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AN EXAMINATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE EASTERN PROVINCIAL COUNCIL FOR MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE

N. Sivakumar

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya

The Eastern Provincial Council (EPC) is expected to provide accessible and affordable services in war ravaged areas in the Eastern Province. The practice of multi-level governance (MLG) at the provincial level can ease the burden of responsibilities which are expected to be undertaken by the EPC. MLG comprises the emergence of public-private-non profit partnership and privatization of the delivery of public services. Adequate institutional capacity is a prerequisite in the EPC to effectively deal with MLG. Thus, the study aims to assess the institutional capacity of the EPC. Also, it identifies the institutional and non-institutional capacities required by the EPC in order to implement an effective MLG. Both primary and secondary sources of data are used. The qualitative method meant to analyze and interpret data is given priority.

The study finds that, the EPC has not been provided adequate institutional capacity to effectively deal with MLG. The success of MLG at the provincial level depends on the extent of the provision of sufficient institutional and non-institutional capacities. The inadequacy in human and fiscal resources provided to the EPC also contributed to the weak institutional capacity. Lack of staff with necessary technical skills and the lack of control over the executive level personnel supplied by the central government is another factor which has restricted the capacity of the EPC. Fiscal and financial arrangements are inadequate, thus the EPC mostly depends on the central government's funds. The service delivery responsibilities in the multilevel system clearly have not been clarified. The MLG played a vital role in development activities in the Eastern province. However the EPC did not play a key role in the MLG process due to weak institutional capacity. Participatory, people-centered development activities are far more effective than top-down, institutional delivery.

Thus the central government should better empower the EPC considering the principles of subsidiary and worth of MLG. The EPC can overcome the lack of institutional capacities, if the provincial level political and administrative leadership can make arrangements to evolve a framework for MLG. Also, national level political will in this regard is a must.