



# The effect of central-local governments' relations on local government autonomy and secondary education service management in Tanzania

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## ABSTRACT

The concern of this paper is to examine the central-local government relations and the extent and the manner in which this relation undermines or promoted the local government autonomy in Tanzania. Nevertheless, the knowledge about the effect of central-local government relation on local government autonomy and education service management is sparse. The central government is responsible for provision of public services such as education and healthcare because the central government cannot perform each function given the wide jurisdiction. This work was guided by the following research objectives: A) to examine the extent in which central-local government relations undermine local government autonomy. B) to explore the power of the local councils to hire and fire staff under central-local relation management. C) to explore the effect of central-local relations on service delivery management in Local Government authorities. The paper used a case study design with a sample of 40 respondents elected using purposive sampling. The method of data collection was interview and documentary review and the data were analyzed using thematic data analysis and descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that the failure of Local Governments Authorities in Tanzania in provision of services depends partly on the central-local relations in terms of central government interference which undermine local government autonomy, the structure of local government revenue is weak, institutional capacity of the Local Government Authorities, and modalities in place for the public services that the central government directly provides at the local level. The paper recommends that local government finance and administrative autonomy should be strengthened by Enshrining Decentralization by Devolution (D by D) in National Constitution.

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## INTRODUCTION

The central-local government relations have been regulated by laws and policies and motivated many parties to make improvements or reforms (Raharja and Indahsari, 2020). One of the reforms needed is an example of reforms in central and local government relations on service delivery. Basically, the aim of reforms is to improve public sector performance and increase quality and quantity of services and accountability. More broadly, this is a manifestation of the desire to go towards responsive local government institutions (Rahrja, 2023).

The concern of this paper was to examine how central-local government relations promote or undermine local government autonomy and service

delivery to the communities in Tanzania. National government is responsible for provision of the public services like education, health care, water and sanitation and social protection are the responsibilities of the government. However, the central government cannot be able to perform every function given the wide jurisdiction. Given to this fact, the central government in Tanzania established local government authorities to promote local participation and responsive service delivery. Nevertheless, the knowledge about the effect of central-local government relation on local government autonomy and service delivery is sparse.

The central-local relation has been reformed with the growing popularity of the New Public Management (NPM) concept. The NPM concept basically champions are the streamlining of

government functions and services by adopting methods and the best practices of decentralization and organizations (Mutiangpil, 2010; Abdullahi, 2024). NPM entails prioritising efficiency and cost-effectiveness in spending taxpayers' money (Hood, 1991).

The NPM is gaining popularity because international funding institutions such as the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have included increasing government efficiency and effectiveness through local government reforms and using technology in some of their recommendations for member countries (Mutiangpil, 2010; Alonso et al., 2011; Larbi, 1999; Sekiziyivu, 2009; Abdullahi, 2024). Therefore, governments around the globe are implementing the central-local government relations and integration of business model to primarily save costs and secondly to benefit from the added value that expert service delivery provides (Alonso et al., 2011).

In line with the quest for quality services and efficient operations of government institutions, the reforms of municipal administration in developed and developing countries have since the late 1970s been encouraged by the internationally known and influential NPM, which started in New Zealand and Australia, then in the United Kingdom, and rapidly expanded particularly to Anglo-Saxon Countries (Alonso et al., 2011).

The NPM reform programme focuses on rolling back the welfare state by reducing its functions and by decentralizing as many tasks as could be taken over by the local governments (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; 2011; Mutiangpil, 2010; Hughes et al., 2003).

As a consequence of NPM, from 1980s onwards, the states in Africa started shifting the emphasis from the state and public sector to the private sector (Hughes et al., 2003). Donor countries such as European countries, the United States of America and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund recommended reforms to developing countries in the form of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which included a wide range of economic, political and administrative reforms (Kettl, 2000; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Hughes et al., 2003); Economic Commission for Africa {ECA}, 2003).

The local governments must ensure quality services are provided, consolidate democracy so that citizens should be in a position to hold their leaders accountable and therefore, the central government has to strengthen the local government system. It is in the eyes of many ordinary citizens that the provision of the services is poor (Rugeiyamu, 2022; URT, 2009:107). The point in question is how central-

local relations have undermined local government autonomy and service delivery? Who is to bear the blame for this? Should it be Central Government or Local Government Authorities? Before one can make judgment there should be a yard stick of bench mark along which a judgment can be made. In order for Local government to be judged to have failed they must be operating under circumstances which among other things, ensure autonomy, power to raise own revenue and to decide how to spend it as well as power to make decisions affecting the local populations, sufficient qualified manpower, adequate technical equipment and materials, clear lines of accountability as well as the favorable organizational and institutional arrangements under which local government authorities interact with other agencies of the central government.

The above preconditions for effective local government authorities seem to be either lacking or very weak in Tanzanian context. It is therefore established from the start that local governments are mostly naively blamed for poor delivery of services while the central government is the main source of the problem. It is because they (Local Government Authorities) suffer from the constraining chains of history from which they evolved and lack of political will and commitment (Kessy, 2008). This has turned the image of local government authorities in service delivery to be soiled and central government which is far prefect ring the local government authorities seems to be a problem for such deficiencies. It is argued, in this paper, that the inherent central government tendency of lack of commitment to support local government authorities makes them weak and inefficient. Hence, despite the local government authorities' internal deficiencies, the central government, to a large part, has to have a lion's share of the underperformance of local government authorities in Tanzania. The logic of the argument takes a historical approach which drives the discussion home by arguing that it is not proper to blame Local government authorities while generically they are made so by central government relations with local governments in Tanzania.

The paper is divided into five sections. Section one presents an introduction. Section two sets out to discuss literature review and section three presents methodology while section four presents the findings and discussion. Section five consists of a concluding remark and recommendations.

### **Literature review**

In this paper, this study reviewed literature and theories in order to establish a research gap.

### **Structural arrangement of central-local Government Relations**

The system of government in Tanzania is organized around three layers and a very extensive parastatal sector. First and foremost is the system of government organization at the Centre. This is organized around a chain of ministerial system that includes independent departments, Commissions and standing committees. The second layer is composed of regional administration where the same organization obtained at the center is repeated at the regional levels thinning out at the district level. These two layers are based on the need to maintain a strong and in reality, excessive central government control. The third layer comprises of Local Authorities, district councils and urban councils as well as cooperative unions and village governments (Kessy, 2018). In this layer, ideally, the concern is to ensure people's involvement and for popular participation. Consequently, district councils, urban authorities, cooperative unions and village governments exhibit considerable provision for ideal popular participation in their structural, institutional and operational spheres. Local authorities in Urban Districts are referred to as town, municipal and city councils while those in rural districts are known as district councils (Mukandala, 1991). The councils are headed by both elected and government appointed officials and are the most important nuclei of empowering people and of development Activities in the districts. It should be pointed out, however, as Mukandala (1991:1) argues "the country's system of government in Tanzania is highly centralized with a notoriously entrenched top-down approach". Hence, lack of systematic approach to promoting local government management capability at district and village councils in the long term and to capacity building in short term, raises a very grave concern to all those who are seriously involved in and committed to promoting local government in delivering services in the country. The literature has indicated the layers

Before starting to explore the situation of service delivery in relation to central-local relations in Tanzania, it is desirable to show what sort of services and in what manner service delivery is carried out in Local Government Authorities and how services are affected by central-local government relations as shown in the next sub-sections below.

### **Modalities of Service delivery under Central-Local Government Relations**

Services to local communities are provided through an array of arrangements involving Local Government Authorities themselves directly deliver

services using their own technical staff and others under their supervision. Services covered under this category include agricultural extension services, primary education, health, roads, water, firefighting, surveying and plot allocation and construction of markets. Secondly, local government authorities deliver services through outsourcing to private institutions, companies and civil society organizations. Services normally outsourced include solid waste management (collection and disposal) and construction of socio-economic infrastructure, such as construction of classrooms, dispensaries and health centers and property valuation. Also, included are services like vehicle parking (mostly in urban councils) and markets (mostly in urban areas and involve collection of fees and related charges). Thirdly, local government authorities coordinate and monitor provision of social services by Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) that receive funding directly from donors in their areas of jurisdiction (Liviga, 2009:375; Kessy, 2018).

It should be noted that the local government authorities are providing services that are not exclusively under their jurisdiction. They do so in collaboration with, and sometimes under strict guidance of the central government. Over all, one is hard-pressed to say that local government authorities facilitate provision of services and the real provider is the central government. Local Government Authorities have serious problems in delivering services in their areas of jurisdiction as detailed in next paragraph.

More specifically, the study examined the central-local relations effects on service delivery with a view to revealing positive practices that could be applied to improve service delivery and autonomy other municipal councils in Tanzania. The central-local relation has received inadequate empirical studies, and so limited knowledge has been generated.

In addition, central-local relations in Tanzania have so far attracted few studies. The scant literature on central-local relation, such as Kessy (2023), Likwelile and Assenga, (2018) whose literature was rather limited, thereby not offering a comparative analysis which is the knowledge gap that needed to be filled by this study to stimulate new scholarly work.

Therefore, this paper makes a profound contribution to the empirical literature on central-local government relations as it reveals circumstances such as complying with financial laws and regulations if properly implemented. Additionally, the study findings also contribute to theoretical debates on public sector efficiency in central-local government relations. Furthermore, this study also contributes to

knowledge on the subject of central-local government relations especially on the challenges and it serves as a reference and basis for further research.

## ■ METHODOLOGY

This section presents the case study design, sampling procedures of respondents, data collection methods and data analysis technique used in this study. This study was conducted in Dar es Salaam Municipal Council Tanzania. The region has five municipal councils and they have been the first in local government reform programme one, two and three. The reason for selecting these municipal councils is based on the fact that within a qualitative research approach, a case study strategy approach will be adopted. The case study strategy is considered to be appropriate because it is the one used to investigate the phenomenon within a small and manageable area and sample. Furthermore, other factors for choosing secondary schools in Dar es Salaam Region were such that this services involve central-local government administrative and financial relations.

In this study, purposive sampling was applied for selecting the teachers and education officers from secondary schools. Another criterion for using purposive sampling is the issue of extreme case purposive sampling where the researcher expects that the local government leaders and education officers have rich information of the study.

**Table 1.** Sample Size and its Composition at (N=64)

S/No	Category of Respondents	No of respondents
1	District executive directors	5
2	Heads of department	5
3	Mtaa/ hamlet members	20
3	Councillors	10
5	Total No. of respondents	40

Source: Field data (July, 2024)

In this study, a structured interview was used in data collection as it involved the use of a set of predetermined questions and highly standardized techniques of recording. This method was used because the researcher intended to get insights, experiences on the practices of health and education services in Tanzania. The documentary review includes books, records, government publications, and official statistics as far as this study is concerned were used in data collection. This method was employed to

gather information from various health services in Tanzania.

### Data Analysis

The data collected were qualitative in nature and were analyzed thematically. Thus, in using this type of qualitative data analysis, major themes were identified in this form of data analysis, the researcher perused the collected data and identify information that was relevant to the research questions and specific objectives stated in this study. The method used involved developing a coding system based on the collected data and the major issues topics to be covered and as well as intensity through which the frequency of idea, word, and description appears. For instance, the data analysis was based on the topics/issues that were identified in the data collected. On other hand, the quantitative data collected were subjected to the calculation of frequencies and percentages relating to research questions.

## ■ RESULTS

This sub-section presents the findings on the effect of Central-Local Government relation management on Local Government Autonomy and secondary education management in Tanzania. The findings are summarized in table 2.

To start with table 2, the findings 65% of respondents indicate that there is lack of capacity at government local government level to exercise responsibility for public services. The responses indicated in Tanzania, the lower tiers of government lack the ability to manage public finances and maintain proper accounting procedures. This trend may be changing but the problem has not been solved completely. For instance, The LGAs have not been able to collect revenues as Planned. These findings are supported by CAG Report, 2010 in the figure 1.

For instance, own sources of revenue in local government finances continues to be low (7-8%) even if we took into account local government expenditure financed through ministerial subventions (Kessy, 2018; URT, 2019). For instance, by 2018, the revenue collection in local governments across the country indicated that LGAs in 18 regions out of 21 regions relied on fiscal transfer from the central government for more than 93% of their fiscal resources (URT, 2023a). For instance, own sources of revenue in local government finances continues to be low (7-8%) even if took into account local government expenditure financed through ministerial subventions (Kessy, 2018). For instance, by 2018, the revenue collection in

local governments across the country indicated that LGAs in 18 regions out of 21 regions relied on fiscal transfer from the central government for more than 93% of their fiscal resources (URT, 2023b). In fact, most regions own sources we account for only 3% to 7% of their financial resources. It was revealed that in only three regions did LGAs actually rely on less than 90 percent of grant sources. These LGAs are in Arusha, Pwani and Dar es Salaam Regions, which collected 13.4%, 10.7% and 35.7%, respectively of their total revenue from own sources (URT, 2018). However, as noted above, LGAs continue to rely on fiscal transfers from the central government, which

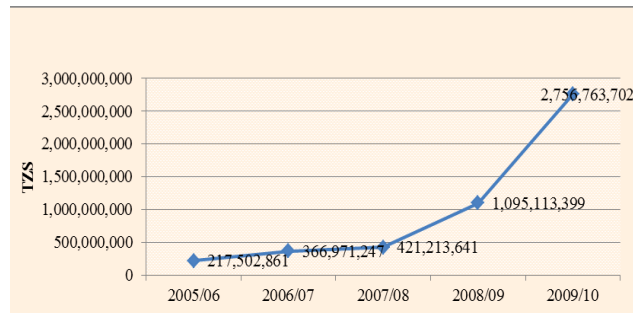
accounts for more than 95% of their (budget) financial resources (Liviga, 2011:376; Kessy, 2011:41; Kisuule, 2021).

The low revenue bases of most of them with the exception of few major urban municipalities, for example, out of 43 Councils, only four councils, namely Temeke, Ilala, Kinondoni and Arusha were able to increase their revenue by more than 20%. The findings give impression that this trend in revenue collection cannot sustain education service delivery and local government finance management particularly revenue collection.

**Table 2.** Responses on central-local government relations on local government autonomy.

S/N	Categories of respondents	Central-relation promote local government autonomy to exercise responsibility	Central-local government relations undermine local government autonomy to exercise responsibility
1	Municipal executive directors (n=5)	02(40%)	03(60%)
2	Mtaa/hamlet members (n=20)	5 (25%)	15(75%)
3	Heads of department (n=5)	2(40%)	3(60%)
4	Councilors (n=10)	5(50%)	5(50%)
Total No. of responses		14 (35%)	26(65%)

Source: Field data, August, 2024



**Figure 1.** Trend of Revenue Collection in Local Governments in Tanzania from Controller and Auditor General Report, 2010.

**Central Government Inteferece in Local Government recruitment matters**

This sub-section examines the central government interference in local government matters. The findings are summarized in Table 3.

The findings indicate that the central-local government relations were associated with a problem of central government tending to intervene in what should, under the law, be the jurisdiction of local government not only in recruitment and selection but in decision making. These findings were supported by 20 (50%) of respondents as presented in table 3. The central government interference is also noted in the

documentary evidences as presented in the subsequent sub-sections. For instance, an interview with one of the Head of Department in one Dar Es Salaam Municipal Council indicated that the central government is the one in charge of allocation of human and financial resources and staffing for core public services: staff recruitment and deployment remains largely centralized (Interview, August, 2024). These findings were corroborated by URT (2019) which found that in 2003, the president’s office-public service management (PO-PSM) issued the public regulations that currently guide personnel management in local government authorities (URT, 2019). These regulations were based on the public service Act No.8 of 2002 and the public service regulations of 2003, and maintained the powers of central government to transfer staff across ministries, regions and local government authorities in ‘the public interest’ (ibid). Furthermore, personnel for the health and education sectors were explicitly exempted by president office-public service management from the decentralized and merit-based procedures for recruitment on basis of ensuring quality control (Shangali, 2009:27). In recent years, for instance large numbers of health staff and teachers have been centrally deployed to local government authorities but surprising enough, the report (URT,

2023b) shows that, during field visits carried out by Dege consultancy for the evaluation of the LGRP in 2007 both regional and district officials noted that, teachers who were locally recruited by local government authorities were far more likely to continue working within their post than teachers who were centrally deployed. This exemplified central

government shortfalls in creating enabling environment for local authorities to deliver services to the community effectively and efficiently. The findings give the implication that the central government interference has been undermining local government authorities in service delivery particularly health and education services.

**Table 3.** Central government interference in local government autonomy

S/N	Categories of respondents	Central-relation does not promote local government interference in recruitment matters	Central-local government relations promote central government interference in recruitment matters
1	Municipal executive directors (n=5)	03(60%)	02(40%)
2	Mtaa/hamlet members (n=20)	10 (50%)	10(50%)
3	Heads of department (n=5)	2(40%)	3(60%)
4	Councilors (n=10)	5(50%)	5(50%)
Total No. of responses		20 (50%)	20(50%)

Field Data, August 20204

**Table 4.** Responses on central-local government relations on legal and policy framework for local government autonomy

S/N	Categories of respondents	legal and policy framework promotes local government autonomy	Legal and policy framework undermine local government autonomy
1	Municipal executive directors (n=5)	03 (60%)	02 (40%)
2	Mtaa/hamlet* members (n=20)	10 (50%)	10 (50%)
3	Heads of department (n=5)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)
4	Councilors (n=10)	5 (50%)	5 (50%)
Total No. of responses		21 (52.5%)	19 (47.5%)

\*= They are village or street council members of village/street government. Field data collected in August, 2024

#### Central-local relations on Legal and Policy framework on service delivery and local government autonomy

This study investigated whether the policies and laws favour local government autonomy and service delivery in Local Government Authorities in Tanzania. The responses are summarized in table 4.

The study findings presented in table 4 indicates that the legal and policy framework of local government authorities promoted local government autonomy and services delivery. The findings presented in table above did not corroborate with documentary evidences. For instance, Local government Authorities operate under the legal framework constituted by the national legislation. The legislations include: Local Government (District Authorities) Act No. 7 of 1982, the local Government Services Act No. 10 of 1982 and the Local Government Negotiating Machinery Act No. 11 of 1982 as amended from time to time). Under these Acts local Government are mandated to carry out their

functions in a frame of law. These Acts specify in detail the details of local government (urban and rural, district, ward and the functions to be performed by each level of local government authority (Kisuule, 2021).

Following the amendment of the country's constitutions through Act No.15 of 1984 Local Government Authorities were reintroduced. Since their reintroduction, Local government Authorities has been interfered with directly or indirectly by activities of the sector ministries and regional administrations (Kessy, 2009; Kessy, 2018). Specifically, they faced and still face serious financial problems to run various public services and they were and are still heavily dependent on subsidies from the central government and most of the lucrative tax bases were still are taken by the central government (Likweliile, and Assey, 2018).

Local Government Authorities in Tanzania derive their powers and authority from the constitutions. Articles 145 and 146 of the constitution of the United

Republic of Tanzania provide for the establishment, purpose, composition, source of revenue and functions of Local Government. Article 146(1) of the specially states that the purpose of having local government authorities is 'to transfer authority to the local people'. Local government has given power to participate and involve the people in planning and implementation of development programmer within their respective areas and generally throughout the county. Liviga (2009) further argues that enshrining local governments in the constitution would ordinarily indicate that most of the policy, legal, institutional, financial and human resource issue and problems have been sorted out for local government authorities to operate smoothly and play their roles effectively and efficiently. However, this has not been the case as local government as an administrative system has had troubled history in Tanzania. On the other hand, Max (1991) provides an interesting insight in this as he aptly put that '.....the history of local government in developing countries like Tanzania, has been one of an off affair, bedeviled with a host of problems.....'. Hence, it can be asserted that these problems have led not only to weakening local government authorities' autonomy but also their ability to perform effectively and efficiently in the provision of services (Kisuule, 2021).

The other last problem to be mentioned is that the jurisdiction of local governments is still limited. Key central government departments have not been adequately devolved, leaving local governments resembling more a parallel appendage to the central government system than an integral part of the country's government system (Liviga, 2009: 379). This tendency or obstacle to local government authorities' better performance has historical genesis as illustrated in the next section.

## ■ RESULTS

Tanzania's local government system is based on political devolution and decentralization of functions and finances within a unitary state (local government reform policy paper, 1998: vii). This paper has presented some aspects which show that poor service delivery by local government authorities is mainly result of central government interference in the affairs of local authorities because the local government authorities do not actually provide services but they facilitate the delivery of such services under central government control.

The central government control over revenue hinders that local governments' ability to facilitate the provision of service as all lucrative sources of revenue

at the local level are owned by the central government (Mniwasa & Shauri, 2001:23). Provisions for revenue sources of local authorities are contained in sections 6 to 10 of the local government finances Act No. 9, 1982. But by far the biggest single sources of local government is grants from the central government. The grants are, ordinarily, for specific purposes. But wording of the law is of interest. Under section 10 of the act 'the central government 'shall' pay grants for costs incurred by local authorities for public health services, road constructions and maintenance, sewerage and agricultural extension services as well as certain officers. But the amounts to be granted are to be in such sums 'as the minister may determine to be the costs 'so incurred'. In this regard there is nothing to prevent to minister from determining that the cost involved for a particular service is 10% of the actual cost incurred because of enormous discretionary powers vested in him while local authorities not capacitated bylaw to negotiate with the central government.

These findings are contrary to Kessy and Mushi (2018) documents that there is a general consensus among council officials that these frameworks for guiding central-local relations are in place, including policies, laws, regulations, and guidelines which are very much resourceful and adequate to guide LGA functions who found that the frameworks to be quite adequate. However, the regional secretary staff feels that the problem lies with the center for not providing enough resources to execute the roles and functions stipulated in the guidelines. Likewise, at the Council levels, there are strong feelings that the frameworks for central-local relations are well framed but sometimes difficult to implement especially where there were instructions to LGAs to perform certain activities without corresponding resources.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that the law has no specific provisions for central government grants or other funding to village councils. Needless to say, the local government owns sources of revenue are extremely limited, accounting for 7% of the total revenue in most cases. Even for those meager resources, the local authorities are subject to detailed and excessive central government control which provides 93% (URT, 2023a). Thus, blaming local government authorities for failure to facilitate provision of services is rather struggling to stop effects without having a bearing to the root cause of the problem.

In terms of resources capacity, the central government is the boss with discretionary powers to determine what is to be the source of revenue to the local government authorities. In June 2004, the

minister of finance announced the abolition of development levy as well as a number of minor revenue sources (so called 'nuisance taxes' because of the complexities involved in the collection of such taxes) while also limiting the local rate setting discerning for other local revenue sources. Until its abolition, the development levy had been the main sources of local revenue for rural authorities in Tanzania. [APRM Report \(2009:49\)](#) shows that local government authorities, since then, were not allowed to levy any taxes, levies or fees.

Despite local government authorities being dependent largely on central government support for over 90%, such measures taken, further crippled the local government's ability to facilitate the delivering of quality services to the community ([URT, 2023b](#)). Thus, it is evident that central government command and control-oriented actions act as disincentive for local governments' to be effective in the whole process of facilitating provision of services to the community. These findings conform to the characteristic of taxation suggested by [Gildenhuis \(2010:214\)](#), who observed that,

*"Absence of direct quid pro quo which means that the taxpayer does not receive an equal value of collective service for each monetary unit of tax paid. That is no equal utilization of the collective services where taxpayers are supposed to enjoy equal access to all collective services which are related to the revenue being paid"*.

In terms of spending revenues, the central government is one that sets priorities. The local authorities have discretionary powers only in areas where the central government does not provide grants. In 2004, an important agreement between the government of Tanzania and development partners was reached in principle towards reforming central government fiscal transfer to local government authorities, whereby formulas would be applied to calculate allocations to local government authorities for recurrent expenditures in six sectors: education, health, local roads, agriculture, water and administration and a new joint donor-government funded block grant for development, the local government capital development Grant (LGCDG) was introduced. Although formula-based allocations were agreed and endorsed by the cabinet, they have not yet been fully implemented ([Kisuule, 2021; PMO-RALG, 2007b and 2007c in URT, 2009: 117](#)). Grant is provided for the following sectors with their specific formula in brackets. Primary education (number of school aged children, 100%), health (population 70%, number of poor residents 10%, district medical vehicle route 10% and under five mortality 10%) agriculture extension (number of villages 60%, rural population 20%, rainfall

index 20%) water (equal share 10% and number of unserved rural resident 90%), Local roads (road network length 75%, land capped area 15% and number of poor residents 10%). From 2021/2022 local government report shows, receive also a General Purpose Grant (GPG) whose formula consists of fixed lamp sum 10%, total number of villages 10%, total population 50% and total number of rural residents 30%. These grants relate to recurrent expenditure in what is called 'priority sectors' ([URT, 2023a](#)). Hence, it depends upon the central government will and commitment to ensure that local government authorities are capacitated to deliver services. Thus, failure to facilitate provision of services to the community by the local government authorities, in this regard, is directly related to central government planning systems.

Furthermore, the situation is not healthy in decision making respect either. Local Government authorities implement central government policies, plans and priorities. There are statutory provisions for citizens under their local government authorities to meet regularly to deliberate and decide on any matters which affect them. For instance, the local government (district authorities) Act No.7 of 1982 as amended by Act No.6 of 1999 provides a framework for village assemblies to conduct public hearings and take the resolutions to the ward development committee which are later to be considered at the district council level. However, no decision is legally enforceable without the consent of some central government executive ([Kabagile, 2006:30](#)). Furthermore, apart from casual laborers, local government authorities have no powers of even effectively disciplining their apparent workforce. The local government services commission is the appointing and disciplining authority in respect of all employees. However, the commission is hardly close to the local authorities. In this regard, reservations are not that the employee are controlled by the central government as such, but rather that local authorities are denied the right of even deciding whether they like, or even need, a particular employee ([Ngware & Haule, 1992:16](#)). What is seen in practice is that the local authorities are constantly receiving a chain of orders and directives from above. Hence, the failure of implementing decisions depends, to great extent, on the nature of the command developed from the top.

The central government is the one in charge of allocation of resources and staffing fore core public services: staff recruitment and deployment remains largely centralized. In 2003, the president's office-public service management (PO-PSM) issued the public regulations that currently guide personnel



management in local government authorities (URT, 2009, URT, 2023a). These regulations were based on the public service Act No.8 of 2002 and the public service regulations of 2003, and maintained the powers of central government to transfer staff across ministries, regions and local government authorities when in 'the public interest' (ibid). Furthermore, personnel for the health and education sectors were explicitly exempted by president office-public service management from the decentralized and merit-based procedures for recruitment on basis of ensuring quality control (Shangali, 2009:27). In recent years, for instance large numbers of health staff and teachers have been centrally deployed to local government authorities but surprising enough, the report (URT, 2009:119;URT, 2023b) show that, during field visits carried out by Dege consultancy for the evaluation of the LGRP in 2007 both regional and district officials noted that, teachers who were locally recruited by local government authorities were far more likely to continue working within their post than teachers who were centrally deployed. This exemplified central government shortfalls in creating enabling environment for local authorities to deliver education and health services to the community effectively and efficiently. For instance, due to ineffectiveness of local governments in Tanzania, it was reported in 2022 that the percentage of Dropouts in Government Schools was 5.3% of total enrolment. The highest percentage of dropout is observed in Bahi DC with (16.6%) followed by Mtama DC (16.0%), while the lowest percentage dropouts was observed in Moshi MC (0.2%). The major reason for dropouts is truancy (97.0%) followed by pregnancy (1.8%) (URT, 2023a).

Pay policy also remains centralized, except that the local government authorities are allowed to establish local incentive schemes. However, such initiatives are unaffordable to most local government authorities except for select staff categories in more wealthy local government authorities. Career management has been partially developed but career progress the senior staff continues to depend on central ministries. This has perpetuated disparities in human resources and, in turn, service provision and educational and health outcomes. For instance, URT (2020) noted that 185 LGAs continued decline in staffing level whereby 169 LGAs had a shortage of 162,342 staff. The noted staff shortage had adverse impact on service delivery particularly in the health and education sector which have been mostly affected.

Central employment generally has failed to address geographical inequalities of staffing in local governments. Attracting and retaining staff in

districts considered 'remote' or marginalized is a persistent problem (PMO-RALG, 2005 cited in URT, 2023a). Urban local government authorities to be better staffed, even for agricultural extension staff than rural authorities clearly demonstrate inefficiencies in the current staff allocation system (URT, 20023b). This in turn hinders availability of skilled personnel in the provision of services to the community. Hence the central Government is to a great extent responsible for poor service delivery by the Local Government Authorities.

Moreover, some of the Local Government authorities are created out of political considerations for consolidation of power rather than being based on technical assessment and professionalism (Kessy, 2023; Mukandala, 1991). This is due to the fact that under article 36(1) and (2) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, the Head of State is vested with powers to create or abolish some of the administrative structure as it may seem viable. In the same line of argument, under the Local Government Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act No. 13 of 2006, the Minister for Regional Administration and Local Government is also empowered to subdivide the area of every district, town, municipality or city council into wards which are also electoral areas for the election of councilors representing the ward in the council (Kabagile, 2006:31). This leads to serious consequences as some of the Local authorities are created without considering their resource base. This makes the Local Government Authorities to remain stooges of the central government. Given the situation that they become heavily dependent on the central government grant, their failure to facilitate delivery of services therefore seems and, actually is, a fault of the central government in the design of their existence.

Several Local Government Authorities invest in capacity building and subsequently see staff transferred to other Local Government Authorities or central government. This frustrates local capacity-building efforts, which are otherwise encouraged by the new system of providing Local Government Authorities with capacity building grants. Transfers are undertaken by the Central Government without adequate consultation with local government authorities and very late replacements are made. Field visits during the Local Government Reform Programme evaluation in 2007 reported by Dege consultancy indicate that this is perceived by Local Government Authorities as the most frustrating aspect of current practices (URT, 2009:120; Likwelile and Assenga, 2018). Hence, in this regard, the Central

Government is the major cause for poor service provision in the local government authorities.

To hold leaders accountable for their actions and inactions presupposes that citizens and other watchdog institutions get the right information from the local institutions. Following the LGRPI, the financial information is easily available on local notice boards although not in detail. The exercise appears more like fulfilling the financial requirements of posting financial information on these notice boards rather than being transparent. That is, to be open is different from being transparent (Kessy, 2008, 2018; Liviga, 2009). Hence, the central government is the one in this case, to be blamed for failing to have in place an institutional framework which enables citizens to be aware of the reforms and empowering them to have viable ways through which they can hold accountable the local government officials with regard to funds provided for facilitating delivery of services.

## ■ DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the central-local government relations undermine local government management and education service delivery. The findings suggest that this relation has impinged local government in revenue collection management and secondary education service delivery. The findings corroborate with URT, (2023) noted that own sources of revenue in local government finances continues to be low (7-8%) even if we took into account local government expenditure financed through ministerial subventions. For instance, by 2018, the revenue collection in local governments across the country indicated that LGAs in 18 regions out of 21 regions relied on fiscal transfer from the central government for more than 93% of their fiscal resources (URT, 2023a).

Central employment generally has failed to address geographical inequalities of staffing in local governments. Attracting and retaining staff in districts considered 'remote' or marginalized is a persistent problem. These findings are supported corroborated by URT (2023) which observed that Urban local government authorities and to be better staffed, even for agricultural extension staff than rural authorities clearly demonstrate inefficiencies in the current staff allocation system. This in turn hinders availability of skilled personnel in the provision of services to the community. Hence the central Government is to a great extent responsible for poor service delivery by the Local Government Authorities.

Moreover, some of the Local Government authorities are created out of political considerations for consolidation of power rather than being based on technical assessment and professionalism. This was further supported by Kessy (2023) who found that the powers of appointments, confirmation of appointments and promotion of public servants other than those appointed by the President are vested Minister responsible for Local Government for political reasons. For example, the shift of Government from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma Capital was associated with the appointment of the Dodoma city mayor in order to consolidate power in 2019.

## ■ CONCLUSION

Given the situation that the actual provider of services is the Central Government under central-government relations in Tanzania, Local Government Authorities should not be blamed for failing to facilitate that provision of services. The Central Government is responsible for financing the local services to a great extent; sets policies, plans and priorities that are to be implemented by the Local Government Authorities. The Central Government further is the one in charge of manpower in terms of recruitment, remuneration, training and development, promotion as well as transfer. Hence, if the local Government Authorities fail to facilitate the provision of services, the central government is to bear the blame for having failed to empower those Local Government Authorities.

The central government control over revenue hinders that local governments' ability to facilitate the provision of service as all lucrative sources of revenue at the local level are owned by the central government. The grants are, ordinarily, for specific purposes. But wording of the law is of interest. Under section 10 of the act 'the central government 'shall' pay grants for costs incurred by local authorities for public health services, road constructions and maintenance, sewerage and agricultural extension services as well as certain officers. But the amounts to be granted are to be in such sums 'as the minister may determine to be the costs 'so incurred'. In this regard there is nothing to prevent to minister from determining that the cost involved for a particular service is 10% of the actual cost incurred because of enormous discretionary powers vested in him while local authorities not capacitated bylaw to negotiate with the central government. Likewise, at the Council levels, there is strong feelings that the frameworks for central-local relations are well framed but sometimes difficult to implement especially where there were

instructions to LGAs to perform certain activities without corresponding resources.

In terms of resources capacity, the central government is the boss with discretionary powers to determine what is to be the source of revenue to the local government authorities.

Despite local government authorities being dependent largely on central government support for over 90%, such measures taken, further crippled the local government's ability to facilitate the delivering of quality services to the community.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this paper, it is recommended that the central government should restrain from interfering local government authorities and cede autonomy to local government authorities so that they can exercise full autonomy in local government development process. The local government finance and administrative autonomy should be strengthened by Enshrining Decentralization by Devolution (D by D) in National Constitution.

## ■ DECLARATIONS

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### Authors' contributions

The author collected, analyzed and discussed the findings of the entire manuscript.

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### Competing interests

The author has no competing interest

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