

University of Namibia
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Geography, History and Environmental Studies
GEA 3430: Research Project in Spatial Planning



The involvement of the concept of decentralization in national development planning. An examination of NDP 1, 2, 3 and Vision 2030.

Research report

By

Booyesen Tubulingane
200527827

Supervisor: Professor Dr Fritz Becker

Acknowledgements

The author will now take time to thank the following people who were of assistance to the completion of the study. First of all the author thanks his supervisor Prof. Dr Fritz Becker for his dedication and kind support, who directed me and supplied me with materials and organizing appointments which were of importance to collection of literatures which was employed during the research period. The author also thanks Dr Kenneth Matengu for his assistance as a co-supervisor during the research proposal formulation period; his advices were of importance to the research. I will also like to thank Mrs. Selma Lendelvo from the Multi-disciplinary Research Center for her advice on research proposal and presentation. Words of thanks still go to Dr. Brian Lwendo who assisted me with literature and introducing me to staffs at the directorate of decentralisation coordination in the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development. I also like to thank, Mr. Charles Tubalike, Mr. M. Samahiya and Mr. Sikume Sikume. Overall words of thanks go to all the people who offered their assistance which lead to the completion of the study.

Background to the study

The Namibian Government is currently implementing decentralization, a policy which was proposed by Nicky Iyambo, the former Minister of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development in September 1997 in the Namibian Parliament (MRLGHRD 2008:4). A decade has passed since the decentralization policy was adopted by the Namibian Government. “During the NDP 1 period emphasis in development planning has been on national and sectoral levels with only consultations at regional level” (NPC 2001:3). Changing from the previous statement, we can easily note that there is a need to investigate the involvement of decentralization in national development planning in order to assess how it have being employed in the planning documents to empower the local communities to carry out development planning at regional and constituency levels in Namibia. This is because “Decentralization seeks to transfer political, administrative, legislative, financial and planning authority from the centre to regional and local authorities” (NPC 2002:420), the problem is how will we transfer planning authority to local communities while decentralization has not being fully implemented in national development planning, because “Decentralization is conceived within the context of governance” (MRLGHRD 2008).

According to Totemeyer, the former deputy Minister of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development “pertaining to the decentralization policy, traditional authorities can assist the state in making a contribution to a conducive atmosphere and enabling environment while implementing decentralization”(Totemeyer 2004:34). Totemeyer clearly stresses the need for the involvement of local communities during implementation of decentralization; the participation by traditional authorities may accelerate the implementation process of decentralization. By looking at first sentences of the sub-vision of the Namibian vision 2030, “Local communities and regional bodies are empowered, and are fully involved in the development process; they actually formulate and implement their respective plans” (GRN 2004:207), the sub-vision of vision 2030 which specify the need to have a decentralized governance system in national development planning for the empowerment of the local communities in Namibia.

Research objectives

The objectives of the research has being, to determine how decentralization is incorporated in national development planning, through reviewing the first National Development Plan (NDP1), the second National Development Plan (NDP2), the third National Development Plan (NDP3) and Vision 2030. In order to determine the stage of the implementation process of decentralization. To investigate the implications decentralization will have on governance in Namibia. To outline how decentralization could be effectively applied in national development planning, by giving it priority in future national development plans.

Research questions

Against the previously mentioned background to the study a number of research questions surfaced that required consideration. The author will briefly describe what the paradigm and process of decentralization entails in the Namibian context of government and governance. The description will enter into desk research, outlining the way how and at what extent the term decentralization is used in national development documents such as NDP1, 2, 3 and vision 2030. It will be of particular interest to examine whether the meaning of decentralization gained complexity, if yes then a question will follow how the documents analyzed consider the role of local communities in the national development planning in the framework of decentralization. In concluding, the paper touches the question about the status of the implementation process of decentralization in national development planning documents in the literature on decentralization in Namibia.

Methodology

The method of data collection was based on desk study as a method for collecting secondary data to find out what have being done since the adoption of the decentralization policy, where the author reviewed material on decentralization and development planning, the first National Development Plan (NDP1), the Second National Development Plan (NDP2), the third National Development Plan (NDP3) and Vision 2030 has being examined to assess how decentralization is incorporated in national development planning. The author explored other literatures on the decentralization from relevant ministries and experts in the field of decentralization.

Data analysis

With reference to the research questions it is evident that the data analysis of the study is based on literature analysis, where the data collected from exploring literature has being examined and analyzed. The data analysis aimed at achieving the previously stated objectives of the study. Results of data analysis are presented in a form of discussion, in an effort to answer the previously stated research questions.

Results: presentations and discussions.

The description of what the paradigm and process of decentralisation entails in the Namibia context of government and governance.

“Decentralisation means giving power to make decisions about those areas, which can be villages, towns, municipalities to regional councils and local authorities, which are directly elected by the people who live there. Through decentralisation, people living in the regions, through regional councils and local authorities, have more control over their own lives-they can influence the decisions that affect their daily lives through participatory democracy” (MRLGHRD 2008:4). With reference to the previous definition of decentralisation, it clearly pinpoint the issue of power through decision making, in the Namibian context of governance this means that people at grass-roots they have the authority to decide what development projects they desire to be carried in their localities. Their decisions have to be channeled through different levels of government structure, as they have to consult their representatives, the councilors who forward their plans and visions to the relevant authorities for assistance to accomplish their development goals.

Decentralisation in this context entails the transfer of decision making from Central Government to Local Government, which involves communities in villages. Decentralisation can still be viewed as a fundamental right to people at grass-root to democratically participate in the development process. “Most government resources will be directed towards the regions through the process of decentralisation. This will ensure the balanced geographical distribution of facilities in the regions, while ensuring equal access to basic services in all regions” (NPC 2001:61). Decentralisation is corned to resource distribution, in Namibia it can be seen also as a vehicle to distribute resources to Sub-government structures, decentralisation becomes a two way tool for decision making and also for resource distribution. “Decentralisation Policy, as sanctioned by the government is not an end in itself; it is a means to improve Sub-national governance and the sharing of responsibility at all levels of government. The policy in which

decentralisation is defined as the transfer of political, financial and administrative powers from Central Government to Regional Councils and Local Authorities, decentralisation is a means intended to promote local democracy, to foster equal economic, cultural and social economic development and to improve public service provision across the country. It is meant to strengthen the role of Regional Council and Local Authorities within the national planning framework” (MRLGHRD 2008.3). This is basically what the concept of decentralisation means in the framework of the Namibian government; we can still figure that the governance system will also be altered as the functions which are currently undertaken by the Central Government will be transferred to Regional Councils and Local Authorities, who will be accountable and responsible for the performance of those functions. Local communities through Village Councils to Regional Councils will decide what the need in their areas.

“Decentralisation in the Namibian context is defined as the delegation and devolution of functions, resources and authority from the central government to regional councils and local authorities, within the framework of a unitary state” (<http://www.decentralisation.gov.na/articles/decentralisation-concepts.html>) [accessed on 16 September 2008). With reference to the latter definition of decentralisation we can view the basic components which define decentralisation in the Namibian context, as delegation and devolution. The definition stresses that certain functions of the Central Government will be transferred to Regional Councils and Local Authorities, by going through the following phases, the first phase will be delegation where the responsibilities and accountabilities of those functions still rest at the line ministries while performed by Sub-national government structures. When the latter phase is successfully completed, the next phase will be devolution, where the full responsibilities and accountabilities of certain functions will be directed to Regional and Local Authorities who will be answerable for smooth management of delivering certain selected services to Local Communities such as water supply in the regions. The decentralisation process in Namibia is executed in a manner that, the Central Government is still the final decision making body, which poses a question of authority and superiority between the Central Government and the Sub-national government structures. Decentralisation is a political

process, which means decentralisation can be seen as a vehicle of the Central Government to have an effective governance system for Namibia. Decentralisation in Namibia is also a democratic process, which will give opportunities and right to local communities at grass-roots levels to fully participate in the decision making process effectively to improve public service delivery to have an effective governance in Namibia. Decentralisation process in Namibia is aimed to equip Regional Council and Local Authorities to be able to formulate their development plans which can be approved at the regional level without being forwarded to the Central Government, for instance the Regional Council can issue permits for timber cutting on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, in this case local communities will be empowered to effectively utilize their natural resources in a sustainable manner. Such decision making which can be best performed at local level than national level will be explored to develop localities of communities.

When referencing to Totemeyer's statement once again "pertaining to the decentralisation policy, traditional authorities can assist the state in making a contribution to a conducive atmosphere and enabling environment while implementing decentralisation" (Totemeyer 2004). The previous statement by Totemeyer, tells us about the role of grass-roots which put them in an advisory capacity as they just assist the Central Government to make decisions which best suits their needs and wants, in other words decentralisation in the Namibian context means that still the final decision when it comes to major decisions on national development policies still rest with the Central Government.

The way how and at what extent the term decentralization is used in national development documents such as NDP 1, 2, 3 and vision 2030

"In the long term improving the regional distribution of resources will necessitate the progressive decentralisation of central government by transferring human and financial resources and devolving planning, budget formulation and spending powers. This will promote greater efficiency in service provision, improved responsiveness to local

conditions and more democracy” (NPC 1995:58). Decentralisation in this national document have being used, in the context that it will be a vehicle for distributing resources, in terms of either financial and human resources to Regional Councils and Local Authorities. Decentralisation has also being employed to stress the affiliation of the decentralisation process and the political system as it calls for more democracy. Decentralisation in the first National Development Plan volume one, have not being used at greater extent as it was not elaborated on what function to be decentralized. The concept of decentralisation was just introduced in the document without specifying the characteristics of the concept of decentralisation in the national planning framework. During the formulation of the first National Development Plan, decentralisation was not yet given supportive legal frameworks as it was only included in the Namibian Constitution without stipulating how the decentralisation process will take place in Namibia. The second volume of the first National Development Plan did not include the concept of decentralisation.

The discussion will proceed into the Second National Development Plan, which was formulated after the first National Development Plan. In this national planning document decentralisation is still referred to as a vehicle for resource distribution to Sub-national structures, but it further touches the issues such as planning and spending powers of Sub-national structures. “Decentralisation of government will make regions fully accountable and responsible for funding through raising taxes and imposing duties, with the central government supplementing these resources through the predetermined formulas. It is envisaged that the Decentralisation Enabling Act of 2000, as well as the Regional Planning Development Policies will be implemented fully during the Second National Development Plan” (NPC 2001:62-63). The previous statement shows how decentralisation gained importance as legal frameworks such as, the Decentralisation Enabling Act of 2000 and the Regional Planning and Development Policies were adopted and are in the process of being fully exercised after their implementation. This national planning document still stresses the process of devolution of Central Government functions to Regions, Regional Councils in this respect will be empowered to increase taxes, which will actually be under the guiding principles of the decentralisation

framework and the decentralisation parameters, as those devolved functions will still be monitored by the Central Government.

The Government of Namibia adopted decentralisation as a policy in 1997. The introduction of decentralisation in the country should be viewed against the historical background of the form of governance before independence. Decentralisation is viewed as a way to ensure democratic participation of the people. It aims to ensure economic, cultural and social development in Namibia; to provide for democratic participation by the people at the grass-roots level. The local people will be able to hold both their appointed and elected leaders accountable. During the decentralisation process some functions will be decentralized faster than others, not all tasks will be taken up by all Regional and Local Authorities simultaneously, decentralisation will be a continuous process. Effective implementation of decentralisation will necessitate organizational changes at national, regional and local levels. Decentralisation will be cost effective because participatory democracy allows people to manage their own resources (community participation). Decentralisation will play a significant role in empowering community to be able to design programs suited to their localities (NPC 2001:722-724).

Decentralisation within legal framework have being used as a political tool to ensure democratic participation, the aims of decentralisation are also linked to development growth. The national planning document still states the process of the implementation of decentralisation policy and it also acknowledge that all sub-national structures are not with the same capacity to perform functions at the same rate, which will lead to the re-organization and re-structuring of the national, sub-national structures to accommodate decentralisation, governance system will also go through transformation when decentralisation process is being implemented. Decentralisation is used in the former context as an empowering tool for local communities, in an effort by the Central Government to cut costs of performing certain functions which will be carried out by the local communities themselves after decentralisation is fully implemented such as managing community water points.

The Central Government responsibilities will change to focus more on policy formulation and guidance. The main challenges for the implementation of the decentralisation process in Namibia are the limited regional institutional capacity. The power to decentralize functions is given to the Minister of Regional, Local Government and Housing, provided that he consults, prior to the decentralisation, with the Minister responsible for the line ministry. The Ministry of Regional Local Government and Housing (MRLGH) as the lead agency overseeing the implementation of the decentralisation policy have responsibilities affective regional development planning (NPC 2001:5-9). Implications of decentralisation on governance is highlighted as the Central Government responsibilities will change; it also touches a crucial obstacle to decentralisation which is the limited regional institutional resources to perform functions which will be delegated and latter devolved to them. Decentralisation process is implemented under the administration of the Central Government, as the Minister of Regional, Local Government and Housing will identify functions to be decentralized rather than grass-roots, which can be the Regional Councils, the Constituency Development Committees and local communities as a whole.

The third National Development Plan utilized the concept of decentralisation as Decentralisation has further provided the necessary impetus for accelerating effective and efficient service delivery as well as ownership at the regional levels (NPC 2007:26). The previous statement still touches the issue of governance within the framework of decentralisation for smooth governing of the country. “The first decentralisation Implementation Plan (DIP) was developed and endorsed by the cabinet in 2001 and was updated in 2004. The taskforce report on legislation harmonization focusing on the necessary amendments to the Regional Councils Act and the Local Authorities Act to accommodate decentralisation was finalized in 2005” (NPC 2007:31).

From the latter statement we can easily review the extent to which NDP3 have addressed decentralisation as it included the implementation plan, which will guide the whole process of making decentralisation a reality. “The government provides funding to the regional councils through the annual budget in consultation with regional council, as an

integral part of the regular central government budget process” (NPC 2007:63). This brings us to the concept of decentralisation, as a financial resource distribution process, the division of national funds to regions of the entire country, the consultation with Regional Councils is aimed at making the Regional Councils justify for the expenditures for the money they will be requesting for their regions. Legal frameworks are baseline for the implementation process of decentralisation, which is geared to strengthening the role of Regional Councils and Local Authorities. “The overall final authority rests with the central government which determine the extent and pace of decentralisation’ (NPC 2007 170). This statement still takes us back to the issue of decentralisation in a Central Government, how will it work and at what extent will the decision makers for Sub-national structures will be able to implement their respective development plans without encountering a zone of conflict with the Central Government.

When we move to the national vision, decentralisation was actually referred to in most scenarios in future tense, as the concept decentralisation was explored in the context of desired functions to be decentralized. “Decentralize 95% of regional water supply resources to the regional councils by 2006 and 100% by 2010” (GRN 2004:106). In the Namibian Vision 2030, the concept of governance is highlighted, and also the political right of local people to participate in the development process, through democratic means. “The challenges facing national development, such as economic disparity, poverty, diseases, limited skills and many others, are primarily about making decisions on social, economic and environmental priorities, and in form of investment, production and consumption. Those decisions must be made and dealt with by governance systems at local, regional, national and global levels” (GRN 2004:204).

Decentralisation is used and referred to as a means of differentiating between different decision making levels and also as a tool to eliminate developmental problems, which must be dealt with by people at different levels of decision making, as a problem which affects a certain community is best solved by the people who are exposed to such a problem than people who don't have insights on what is actually happening in that community. This national vision still reviews the origin of the concept of decentralisation

as an approach to structure and stipulate how the Regional Councils and the Local Authorities will be functioning, as in the constitution of the Republic of Namibia, it was stipulated that Namibia will be divided into regional and local authority units. The national vision document still also highlight on the implementation process of decentralisation and the legal framework of the decentralisation process.

When looking at the sub-vision of the Namibia Vision 2030 on decentralisation. “Local communities and regional bodies are empowered, and are fully involved in the development process; they actually formulate and implement their respective development plans, while the national government working hand-in-hand with civil society organizations provides the enabling environment (laws , policies, finance, security) for the effective management of national, regional and local development efforts”(GRN 2004:207). This leads to the need for new Policies and Acts on development planning to give the opportunities to Regional Councils and Local Authorities to be able to make decisions, but we need to look at the institutional and human resource capacity to be able to perform those delicate planning and implementation functions of the development projects to be initiated by the Regional and Local Authorities, when the devolution stage of decentralisation will be achieved.

An examination whether the meaning of decentralisation gained complexity and the role of local community in the national development planning in the framework of decentralisation.

The political leadership in Namibia through the cabinet has chosen the path of decentralisation to enhance and guarantee democratic participation of people at lower/grass-roots level in order to achieve sustainable democratic development. The vision of the political leadership in Namibia is that decentralisation is an instrument the state can use to bring about democratic participation to people at lower levels of government. The theme of the Decentralisation Policy in Namibia is therefore “Decentralisation, Development and Democracy” (MRLGHRD 1998:3). The latter

statement brings us to the question, at what extent will the lower/grass-roots levels will they participate through democratic means? And what influence will they have on the highest decision making government body in Namibia.

The decentralisation process is politically motivated and is a top-down approach to the political governance system in Namibia, as it was initiated, formulated and still implemented by the Namibian government, through political channels, as it was adopted by the Namibian Parliament in year 1997. “For the policy formulation to gain momentum the then minister of regional and local government, Hon. Libertina Amathila organized a high level national conference to discuss the formulation of the policy and ways and means to take the process forward. The conference triggered the drafting of the Decentralisation Policy, which was published in November 1996 in the booklet Decentralisation Policy for the Republic of Namibia-Decentralisation, Development and Democracy” (MRLGHRD 2008:4)

Decentralisation in this context is used as a channel of communication of grass-roots to the Central Government and also it's a way how the structures of Sub-national government will function and carry out their mandatory tasks for the people who elected them to their respective political positions they hold. When we look at the objectives of the Decentralisation Policy are as follows “To extend, enhance and guarantee participatory democracy, to ensure and safeguard rapid sustainable development, to transfer power to the regional councils and local authorities based on national ideas and values, to improve capacity of regional and local government councils to plan, implement, manage and monitor delivery of services for their constituencies” (MRLGHRD 1998:5). By referring to the third objective, empowering a community doesn't only involve the transfer of power, but also people must be put on educational and training programs to be able to effectively plan, manage and implement a development program, the decentralisation policy doesn't explain how the planning, managing and the implementation will be carried out, the decentralisation implementation strategy doesn't go in detail how the decentralisation process will be effectively achieved in Namibia, “One of the lessons learnt so far from the time of

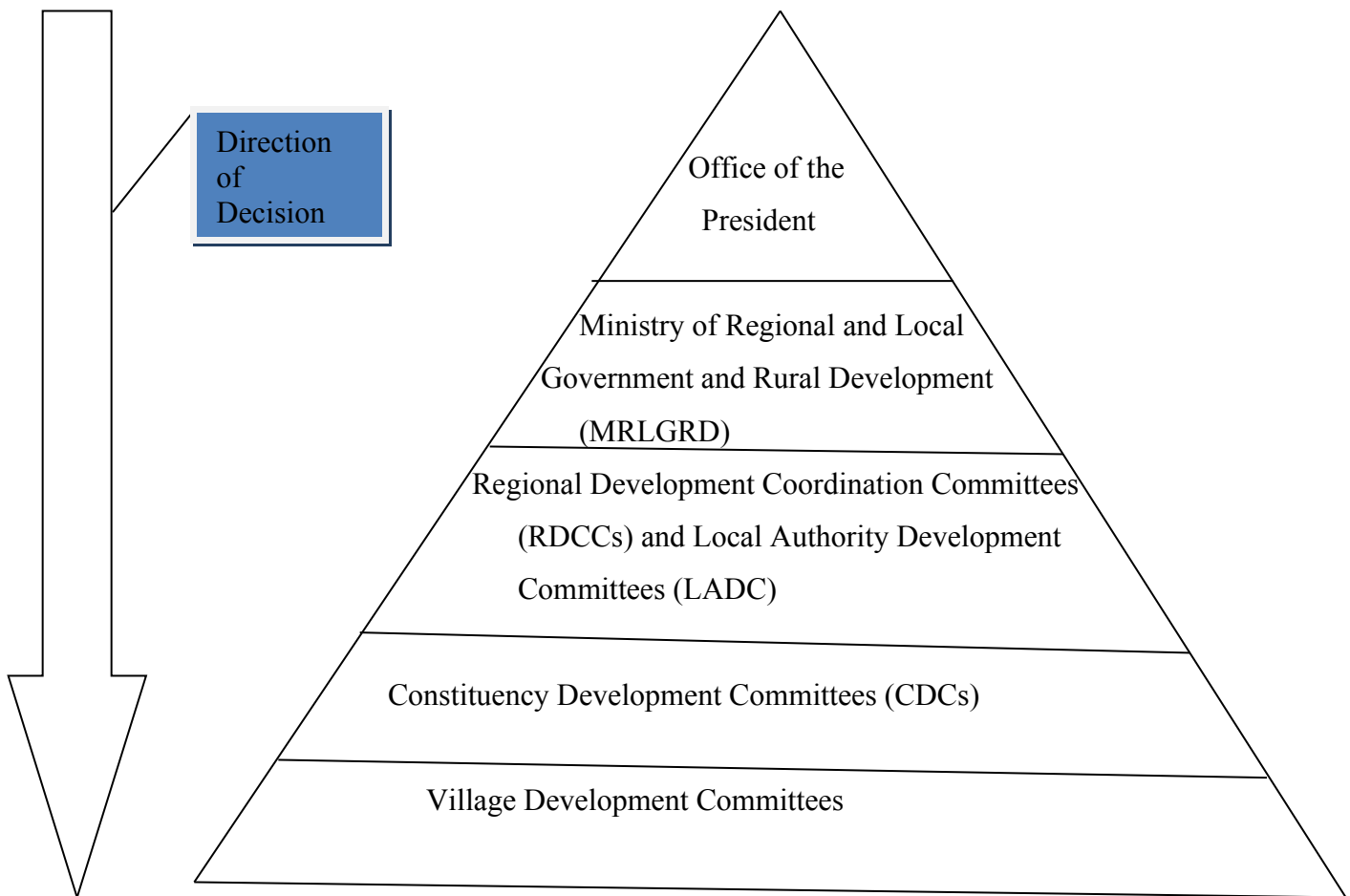
conception of the decentralisation reform is implementation can never be straight” (MRLGHRD 1998:10).

When looking at the steps to decentralize a function are categorized in six steps. “Step 1: Line Minister or the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development identify functions to decentralize. Step 2: Consultations between the two Ministers take place with the aim of establishing reasons for/benefits of the decentralisation of the function. Step 3: Minister of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development decides to recommend a function for decentralisation. Step 4: Minister of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development consults with cabinet to obtain its consent to decentralize the function. Step 5: Notice of decentralisation of the function is given in the government gazette. Step 6: The function is decentralized to Local Authorities or Regional Councils” (MRLGHRD 2008:10-11), those steps bring us to the formulation of a pyramid to decentralize a function. This decision making pyramid to decentralize a function, highlights that local community they are at the bottom of the decision making process as the office of the president appoints the line ministers for the line ministry involved in the decentralisation process and the Minister of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development the main player as the agent of the decentralisation process.

The role of local communities is basically to elect their representatives for their Constituencies and Regional Councils. When it comes to the identification of a function to decentralize, the local communities they are excluded as according to the procedures to decentralize a function, only the Minister of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development can decentralize a function to Regional Councils and Local Authorities. The Regional Councils and Local Authorities they are not given the powers and authority to determine what function they want to perform. The direction of decision making shows also the magnitude of power as we move from the Office of the President to the Village Development Committees the ability to make decisions is decreasing. This limits the involvement of local communities in villages as they don't have authority to decide with reference to their capacity which functions to perform for their respective

localities. It is important to note that direction of decision making on a decision making pyramid doesn't include the influence of the political climates (different political parties).

A decision making pyramid to decentralize a function.



Source of data: Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing. Decentralisation in Namibia. The Policy, Its Development and Implementation. March 1998. Pages 12-19.

“The decentralisation Enabling Act is the legislation that makes the decentralisation of functions of line ministries possible by creating the necessary conditions and providing the necessary authorizations. The Decentralisation Enabling Act has overriding effect:

This means that the Act is more powerful in relation to decentralisation than other legislation and that no sector legislation can hinder the decentralisation of a function if cabinet decides to decentralize it” (MRLGHRD 2008:18). The focus of the decentralisation policy is on the delegation and devolution of government functions, it doesn't give the grassroots the legal environment to be in charge for their own localities.

According to Totemeyer (1987) “In a process of decentralization local representatives should be given formal power to decide on wide range of public matters. The political base must always remain the locality. Local officials should thus not be perceived to be in the service of the central government. Their loyalty and responsibility to the local community should be unquestionable” (Totemeyer 1987). Totemeyer points out the need for decentralizing power to grassroots especially in decision making in areas like development planning it also apply in order to accelerate and empower the local communities in constituencies. The local communities should be allowed to vote as a democratic right to decide which functions and development projects they desire to be carried out in their respective constituencies. This will stimulate full community participation in the development processes and functions driven by the decentralisation process.

The status of the implementation process of decentralisation in national development planning documents in the literature on decentralisation in Namibia

“Since the inception of the decentralisation policy in 1997, much effort has been put in creating an enabling environment for decentralisation. In simple terms, this means developing guidelines for involved stakeholders on how to go about handing over functions and resources. So far only one of the functions earmarked for decentralisation in the Decentralisation Policy, rural water supply, has been handed over to Regional Councils. This happened in August 2007. Indication however exists that several other

earmarked functions could be handed over in 2008” (http://www.decentralisation.gov.na/fag/where_are_at.html) [accessed on 8 September 2008].

Decentralisation in Namibia involves the strengthening of the Sub-national structures, for those structures to be able to perform the functions which has being and still in the process of being handed over to Regional and Local Authorities. According to the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing, the following legal frameworks have being put in place to guide the decentralisation process in Namibia, the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, which stressed for the provisions for the establishment, powers and functions of regional councils and local authorities. The Regional Councils Act (No. 22 of 1992), with which the legislative framework included the establishment of Regional Councils; Local Authorities, Municipal Councils; Town Councils. The Decentralisation Policy, calling for participatory democracy; sustainable development; transfer of responsibilities, functions and resources to Regional and Local Government; institutional and organizational change; cost-effectiveness; coordinated and cooperative relationship between Central Government and Regional Councils and Local Authorities. In year 2000 two Acts were passed, Trust Fund for Regional Development and Equity Provision Act (No. 22 of 2000) and the Decentralisation Enabling Act (No. 33 of 2000), which will be the overall guideline for the decentralisation process: which gives authority to the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development to lead and direct decentralisation, in consultation with cabinet and other government agencies to cooperate fully in the process (MRLGHRD 2008:5).

According to Mukwena and Chirawu (2008) the creation of the directorate of decentralisation coordination in the Ministry of Reginal and Local Government has displayed the commitment of the Ministry of Reginal and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development for its role as lead agency in the implementation process of decentralisation policy (Mukwena and Chirawu 2008:20). “The first Decentralisation Implementation Plan (DIP) was developed and endorsed by the cabinet in 2001 and was updated in 2004. The taskforce report on legislation harmonization focusing on the necessary amendments to the Regional Councils Act and the Local Authority Act to

accommodate decentralisation was finalized in 2005, and the amendments are to be facilitated during the NDP3 period” (NPC 2007:31).

According to Samahiya (2008) of the directorate of decentralisation coordination in the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development, the following functions to be decentralized and the status quo in January 2008 in the line ministries. In the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, the function to delegate was rural water supply; this function has being delegated as from August 2007. In the Ministry of Education, the functions to delegate are primary and secondary education, inspectorate and advisory services, community libraries and adult education, those functions they are still in the process of being delegated as a delegated structure has being approved by the office of the prime minister, the decentralisation plan have being drafted, they are also busy with staff file auditing, secondment letters and the preparation of the cabinet submission. In the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the function to delegate is community-based conservancies, where technical visits are planned.

In the Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare, where action plans have being drafted for the delegation of community development and early childhood development. In the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, functions to delegate in this ministry are, primary health care and rehabilitation services, they have made technical visits to the southern African countries where delegation of primary health care has being successful. In the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, functions to delegate are as follows, print media and audiovisual media, where a number of staff to decentralize have being identified. In the Ministry of Labour and Social Services, function to decentralize is administration of pension grants, where a taskforce has being setup. In the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement, functions to delegate are land boards and resettlement centers, where an action plan is in place. A management briefing was held at the end of 2007.

In the Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development, functions to delegate are as follows build together program and regional planning, technical services (capital projects) and property administration. Where build together program is nearly decentralized. In the Ministry of Works, Transport and

Communication, the functions to delegate are as follows, maintenance and repairs to buildings and related infrastructures, renovation and upgrading of buildings and infrastructures, servicing repairing and overhaul of equipment, sewerage services, where the decentralized structure has being finalized. When we come to the status of Regional Councils, the following shortcoming still reviews after the readiness assessment done late 2005 and early 2006. The report shows that a lot have been done but there are still issues outstanding by Regional Councils, such as audited financial statements still remain outstanding, back account for delegated functions will be with Bank Windhoek. Accounts will only be activated once delegation has taken place. Most managerial positions have been filled, except for technical staff-engineers and town planners. SADC advertisement the only option left to fill the remaining positions. There is still a shortage of accommodation and office space, nevertheless, regional structures has been approved” (Samahiya 2008:3).

With reference to the newly formulated, third National Development Plan (NDP3) “Serious loopholes and omissions in the current legal framework have lead to delays in the implementation of the decentralisation process. This is because the guiding pieces of legislation are unclear on revenue and expenditure assignments of Regional Councils, which are to receive the bulk of decentralized services” (NPC 2007:172). We previously highlighted the achievements made so far in the implementation process of decentralisation, we are now going to explore on the challenges which are still hampering, delaying the smooth and efficient implementation of the Decentralisation Policy. According to the Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, the first challenge is that the process of decentralisation is far more complex than merely moving personnel and finances from the Central Government to Sub-national government as required by the policy.

The structures, strategies and the controlling, evaluation and monitoring systems have to change at both levels. Most challenging indeed is the need to change the entire culture of how we are doing our day-to-day business, the management style, the skills and our

shared values. The second major challenge is to address the fear and concern amongst some political key players that decentralisation may reintroduce pre-independence government structures and consequently de-link the region from government structures along ethnic or tribal lines. The third challenge is associated with general anxiety, uncertainty and some resistance amongst line ministerial staff who are preparing themselves for the consequences of the Decentralisation Policy and their subsequent new roles during the delegation phase of the decentralisation process. The fourth challenge pertains to the human resources required to facilitate an efficient and smooth implementation of the decentralisation policy. The fifth challenge relates to the capacity at the receiving end- the Sub-national government being the recipients and implementers of the process, sensitization and awareness of councilors and staff members at all levels of Sub-national government is a prerequisite for a successful receipt of functions and resources hitherto performed and managed by the line ministries.

This requires a strong commitment by the line ministries and receiving sub-national government to comply with the Decentralisation Policy. The sixth challenge pertains to the legal framework for decentralisation, in particular the Decentralisation Enabling Act and the Regional Councils Act, neither of which makes provision for the decentralisation of functions as earmarked in the policy document endorsed by cabinet in 1996. Such an omission is perceived as a loophole and shortcoming in the legal framework. The seventh challenge is linked to the shortage of office space to accommodate staff from the line ministries is another obstacle that requires attention. Finally the eighth challenge, it acknowledges that it should be recognized that without the active support of the Office of the Prime Minister, National Planning Commission, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance, the implementation process will in all probability not be successful (MRLGHRD 2008: 21-23).

With reference to the third challenge delaying and hampering the implementation process of decentralisation, according to Lwendo, he stipulates the management of staff under delegation, “the transfer of staff from line ministries to regional councils can take place in two ways, through secondment during the delegation phase and through transfer

under devolution (Lwendo 2008:2). Guidelines to be followed are clearly outlined, which will help reduce general anxiety among staff members of line ministries involved in the decentralisation process, as staffs will be appointed according to their expertise to perform in different roles of the functions to be decentralized.

Overall it is important to be aware and to note that functions are being decentralized in two phases. Those are called delegation and devolution. At the moment, we are still at the first phase, delegation, where Sub-national government structures perform tasks on behalf of the line ministries (http://www.decentralisation.gov.na/faq/where_are_at.html) [accessed on 8 September 2008].

Conclusion

To conclude the decentralisation process in the Namibian context of government entails delegating functions to Sub-national government structures (Regional Councils and Local Authorities), while preparing for the devolution of these functions. The change of the roles of the Central Government and Regional and Local Authorities after the decentralisation process is implemented will lead to the alteration of how the country will be governed which bring us to the concept of governance within the Namibia context. As stipulated in early section decentralisation in Namibia involves the transfer of power (authority) to Sub-national structures and it's corned with resource distribution. The decentralisation process has being used in the first national development plan as a process geared for resource distribution to Sub-national government structures and to improve the governance system in Namibia to have effective public service delivery and to promote political right to citizens to participate in the development process of their nation.

When we summarize how decentralisation was employed in the second national development plan, the concentration was basically on the transferring of authorities from line ministry to the regional and local authority, the legal frameworks of decentralisation were also stressed, the role of the local communities in democratic and political parameters in the decentralisation process as the will be reliable to hold their elected representatives accountable when development growth is under threat.

The key ministry will be the Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development, through its Minister who is enriched with the authority to decentralize a function with consultation with Ministers of line Ministries involved in the decentralisation process. The third national development plan, looks at the Decentralisation Implementation Plan (DIP), which will be the guideline to the process of decentralisation during implementation of the decentralisation policy, while the final authority still rest with the Central Government. The Namibian vision 2030 refers to decentralisation in future tense, the potential outcomes and benefits of the decentralisation process. With reference to the results presented on this section, the author derived to the conclusion that decentralisation in Namibia did not gain complexity as decentralisation is a process with aims to empower grassroots to be able to make

decision on issues which affects their life. Instead the decentralisation process in the Namibia context focused on improving governance in Namibia, as it aims to equip Regional and Local Authorities to deliver basic services to the public, such as rural water supply.

The local communities they are just given a communication channel through decentralisation to their representative entities such as Regional Councils and Local Authorities, decentralisation process in Namibia doesn't aim to empower local communities at all, as the role of local communities is not given legal grounds and consideration in the decentralisation process. The decision making authority still rests with the Central Government as the Minister decides what must be decentralised, not the Regional and Local Authorities. When we come to the status of the implementation process of the decentralisation process, it is evident that the process is still at its first phase which is delegation which is still very far to be achieved as only one function (rural water supply) has being delegated to Regional Councils while numerous number of functions to be delegated are still pending due to challenges hampering the implementation process of decentralisation in Namibia, while efforts in terms of financial and human resources into the decentralisation process is still being invested in the implementation process.

Recommendations

Decentralisation is a process which requires a concentration, commitment and valuable inputs of all ministries and stakeholders involved in the implementation process of decentralisation. It will be in the best interests of the implementers of the decentralisation process not to undermine the roles, contributions the local communities can make to ensure an effective and efficient implementation process of the decentralisation process in Namibia, the author therefore emphasises the importance of community participation. The author therefore recommends that more research aimed at grassroots, particularly to the local communities to be undertaken to incorporate them in implementation process of decentralisation as the decentralisation policy is aimed at empowerment and participatory democracy for local communities.

References

1. Chirawu, T., Mukwena, R (2008) Decentralisation and regional and local government in Namibia. Windhoek: Organisation for Social Sciences Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA).
2. Directorate of decentralization. Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development. Republic of Namibia (2008) Decentralization and good governance. Windhoek
3. Lwendo, B S (2008) Management of staff under delegation; April 2008; Windhoek. Windhoek. Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development.
4. Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development. Republic of Namibia (2007) Moving towards 2030 through decentralization the anniversary of the adoption of the decentralization policy. Windhoek: Ministry of regional, local government, housing and rural development.
5. Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development. Republic of Namibia (2008) A practical guide to the Decentralisation Enabling Act. Windhoek: Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development.
6. Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development. Republic of Namibia (2008) Decentralisation in Namibia, the policy, its development and implementation. Windhoek: Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development.
7. [NPC] National Planning Commission. Republic of Namibia (1995) first National Development Plan (NDP1). 1995/1996 – 1999/2000 Volume one. Windhoek.
8. [NPC] National Planning Commission. Republic of Namibia (2001) Second National Development Plan (NDP2). 2001/2002 – 2005/2006 Volume one: Macro Economic, Sectoral and cross-sectoral policies Chapters 1-22. Windhoek.
9. [NPC] National Planning Commission. Republic of Namibia (2001) Second National Development Plan (NDP2) 2001/2002 – 2005/2006 Volume one: Macro Economic, Sectoral and cross-sectoral policies Chapters 23-47. Windhoek.
10. [NPC] National Planning Commission. Republic of Namibia (2001) Second National Development Plan (NDP2) 2001/2002 – 2005/2006 Volume two: Regional development perspectives. Windhoek.

11. [NPC] National Planning Commission. Republic of Namibia (2007) third National Development Plan (NDP3) 2007/2008 – 2011/2012 Volume one. Windhoek.
12. Samahiya, M (2008) Current status of decentralisation process in Namibia; April 2008; Windhoek. Windhoek. Ministry of Regional, Local Government and Housing and Rural Development.
13. Totemeyer, G (2004) The politics of Namibia from Bantustan to positioning of ethnicity in a unitary state. Windhoek: Ministry of Regional, Local government, Housing and Rural Development.
14. Totemeyer, G (1987) Public administration in the third world countries with particular reference to local government. Windhoek: University of Namibia & Academy
15. [NPC] National Planning Commission (2008) “Directorate of development planning” [On-line]. Windhoek: [NPC] National Planning Commission. Available from: <www.npc.org.na> [Accessed on 5 May 2008]
16. Directorate of decentralisation coordination (2008) “How far has decentralisation gone” [On-line]. Windhoek: Directorate of decentralisation coordination. Available from: < www.decentralisation.org.na > [Accessed on 6 May 2008]