

# Administrative decentralization

Business, Corporate Governance



In a centralized organization, the decisions are made by top executives or on the basis of pre-set policies. These decisions are then enforced through several tiers of the organization after gradually broadening the scope of control until it reaches the bottom level.

In a more decentralized organization, the top executives delegate much of their decision-making authority to lower tiers of the organizational structure. As a correlation, the organization is likely to run on less rigid policies and wider scopes of control among each officer of the organization.

This paper will consider administrative decentralization, the benefits and potential pitfalls as it pertains to local emergency services. The first section reviews the term administrative decentralization and its various forms. While it is followed by the benefits and pitfalls in relations to local emergency services

#### Administrative decentralization

Administrative decentralization seeks to redistribute authority, responsibility and financial resources for providing public services among different levels of governance. It is the transfer of responsibility for proper planning, financing and public functions management from central government to the local governments, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, or area-wide, regional or functional authorities.

An example of administrative decentralization is the power of a field office to settle certain claims against the central administration (decentralization “government” Encarta student 2008). Governments in developing countries have variety of administrative decentralization policies.

These range from those that are more widespread in scope and designed to transfer development planning and management responsibilities to local units of government. Others have been more narrowly conceived, deconcentrating or reallocating administrative tasks among the units of central government.

The three major forms of administrative decentralization -- deconcentration, delegation, and devolution -- each have different features

### Deconcentration

This is the weakest form of administrative decentralization and is used most often in unitary states. It distributes decision making, authority and financial and management responsibilities, among various tiers of the central government.

It can simply shift responsibilities from the central government workers who are in the capital city to those working in local regions, provinces or districts, or it can create strong field management or local administrative capability under the supervision of the central government ministries.

### Delegation

Delegation is another form of administrative decentralization. It's more extensive form of decentralization. It works by transferring of responsibility for decision making and administration through semi-autonomous bodies. Such bodies are not wholly controlled by the central government but they are somehow accountable to the government.

This is usually done by designating responsibilities by creating various forms of public enterprise, housing authorities, transportation authorities, and special project implementation units. These bodies have an enormous caution in decision making. The organization may be excluded from certain law and constraints on regular civil service personnel. They may also charge the customers directly for product consumption.

### Devolution

Devolution is the third form of administrative decentralization. Governments delegates functions, by transferring authority for decision-making, finance, and management to semi-autonomous units of local government with corporate status.

It usually transfers responsibilities for services to districts that elect their own mayors and councils, generate their revenues, and have independent authority to make investment decisions. In such a system, local governments have plain and lawfully recognized geographical boundaries over which they exercise power and within which they perform public functions.

This form of administrative decentralization underlies nearly all political decentralization.

Community services produced by local government include water provisions, wastewater disposal and creating and maintaining streets and parks, education and social welfare, infrastructure development and protecting the citizens' legal security and the exercise of public authority and police power.

Benefits of administrative decentralization in local emergency services

Increase coordination; since power has been brought closer to people, it makes the citizen contribute in one form or the other in reducing the risks of hazards. There is also increase in self reliance of the population at reducing risk of hazards and also helps in disaster prevention.

Its also believe that bringing power close to people enhance vertical linkages and flexibility among the administrative agencies hence facilitating planning and implementation of local emergency service policies.

Administrative decentralization also helps government in post-disaster relief compensation programs and international assistance may also act as ‘incentives’ for people to locate to disaster-prone areas. There’s also effectiveness in development and conservation, planning and implementation of various local emergency system.

Potential pitfalls of administrative decentralization pertaining to local emergency services

Equilibrium in empowerment; as stated earlier the objectives of a decentralized administration are good, this is characterized by public empowerment, effectiveness in development, increased efficiency and increased coordination. There is usually a problem in achieving equilibrium between the people of different geographic location or in different communities in people empowerment.

Administrative decentralization; it's not absolute in its purpose nor is it always efficient or just. It may assist in programs that alleviate poverty or sustainable forest management but it is not always sufficient. It’s usually a

long term process which is to be achieved in stages or phases. The local government also tends to lack the skills in proper management of disaster.

Weak; decentralizing power does not mean doing away with control, hence it tend to be more effective under a strong central government. Hence effectiveness might not be accomplished under the weak form of government.

Policies; administrative decentralization policies especially those involving devolution should address existing corruption and potential new structures before initiating the necessary change to address them.

Staffs; another problem that tend to arise from this form of decentralization pertaining to the local emergency services is the transfer of power to officials who care more about their self interest than the welfare of the community. This can lead to corruption. Another problem may also arise when power is been devolve to an incompetent official.

## Conclusion

Considering the merit and demerits of administrative decentralization of governance, proper implementation and designation of power and it monitoring will help to prevent local emergencies and its proper management if it occurs. Its makes life better and brings out their innate potentials because they are allowed in the decision making process.

## References

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