and also for monitoring to be undertaken in time.
- Apart from paying school fees for especially the girl child, government should provide additional teaching and learning materials for them to prevent them from giving in easily to men for such materials especially those girls that want to be educated but lack the needed materials.

Government should also provide school fee subsidy to community schools. These schools are managed by the community with meagre resources but contribute greatly to education and as a result are desperately in need of support which is lacking from the government.

- In order to improve further the decentralized governance and enhanced delivery of services, government should take into consideration following measures and activities:
- Decentralized governance must become part of the overall enabling environment in the decentralization reforms processes and programmes in all country.
- Institutional and administrative capacities must be in place, in order to implement successfully local governance reforms (in developing successfully these capacities an introducing and implementing of innovative approaches and instruments is also required);
- Decentralized governance cannot be useful mechanism for enhanced and efficient service delivery, without well trained, professional and qualified local government staff;
- Existing legal framework in the decentralized governance systems in these country should be further developed and upgraded with more effective legal instruments and institutional framework;
- Continuous attention should be paid to the fiscal decentralization reforms, in order to ensure that local governments have enough fiscal control to plan their activities in most efficient way, including service delivery;

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