

A CRITICAL STUDY OF DEVOLUTION THROUGH THE
PROVINCIAL COUNCIL SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA

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A B S T R A C T

The Introductory chapter examines why devolution and provincial councils were introduced in Sri Lanka, and whether they have met the purposes for which they were designed. An analysis of the functioning of the process of devolution through Councils indicate that there are number of shortcomings that had restrained effective devolution.

Chapter two points out the prospects and problems of devolution. Historically, devolution has been known although in the more recent past it had been replaced by centralised government. The structure which provides for devolution is studied and shown to be deficient in some respects. Those deficiencies need to be supplied if devolution and provincial councils are to work satisfactorily. The third chapter continues in the same strain demonstrating the legal problems that pose difficulties to devolution and to Councils and suggests ways and means of combating them.

The organisation and structures of provincial councils are outlined and discussed in chapter four with a critical treatment of the details of the machinery of devolution. Chapter five deals with the vital basis of devolution - finance - and shows that there has been reluctance to provide for effective fiscal devolution and how changes for the better could be effected.

A related aspect, planning, is treated in chapter six. The want of a suitable provision for carrying out this indispensable function is highlighted and suitable ways of supplying this deficiency are discussed.

Chapter seven surveys an area where devolution had been promised but had not been implemented through the Provincial Councils. Comparisons are briefly made with other places where this function has been devolved, the problems that could arise if it is devolved as it is now designed, and how law and order could be executed through a devolved set up are examined. The next chapter treats the Centre's relations with the Provincial Councils and the Periphery. Several problems are envisaged in the conduct of the relations; the important ones are discussed along with suggestions toward smoothening of transactions.

The Conclusion critically ties up what had been discussed or examined in the earlier chapters in a concise and succinct form. Suggestions are advanced for making devolution and Provincial Councils to function more satisfactorily and efficiently.