

# The Role of Political Decentralization on the Development of Democracy in Dawro Zone

Abraham Blucha Gamu  
Wolayta Sodo University, Dawro Tarcha Campus, Tarcha, Ethiopia

## Abstract

Political decentralization is to give the right to the citizens to elect their leader or have power in making decisions in commonly and also more influences in formulation and implementation of policies. The purpose of this study is to identify the role of political decentralization for the development of democracy and explains major challenges and level of political decentralization in Dawro Zone. To achieve the objective of the study, the research used qualitative and quantitative approaches and it employed descriptive survey design. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to select the resident. The target population of this study was Dawro Zone resident and among the resident 110 respondents was selected. On the other hand, 33 individuals from the zonal government office obtained to face to face interview through comprehensive sampling technique. To collect the data the researcher used primary and secondary data sources. To analyses the data, the study used descriptive research approaches. The study found that the contribution of decentralization system to increase popular participation, increase responsiveness, enhance service delivery and increase transparency and accountability. Based on the data gathered from the respondent the level of political decentralization in Dawro zone is low due to lack of good leadership capacity, low level of popular participation, lack of transparency and accountability and low level of completion. So minimize or reduce the problem, it recommended for government to motivate people and create awareness about the relevancies of decentralization to promote democracy. Second, government, people and officials should ensure availability, accessibility and sustained advocacy for implementation of decentralization system. Finally, the researcher suggested creating strong linkage among Dawro zone sector administration on the basis of their personal skill and work experience in order to enhance its effectiveness and promote democracy.

**Keywords:** Dawro, Political decentralization, Development, Democracy

**DOI:** 10.7176/JAAS/79-02

**Publication date:** April 30<sup>th</sup> 2022

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

Decentralization is the transfer of administrative authorities from high level of government to low level government (Taye Asefa 2007). In another word the basic idea of decentralization is sharing the power of decision making with lower level of organization (sundram, 2002). The aim of Political decentralization is to give the right to the citizens to elect their leader or have power in making decisions in commonly and also more influences in formulation and implementation of policies. Political decentralization assumes that decision made with great participation and with better information (Bahru 2006).

In the last decade decentralization has gained acceptance as an actual pursuit in several Africa countries. Historical African countries have personalized and highly centralized governance system. But starting in 1980 most African countries started to transfer power and resources to lower levels. Many African governments such as Mali, South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda have deepened process of transfer of authority, responsibility and resources to sub national level. However the political decentralization in Africa still not developed yet much as possible political decentralization recent phenomena in Ethiopia political landscape (chen, 2004)

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution adopted in 1995 decentralization was one the issue in Ethiopia politics, consequently a number of political and administrative active measures have been launched at almost all levels to effectively decentralized and also fiscal decentralization is expansion of revenue and administration unit (Eshetu 2000)

However the decentralization is low in implementation in district level administration programs and popular participation, poor coordination, inadequacy of resources and low level of institutionalization (kasahun, 2008). since decentralization is the appropriate policy and positively associated with good governance, decision making, accountability, responsiveness and so on. By giving this opportunity it has positive contribution for the promotion of democracy in the country that follows decentralization policy. Decentralization can create more accountable and transparent political institution including strong citizens participation for in governance which improve Democratic participation (Tagaye, 2007)

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Decentralization is important policy to initiate development of democracy through distribution of powers at different administrative levels, create and motivate popular participation and relationship between rural, city and local level government and also effective and efficient service delivery to their tiers of government (Kasahun, 2000).

Further decentralization is directly or indirectly associated with good governance including decision making equity representation, accountability and responsiveness of public institutionalizations to community concerns, decentralization is effective system to bring government and closer to people (UNDP, 2009).

Political decentralization encourages development of democracy in our country. As principles of democracy practicing of transparency and accountability, openness, political participation and separation of powers were never separate; they are the two sides of coin. This needs study to know about decentralizations contribution for democratization in Waka town. There is no study conducted regarding this issue, due to this reason this study conducted to solve the lack of accountability and transparency in the study area. The decentralization policy implementation has been started in Waka town during it was started in country as whole. There for this study investigates the extent of decentralization policy promotes democratization in Waka town on post adoption of decentralization period.

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The main objective of this study was assessing the role of decentralization in promoting democracy in Dawro zone

### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the study**

- √ To investigate the role of decentralization for local communities to enhance democracy.
- √ To identify the challenges of decentralization in Dawro zone.
- √ To examine how decentralization promote transparency and accountability in Dawro zone.

## **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The researcher believes that the results of this study may have the following significances. First, it may bring new political out looks concerning the role of political decentralization in the development of democracy at Dawro zone. Hence, the result of this study may show the indication of how democracy is implemented in Dawro zone. It is also help as guideline for preparation of political documents, manuals by concerned bodies in Dawro zone. Finally, at the end of this study, it helps as a springboard for further study.

## **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study was to assessing the role of decentralization in promoting democracy in Dawro zone. The study identifies the challenges of decentralization in Dawro zone, and finally it focuses how decentralization promotes transparency and accountability in the given zone. However, conducting research in the whole aspect of decentralization is very difficult due to a number of constraints. There for, this research has limited on the role of political aspects for development of democracy.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2. 1. Research Design**

To conduct the Study, the researcher employed the descriptive survey type of research. When the researcher selects the descriptive design, it obtains pertinent and precise information covering the current state phenomena and draw valid general conclusion from the data and fact discovered.

### **2.3. The Sources of Data**

The sources of data collection were both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected from government offices and from the society through interview and questioner. The secondary data were collected from published and unpublished materials like books, internet, reports and magazines.

### **2.4. Instruments of Data Collection**

The instrument of data collection would be both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected from government offices and from the society through interview and questioner gathering data. The secondary data were collected from published and unpublished materials like books, reports and magazines.

#### **2.4.1 Interview**

The researcher selected 33 individuals from the 10 districts and 2 Town administrations sinner experts from government office of Dawro zone were obtained to get the relevant and credible data from the respondents asked face to face interview. The researcher purposively selected the peoples from office because of they have

knowledge and experience as well as well aware about the decentralization. And also the researcher used the semi structured interview because it is open, allowed new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewer said.

#### 2.4.2 Questionnaire

The researcher was distributed the questionnaire to the zonal residents and 15 key informants were obtained from each districts and Town administrations. Moreover, 165 key informants were selected purposively from residents because they have detailed information and all research questions got respond from this person. In addition, the researcher used both open ended as well as close ended questions because to get sufficient data and more relevant information from the respondents.

#### 2.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The researcher used purposive Sampling technique which used to find out the people who have knowledge and experience about the issue. The Questionnaires would be distributed to the residents who were expected to have detailed information and all research questions get response from these peoples. The researcher would be selected 165 residents from the zonal district and 33 interviewers from each district government offices based on purposive sampling technique.

#### 2.6 Methods of Data Analysis

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods for analysis and interpretation of both the primary and secondary data. After the relevant data has been collected, the researcher used table and percentage to analyses the quantitative data and the qualitative data analyzed through narration.

### 3. Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data obtained from the respondents through questioners and interview.

Table 1 role of decentralization in promoting democracy

Item	Alternatives	Number of respondents	Percentage
Do you believe that decentralization Promote democracy	Yes	100	60%
	No	65	40%

According to data presented in above table shows 60% of the respondents where responded that yes, they believe decentralization promote democracy. The remain 40% of responds where answered as they do not believe the perception of decentralization has role to promote democracy. Political decentralization intended to promote popular participation in decision making in local governments, people can exercise their voting power, influence decision that concern them, strengthen accountability and transparency, and establish sensitivity and responsiveness of public administration to the community. (yigremew, 2004)

Therefore the researcher concluded that decentralization promote democracy by enabling all people to participate, to know and to play their role in the political affairs. When all people participate in election and other decision of the government also develop democracy.

Table 2 contribution of decentralization in democracy

Contribution	Number of respondents	Percentage
Increase popular participation	95	58%
Increase responsiveness	45	27%
Sharing power	25	15%

Based on above table 58% of the respondents were agreed that the contribution of decentralization in democracy increase popular participation and 27% of the respondents where argued that the contribution of decentralization in democracy increase responsiveness and lower level living peoples. Whereas, 15% of respondents were believed that the contribution of decentralization in democracy is sharing of power. Political decentralization is best by facilitating local people to exercise their voting power and participation in terms of election but also to have strong influences in making, implementation and evaluation of decision that concern their socio-politico-economic wellbeing (decentralization policy, 2003). Therefore the researcher conclude that decentralization system contribute to increase popular participation in the given zone.

Table 3 community participation political affairs

Item	Alternatives	Number of respondents	percentage
As one of the resident do you think that you and Community participate in political affairs	Yes	110	67%
	No	55	33%

The above table shows that 67% of the respondents responded yes and the remain respondents responded no which 33% decentralization provided structural and institutionalized venue through local people can

participate and exert more influence in formulation and implementation of policies and make decision on their issues, vote their representatives during election. Therefore, the researcher concludes people of the districts were participated in political affairs.

Table 4 decentralization promote transparency and accountability

Item	Number of respondents	Percentage
By being close to people	110	67%
It is participatory	55	33%

Data presented in table 4 which shows 67% of the respondent answered decentralization promote transparency and accountability by being close to the people and 33% of the respondents responded it is participatory, decentralization enables people to know about the action and decision of political issues, give opportunity to participate in election and enables local community to determine their local leadership through democratic election, for involving special groups such as women, youth and disabled in decision making and election because of close to people (mehret,2007)

Therefore, based on the above discussion, decentralization promote transparency and accountability by being close to people, they can participate and clear and easy to access to the political issues and the represented be accountable for the community in his action because of the closeness they ask him/her decisions and actions. This increase transparency and accountability as result also promote democracy.

#### 4.5 Factors that affecting the effectiveness of decentralization to promote democracy

Item	Number of respondents	Percentage
Lack of skilled man power	55	33%
Low public participation	45	27%
Lack of transparency and accountability of official	65	40%

According to data presented in above table shows that 33% of the respondent answered lack of skilled man power to implement the political decentralization to promote democracy, and 27% of the respondents were responded low public participation in political issues. Whereas 40% of respondents responded lack of transparency and accountability of officials.

According one of the interview respondents of the office administration manager said that, there are many challenges which constraints in the district administration for decentralization in promoting democracy from the challenges, the challenges in institutionalizing function of decentralization system of the government offices are serious problems of skilled man power and expertise in area of management, finance, human resource management and service sector delivery and those are also people who have no political experience.

In addition, lack of awareness about the use of decentralization system and social issues of the districts. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that a factor that affecting the effectiveness of decentralization is low public participation due to lack of awareness and lack of transparency and accountability of officials to the community.

Table 6 measurement to minimize the challenges of decentralization

Item	Number of respondents	Percentage
Ensuring principles of accountability	65	40%
Motivate people to participate	35	20%
Ensuring the principle of transparency	65	40%

The results of the above table shows that 40% and 40% of respondents believe that the best solution to minimize the challenges of decentralization system by ensuring the principles of accountability and transparency respectively and 20% of the respondents argued that to minimize the challenges of decentralization is motivating the people have to participate in the public meeting. According to interview respondents, measurement to reduce challenges of decentralization is ensuring the principles of transparency, increase access of information and awareness of political participation of the community and increasing transparency and accountability of officials also should be loyal to the community about advantage of decentralization in political issues.

Therefore, the researchers conclude the measurement of challenges of decentralization is ensuring the accountability and transparency among the officials and community and develop understanding of community about public participation and their role in political issues be solution to challenges.

Table 7 the responsible body in preventing the challenges of decentralization

Item	Alternatives	Number of respondents	percentage
Responsible body in Preventing the challenges of Decentralization in this town	Ordinary citizen	65	40%
	Government	65	40%
	NGO	35	20%

The data presented in the above table shows that the total respondent of 40% of the respondents where responded as ordinary citizens where responsible in preventing the challenges of decentralization in Dawro zone

and of total 40% responded as governments were responsible in preventing challenges of decentralization of total respondents 20% of the respondents responded that non-governmental organization. Thus, based on the response the finding implies that the implementation of decentralization policy needs effort of all, not government or citizens solely but it needs coordination and cooperation of citizen to reduce the challenges of decentralization.

According to interview respondent about responsibility of administrative office to promote political decentralization in the zonal district, the administrative officials were accountable to its action and decision, make opportunities to the peoples of the districts to express their idea in freedom about political and other grievance and make the people informed also encourage, make awareness how to participate in political and take suggestion from the people. Therefore, the researcher concludes the responsibility of the administrative official make the system participatory these also develop our democracy.

Table 8 effectiveness of Decentralization system in Dawro zone

Item	Alternatives	Number of respondents	percentage
How do you evaluate Level of decentralization	Effectively decentralized	130	79%
	Centralized	35	21%

The data presented in the above table shows that among the total respondents 79% of the respondents were considered that they have efficient and effective decentralization system and whereas, 21% of the respondents were responded that centralized, FDRE has been decentralized power to lower level governments and the decentralization process took place to increase the efficiency of policy implementation. Ethiopia attempted to impose political decentralization with the election of sub national politicians at the regional and district level (Tegene, 2001). Therefore the researchers conclude decentralization system was effectively decentralized which promote democracy.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

##### 4.1 conclusions

The investigation of the practice of political decentralization and presentation and analysis of data on the matter of local democracy on decentralized system of the government in which Ethiopia has to practices the system as the main and ultimate solution to capture and promote grass root democracy with including the voices of poor and local community. The development of good governance and local democracy in a developed power and function requires the commitment of all individual to participate in issue that affects their life. As evaluation of power function derive the establishment of democratic institution and the responsive to the citizen need.

The participation of people in Dawro zone administration in local affairs implied that, there is much commonly participation of individual in socio economic and political life of themselves. The way to increase political decentralization in theory and practices of good and effective transfer of power is the authority from top to the lower level. One cannot imagine the effective result of political decentralization without bring the theory in to practice. So, political decentralization is increase through popular participation.

If all the society is official open deal all issue with the lower and the top -higher hierarchy officials, all society and officials were know their own responsibility and functions. If there is follow up the activity and so that issue transparency and accountability of the intended activity.

The zonal administration have faces different challenges, like political and economic obstacle were the main challenges to exercise political decentralization in grass root level in the dawro zone. Generally, to minimize challenges of government, the administration and community at all have the responsibility to promote political decentralization in grass root level in the town.

##### 4.2 Recommendation

I would like to mention the following point concerned to the political decentralization to promote democracy in Dawro zone.

1. The zonal administration should avoid very complex bureaucracy process for the provision of service and for this they should implement the principle and policies of the business processes reengineering in correct way .Unless the use of grass root democracy and good governance will remain principle.
2. The power and responsibility of the districts administration should be clearly described by the federal constitution, unless the monopolistic of the regional government in economic political participation is minimized. The process of political decentralization is very difficult. But it is clearly describe in the regional constitution under their supervision criteria of conducting and governing system in detail procedure, actually this discourage and limit the sharing of constitutional power and development.
3. The administration charter should give the chance for participation of community in the preparation of policy, formulation and its implementation in grass root level.
4. The administration should have developed and trained its own experts for policy formulation rather making policy by regional government designing and approving different developmental project.
5. The zonal administration official and the council should give emphasis and accountable for the districts and

Kebele representatives rather than being only accountable for the regional official since the realization of the local democracy in the decentralization system of the government require the maximum participation of the mass society.

6. In decentralized institution of local and grass root level participation of the whole section of the society is the main requirement, in this system. The poor and the majority should participate in their life problem. In the participation of economy, political and social affairs of their life, since they are the poorest of the poor in the society require basic need therefore; local government should give concern and impasses to them to participate in their life affairs.

7. Representation of official and council in the zonal administration has to be in free and fair election that in compasses the whole society representative in the town.

## REFERENCE

- Ajay, Kunle, (2000), "Justification and theories of local government" Ado -Ekiti. University Adeler fire,1996.
- Local governmente. Garica, Raj kumar,(2008). "Achieving Better Service Deliv Alder fire,1996. Local governmente.
- Assefa fiseha, (2007). Federalism from Acoma of diversity in Ethiopia. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Netherlands.
- Bahiru Zewude, (2006). Ethiopia: the challenges of democracy from below (2nd edition) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- FDRE constitution of Ethiopia
- FDRE constitution of Ethiopia
- Garica, Raj kumar,(2008). "Achieving Better Service Delivery through decentralization in Ethiopia."
- Htt; //ww. Busyness dictionary com local government
- Htt://ww. napsepage.org/pdf/ decentralization Bangladesh pdf).
- J.Tyler and Tegegne gebre -egziabher,comparative asesemnt of decentralization in Africa; Ethiopia Desk study.
- Kassahun Berhanu (2007), decentralization, local government and federalism in Ethiopia in electoral politics. Edited by kassahun Berhanu and tefesse olika, 33-70.Addiss Ababa. AAU Printing press.
- Mehert Ayenw, (2002). A rapid Assessment of woreda decentralization in Ethiopia: decentralization in Ethiopia, edited by Taye Asefa.
- Myerson, Roger B, 2014 Local foundation for better governance.
- Taye Assefa, (2007). Decentralization in Ethiopia printed in Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa Ethiopia.
- Tegegne and Kassun. "Literature Review of decentralization in Ethiopia, Taye assfa and tegegne Gebre-Egzabher, eds.," decentralization in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: Forum for social studies 2007.
- Tegegne G.E and kassahun, (2004). Decentralization in Ethiopia.
- Tegegne, and Taye, decentralization in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa: Form for social studies 2007.
- Tsegaye Teganu, (2006). Evaluation of the operation and performance of ethnic decentralization system in Ethiopia 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Addis Ababa university
- Worku dibu,(2015).Decentralization have the role poverty Reduction.
- Zemalik Ayele, (2011): Local government in Ethiopia: still an apparatus of control: doctoral in taken with local democratic state. Peace and human right security programs, community low centre, University of the Western Cape.