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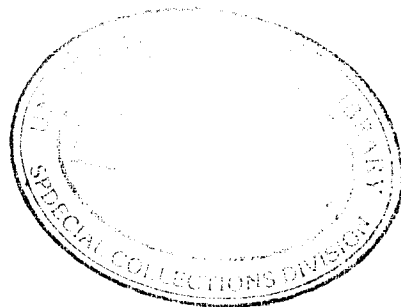
**The Local Government (Amendment) Act No. 6 of 2010 and its Impact on Local Government
Administration.**

BY

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An Obligatory Essay submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree Bachelor of Laws (LLB) of the University of Zambia.

April 2012



DECLARATION

I, **ABIGAIL SHANSONGA**, National Registration number – 285167/10/1 do hereby declare that I am the author of this Directed Research entitled: The Local Government (Amendment) Act No.6 of 2010 and its impact on Local Government Administration and confirm that it is my own work. I further declare that due acknowledgement has been given where work of other scholars has been used. I verily believe that this research has not been previously presented for a degree at the University of Zambia or any other University.

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ABSTRACT

The Local Government Service Commission was introduced for the first time in 1964 under the Local Government (Officers) Act CAP 477. Today it has been introduced under the Local Government (Amendment) Act No.6 of 2010. The purpose of the Commission under the Act is to exercise responsibility in respect of all matters relating to principal officers and officers of the councils, they shall appoint, discipline and transfer officers from one council to another.

This research endeavours to assess the impact of the Local Government Service Commission on the administration of Councils. It shall explore the reasoning behind the establishment of the Local Government Service Commission and shall discuss whether having a Service Commission has a negative or positive impact on the administration of councils.

The study found that most of the Commissions were very similar in terms of functions and structure which in turn makes the occurrences of abolitions very likely and further making the establishment of a Commission an unnecessary and costly exercise. The study also found that in trying to exercise their functions, the Commission made the administration of Councils quite difficult as almost each administrative step Council would have liked to take was subject to the Commission's approval. It is therefore the recommendation of this study that the Local Government Service Commission had served its purpose and should be abolished. Furthermore, it also recommends that Councils be allowed to manage their all staff matters. To make sure that Councils do not abuse their power it is hereby recommended that the government should put in place good standards which may be used to monitor Council's performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my Lord and Saviour for seeing me through this paper every step of the way. You have been my strength through it all.

I would also like to acknowledge my supervisor Mr. Sangwa for the guidance that was given during the preparation of this essay. To you, I express my profound gratitude for your patience, understanding and guidance throughout my research.

To my parents for the continuous inspiration, motivation, support and encouragement, I am greatly honoured. I would never have done it by myself. A million thanks to your my Barrack room Lawyers. You are truly remarkable.

To all my work colleagues and friends I thank you for the encouragement and for always providing a shoulder for me to lean on when things got tough.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTEXT	PAGE
PRELIMINARY PAGES	
Declaration	ii
Recommendation	iii
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
 CHAPTER 1	
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Statement of Problem.....	4
1.2 Objectives of Study.....	6
1.3 Methodology.....	7
 CHAPTER 2	
THE 1991 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE COMMISSION	
2.0 Introduction.....	8
2.1 The 1991 Commission.....	8
2.2 Functions of the 1991 commission.....	9
2.3 Impact of 1991 Commission on Local government administration.....	9
2.4 Conclusion.....	11

CHAPTER 3

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995

3.0 Introduction.....	12
3.1 Local Government Act 1995.....	12
3.2 Effect of having the power to appoint on the Administration of councils.....	13
3.3 The Effect of having the power to dismiss on the administration of councils.....	16
3.4 The Provincial Local Government Appeals Board.....	16
3.5 Conclusion.....	20

CHAPTER 4

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) ACT NO.6 OF 2010

4.0 Introduction.....	21
4.1 Functions of the LGSC.....	22
4.2 Problems the Commission had to resolve.....	22
4.3 Impact of the 2010 Commission on Local Government Administration.....	24
4.4 Conclusion.....	27

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction.....	28
5.1 Conclusion.....	28
5.2 Recommendations	31
Bibliography.....	34

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LGSC	Local Government Service Commission
LGAZ	Local Government Administration of Zambia
MMD	Movement for Multi-party Democracy
PLGAB	Provincial Local Government Appeals Board
ZULAWU	Zambia United Local Authorities Workers Union

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) was first introduced in 1964 under the Local Government (Officers) Act Chapter 477 as a part-time Commission appointed by the Minister of Local Government and Housing. Its main function was to determine salary structures, conditions of service for officers in local authorities and also to establish administrative procedures¹ between Councils. Councils however, during this period, were able to exercise their powers on the recruitment and dismissal of their staff as the Act had made provisions for them to do so. The Commission under section 17 were to act as an appellate body for officers who were aggrieved by any decision made by the Councils. The Act also gave the Commission powers to establish local Government Service Boards after consultation with the Minister². The Boards once established could perform all the functions of the Commission however their powers were limited to Township and Rural Councils as they were not authorised to exercise their powers in City and Municipal Councils as stated under section 47. The decisions of the Commission and the Boards during this time were all subject to the approval of the Minister of Local Government and Housing.

In 1974, the Local Government Service Act was enacted and this act abolished the 1964 LGSC and repealed the Local Government (Officers) Act. The Act established a full time Commission which was to be appointed by the President and unified all Local Authorities in the Country.³ The LGSC handled all employment functions in all Councils, it could appoint, dismiss, discharge and transfer officers from one Council to another.

¹ Zambia, National Assembly, *Report of the committee of Local Governance, Housing and Chief's Affairs on the Local Government (Amendment) Bill N.A.B No.14 of 2010 (23rd September 2009)*, at p, 5.

² S.47 Local Government (Officers) Act Chapter 477.

³ Zambia, National Assembly, *Report of the committee of Local Governance, Housing and Chief's Affairs on the Local Government (Amendment) Bill N.A.B No.14 of 2010 (23rd September 2009)*, at p, 5.

In 1980 the enactment of the Local Administration Act No. 15 of 1980 led to abolition of the LGSC and introduced a joint Local and Central Government Service Commission under which all officers in the local authorities except general workers were transferred to the Public Service Commission and became civil servants⁴. The responsibility of determining salary structures now came under the Central Government and was done through a Commission of Enquiry which would then make recommendations to the Minister of Local Government and Housing⁵. Councils under this Commission continued to pay salaries, recommended officers for appointments and promotions, and were also responsible for the disciplinary procedures. The final determination of these recommendations however remained with the Public Service Commission⁶.

In 1986 the Local Administration (Amendment) Act introduced a separate Local Government personnel system which empowered Councils to employ and dismiss any of their staff subject to appeal at the Provincial Local Government Appeals Board.⁷ Under Statutory Instrument No. 101 of 1987 which provided the Local Administration Service Regulations, the District Council became the appointing authority and it dealt with issues pertaining to promotion, transfer and discipline⁸. Negotiations of salary structures and conditions of services were now left to ZULAWU and LGAZ subject to the approval of the Minister.

Under Local Government Act 1991, a unified Commission was re-introduced and it resulted in Council officers reverting back from the Public Service Commission to LGSC.⁹ Councils were also

⁴ *Ibid*, p, 6.

⁵ Ministry of Local Government and Housing, *Minutes of the Ministerial Advisory Technical committee*, November 2006, Lusaka, p, 5.

⁶ Zambia, National Assembly, *Report of the committee of Local Governance, Housing and Chief's Affairs on the Local Government (Amendment) Bill N.A.B No.14 of 2010* (23rd September 2009), at p, 6.

⁷ Ministry of Local Government & Housing, *Memorandum for the committee on Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs Affairs on the establishment of the Local Government Act to establish the Local Government Service Commission*, March 2010, Lusaka, P, 6.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ Zambia, National Assembly, *Report of the committee of Local Governance, Housing and Chief's Affairs on the Local Government (Amendment) Bill N.A.B No.14 of 2010* (23rd September 2009), at p, 6.

given the responsibility of appointing and moderating the conduct of their officers subject to the approval of the Commission. Transfers of officers however could not be done without prior consultation of the Minister. The Commission was to act as an appellate body where aggrieved officers could appeal. The responsibility of revising salary structures and conditions of service also reverted back to the Commission.

In 1995 Councils were given the power to appoint, dismiss, transfer and discipline workers by virtue of section 90 of the *Local Government Act*.¹⁰ The Act abolished the LGSC and mandated Councils to train and remunerate their staff. Section 93 of the Act brought about the establishment of the Provincial Local Government Appeals Boards, which were to act as appellate body's to assist any employees who wished to appeal against a disciplinary action.¹¹ In exercising their powers, Councils were to use Statutory Instrument No.115 of 1996 which provided Councils with Regulations on administration and employment procedures among other things.¹² With this Statutory Instrument Councils were also given the power to negotiate their own salary scales and conditions of services.

In 2010 the Local Government (Amendment) Act No.6 of 2010 was enacted, this took away Council's powers to appoint and dismiss officers. The Act also abolished the PLGAB. Additionally, it also established the Local Government Service Commission where all the powers and responsibility of staff matters were vested. The LSGC were also given the responsibility of making regulations and prescribing conditions of service for all Councils.

¹⁰ Chapter 281 of the Laws of Zambia.

¹¹The Local Government (Division IV Conditions of Service) 1996, P, 28.

¹² Ministry of Local Government & Housing, *Memorandum for the committee on Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs Affairs on the establishment of the Local Government Act to establish the Local Government Service Commission*, March 2010, Lusaka. P, 8.

1.1 Statement of problem

Subsequent to the 1974 Commission it can be noted that various Commissions were introduced in an attempt to resolve the problems that resulted from the enactment of predecessor Commissions.

This can be shown as follows:

The 1964 Commission was criticised for comprising part-time Commissioners whose meetings were irregular and caused an apparent delay in their decision making, this in turn had a negative impact on the operations of Councils. In an attempt to try and understand the cause of the delay it seemed as if a full time Commission help resolve this. The 1964 Commission also had difficulties in performing its duties as every decision it made was subject to the approval of the Minister even over apparently trivial decisions. This led to further delays in the dispensation of cases and performance of the Council's functions. Following on from these criticisms, the introduction of the 1974 Commission was designed to resolve these problems. The 1974 Commission unlike the 1964 one was a full time Commission, which was appointed by the president. It not only dealt with salary structures of the local authorities but also dealt with all staff matters. Its new powers included the appointment, dismissal, discipline and transfer of local authority officers. The 1974 Commission however fell short, it was criticised for having too much power and there now developed calls to have these apparent excessive powers of the Commission reduced. The local authorities viewed the powers of the Commission as eroding their powers provided by the Local Government Act CAP 480 which gave Councils the legal capacity as local authorities to appoint, discipline and dismiss their staff. It was also noted that there was no appellate body for disciplinary cases during this period as the Commission was in charge of both appointing and disciplining staff¹³. The Commission was also to be paid by the individual Councils.

¹³*Ibid*, p 5.

The Local Administration Act No.15 of 1980 was enacted as a response to these criticisms and complaints to abolish the LGSC. The Act transferred all local authority employees to the Public Service Commission. The Central Government now determined the salary structures of Councils. During this period Councils were empowered to employ and discipline their staff, however, the discipline of staff was subject to appeal to the Provincial Local Government Appeals Board. This arrangement however, was not in line with the decentralisation policy as it was centralising the administration of local authorities.

The 1991 Commission was introduced to help make a positive move towards decentralisation and it reverted the local authorities back to the local government system by re-introducing the LGSC. The problem that arose from this arrangement was that both the Councils and the Commission were given the same powers to appoint and dismiss staff. There also appeared to be an apparent interference from the Minister, who with Councils would overlook the Commission highlighting the ambiguity of the Commission's powers. It appeared that the Commission did not hear appeal cases expediently and made staff transfers that were apparently unnecessary nor were they done with consultation of the officer, receiving and sending Councils. The Commission also prescribed conditions of service, salary structures and graded Councils without having regard to the particular Council's capacity to meet the prescribed conditions and salaries. This ambiguity and method of the Commission inevitably led to the abolition of the LGSC in 1995 under the Local Government (Amendment) Act No.30 of 1995. This Act empowered Councils to deal with all staff matters.

Having abolished the Commission through the Local Government Act of 1995 and empowering Councils to deal with staff matters, a number of problems seemed to occur. There seemed to be an apparent increase in the number of cases where the power given to Councils was abused. For

instance there were cases of Councillors suspending, dismissing or discharging employees for trivial reasons¹⁴. This in turn led to poor work relations between the Councillors and officers. Councillors would constantly attempt to abuse their roles as members of certain Council committees, by pushing for the disciplining or dismissal of officers whom they felt were not co-operating with them or who were hindering their progress in getting what they desired.

Councils were also accused of practising nepotism when it came to the recruitment of their officers. It was believed that officers were recruited not on merit, but based on the relations or whom they knew within the Councils which was contrary to the Local Government Service Regulations.

The other problem was the inability of the Provincial Local Government Appeals Board to deliberate on cases given to it expediently, which in turn resulted in the aggrieved persons being stranded whilst waiting for their cases to be heard. The Board as a result was rarely used by aggrieved officers who preferred to take their grievances to either the Industrial Relations Courts or the High Court which was costly to the affected Councils.

In attempt to solve these problems the Local Government (Amendment) Act No. 6 of 2010 was enacted. It abolished the PLGAB and took away Council's powers in relation to staff management giving this power to the re-established LGSC.

1.2 Objective of the study

Over time, legislation has been enacted in an attempt to overcome various operational problems faced by Councils as they try to become more efficient, effective and uniform. In attempting to achieve this, various powers have been transferred between Councils and Commissions of various

¹⁴ Zambia, National Assembly Debates (4th December 1974) p,280.

configurations. The purpose of this study is to understand the impact that all these legislative changes and in particular the Amendment Act of 2010 have had on the administration of Local Government.

The impact on the administration of Local Government shall particularly address:

- 1) The effect the power to appoint staff has on Local Government Administration.
- 2) The effect the power to discipline staff has on Local Government Administration.
- 3) The effect the power to transfer staff from one Council to another has on Local Government Administration.

1.3 Methodology

The method of research that shall be used in this study will mainly be a review of Parliamentary Acts, Debates and the National Assembly Committee Reports which will mostly be found at the National Assembly Library. Interviews will also be conducted with the members of the Local Government Service Commission, the Local Government Association of Zambia, Ministry of Local Government and Housing, members of Local Government Administration and with members of the Provincial Local Government Appeals Board.

Chapter 2

THE 1991 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE COMMISSION

2.0 Introduction

The last Local Government Service Commission was in 1991. This chapter will therefore focus on the legislation that introduced it and the functions it set for the Commission. It will further consider the impact of the 1991 Commission on Local Government administration.

2.1 The 1991 Commission

In 1991 a unified Local Government Service Commission was introduced under Local Government Act No. 22 of 1991 which was enacted by the newly elected MMD government¹⁵. The introduction of the Commission saw Council officers move from the Integrated Civil and Local Government Service to the Local Government Service. Councils were now given the responsibility of appointing and moderating the conduct of their officers under section 91 of the Act. The Commission was to approve the appointments of certain categories of staff¹⁶.

Statutory Instrument No. 31 of 1993 was later enacted and it provided that while the power to appoint and transfer officers was left with individual Councils, the power of appointing authority to transfer officers where the transfers would involve an increase in salary or a promotion could only be exercised with prior consultation of the Minister. The introduction of this Commission was also done in line with talks of decentralisation. Other reasons as to why the Commission was introduced would have been found in the parliamentary debates that debated the passing of the bill

¹⁵ Ministry of Local Government & Housing, *Memorandum for the committee on Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs Affairs on the establishment of the Local Government Act to establish the Local Government Service Commission*, March 2010, Lusaka. P. 7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

in 1990 or 1989, unfortunately there appears to be no parliamentary debates available for the years 1988, 1989 and 1990. Searches for these documents revealed that there was an unfortunate event which occurred at the National Assembly which resulted in the loss of the transcribed debates and at the time the loss was discovered the recording rolls had been recorded over with new debates. This vacuum leaves us ill-informed as to the real intention of parliament when they introduced the LSGC and attempts to locate any members of the 1991 Commission proved futile.

2.2 The functions of the 1991 Commission

The main functions of the Commission were set out under section 100(2) which stated that;

The Commission shall in respect of every council exercise its functions to-

- a) Confirm appointments and promotions of such categories of officers as may be specified in the regulations;
- b) Review disciplinary cases from councils relating to officers and employee of such councils; and
- c) Hear appeals on disciplinary matters from officers and employee of such councils.

They were to deal with the transfer of officers from one Council to another. The Commission was also in charge of prescribing conditions of service, salary structures and the grading of Councils.¹⁷

2.3 The Impact of the 1991 Commission on local Government Administration

Though the Commission had the power to confirm the appointments and transfers of officers it became apparent that there were special circumstances where the Minister would direct the transfer of an officer overlooking the power of the Commission to do so and also other situations where the Councils themselves and the Minister would decide on an action to be taken.¹⁸ This in turn made it

¹⁷ Ministry of Local Government and Housing, *Minutes of the Ministerial Advisory Technical committee*, November 2006, Lusaka, p, 5.

¹⁸ Ministry of Local Government & Housing, *Memorandum for the committee on Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs Affairs on the establishment of the Local Government Act to establish the Local Government Service*

ambiguous as to what powers the Commission possessed besides those of confirming and attending to appeals cases which were given under section 100(2) of the Act. It was also discovered that the Commission did not have regulations authorising and stating clearly what their functions were to be, this inevitably led to the assumption that the Commission was not effective. There was also the argument that the Commission was too expensive, superfluous, a contradiction to the policy of decentralisation and that it delayed in the dispensation of appeals cases.¹⁹ The 1991 Commission were also accused of making transfers without consulting the officer and both sending and receiving Councils.

It also noted that they made prescribed conditions of service, salary structures and grading of Councils without regarding the capacity of the affected Councils to meet those prescribed conditions²⁰.

The above reasons inevitably led to the abolition of the Commission. The then Minister of Local Government and Housing in response to the abolition stated that the LGSC was not necessary for the environment and that the appointing, promoting and any other staff related matters should be the responsibility of the individual Councils and not the Commission.²¹

The above reasons led to the enactment of Act No.30 of the 1995 which abolished the 1991 Unified Local Government Service along with the Commission and established a Provincial Local Government Appeals Board under section 93. Section 90 of the same Act vested Councils with the powers to appoint officers, discipline them and negotiate their own salaries and also made officers of a Council non-transferable.

Commission, March 2010, Lusaka, p, 7.

¹⁹ Hon. Ben Mwiinga, Zambia, National Assembly Debates(11^h August 1995), p, 426

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ *Ibid*, p, 425.

2.4 Conclusion

It is unfortunate that there are no records revealing or explaining the reason behind Parliament's decision to establish the 1991 Commission and attempts to obtain such information have proved futile. However, from the little information gathered it appears that the 1991 Commission in terms of its functions was no different from its predecessor Commissions. The structure of the Commission also appears to have remained the same and it is perhaps for these reasons that the 1991 Commission failed. As was stated by the Late Hon. Ben Mwiinga it was not the right machinery for the state of affairs that were being faced at the time and hence its abolition.

Chapter 3

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1995

3.0 Introduction

In 1995 the Local government Act abolished the Local Government Service Commission and vested all responsibility to deal with staff matters to the Councils. This chapter endeavours to look at the period when there was no Local Government Service Commission. It will also address the impact that Council's new powers had over its administration.

3.1 The Local Government Act 1995

In 1995 the Local Government Act Cap 281 was enacted, it abolished the LGSC and established the Provincial Local Government Appeals Board (PLGAB). Section 90 of the Act empowered Councils to make decisions over the employment of their staff.²² It stated that a Council shall have power to-

- (a) Appoint officers and other employees for the purpose of assisting the Council in carrying out its functions;
- (b) Discipline any officer or employee.

Councils under the Act were also allowed to second officers from one Council to another, upon request and on terms agreed upon by the two Councils.²³ Section 92 of the Act gave the Minister of Local Government the power to make Regulations that would govern employment service with the Council. It also provided regulations that would govern the powers and functions of Councils. In exercise of this power, we see the enactment of the Local Government Service Regulations under Statutory Instrument No.115 of 1996. The statutory Instrument provided Councils with Regulations which they were to use in the exercise of their newly found powers and functions. It also listed procedures to be followed when disciplining, appointing, training and seconding employees. The

²² Zambia, National Assembly Debates (11th August 1995) p, 425.

²³ Section 91 Local Government Act, Chapter 281.

Regulations also stated the procedure to be followed if one wished to appeal against a decision made by Council. The Regulations however, did not allow for the transfer of officers between Councils, employees who wished to work for another Council had to resign from their respective Councils before they could work in the other Council.²⁴ The regulations also gave Councils the power to negotiate salaries and conditions of service with the Zambia United Local Authorities Workers Union (ZULAWU) and the Local Government Association of Zambia (LGAZ).

However, it had been observed by the Ministry of Local Government and ZULAWU that despite the enactment of the Local Government Act and Statutory Instrument No. 115 of 1996, being done in good faith the two fell short in practice, as they were not accompanied by capacity building programmes to train or prepare Councils for the important task that was to be assigned upon them so as to enable them deal with human resource matters competently.²⁵ These programmes would have greatly benefited Councils who were going to be confronting this task for the first time.

3.2 Effect of having the power to appoint on the Administration of Councils

The power given to Councils by the Act to appoint their own staff was welcomed as it gave Councils the chance to recruit staff they needed without having to make a request to the Commission. It also gave Councils the chance to employ persons whom they saw fit for the job as opposed to having persons who the Commission thought was fit for the Council. The power to appoint staff also gave Councils a chance to actually run their own affairs and it was a step towards the much talked about decentralisation policy.

²⁴ Section 7 Local Government Service Regulations S.I. 115 of 1996.

²⁵ Ministry of Local Government & Housing, *Memorandum for the committee on Local Governance, Housing and Chiefs Affairs on the establishment of the Local Government Act to establish the Local Government Service Commission*, March 2010, Lusaka.

However, despite the good intentions behind the Act, this newly found power affected the administration of Council. It was observed that since their newly found powers the relationship between Councillors and officers within Councils became strained. This was as a result of failure by the two to work effectively with each other. Councillors' main functions are to make policies, represent the electorate, provide leadership, monitor and control the management of Council. Whilst an officer's main functions are to give advice on the implementation of the policies, provide technical information and day to day management of the operations of Council.²⁶ Many arguments that have been put forward as to why there was conflict between the two and these arguments include the following;

- 1) **Lack of separation of powers-** As shown above, Councillors and officers have different roles however, these roles were designed to be complimentary. It has been argued by LGAZ in their *Councillor's Orientation Manual* that the conflict between Councillors and officers mainly arises by the two's inability to separate their powers.²⁷ Councillors are representatives of the people and it is their duty to represent and serve their wards in the best possible way. They therefore try and make policies which they believe will benefit their wards. Officers on the other hand, have the task of advising Councillors on what they think is the best way to implement these policies and also to make sure that the implementation of these policies does not work to the detriment of Council. It is in attempt to balance these roles that the conflict arises. For instance there would be some form of procedure which one is required to follow if they are to implement the policy, which would be lengthy and time consuming. It is during this lengthy procedure that a Councillor would get frustrated and assume the officer is not doing his/her job or that they are not co-operating with the Councillor which would in turn lead to interference on the part of the Councillor in attempt and expedite the process.

²⁶ Local Government Association of Zambia, *Councillors' Orientation, Reference Manual* (2006), p, 48.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

- 2) **Humble Education Background** - Under section 16 of the Local Government Elections Act CAP 282, one can be elected Councillor if they are a Zambian citizen, over 21 years of age and are ordinarily resident in the area of that Council. There are no educational qualifications required to become a Councillor and this was deliberately done by government to give chance to those with little qualifications to stand as Councillors.²⁸ However, it has been argued and criticised that despite knowing that most Councillors have humble education backgrounds, how then can they be assigned with the task determining the employment of Council staff especially chief officers? It has also been argued that it is because of this humble education that there has been different interpretations and disregard to the local Government Service Regulations. It has also been noticed that there is a tendency by Councillors, who are the main appointing body, to employ staff based nepotism and favouritism towards people with equally humble backgrounds and not according to the Regulations or on merit.²⁹
- 3) **Personality Clashes**- The perceived lack of higher education of Councillors' has also led to their being personality clashes between Councillors and the officers. This was in that officers tended to have adopted the widespread stereotype that most Councillors were illiterate and therefore could not give sufficient advice or instructions to officers on the way the Council should be managed or run. Councillors were also inclined to the view that officers were arrogant merely because they were more educated, which in turn led to Councillors wanting to show the officers that they too had powers to hire and fire despite their lack of education. It is through this stereotyped view that there was little co-operation between the Councillors and the officers as the officers seemed to have believed that

²⁸ ZULAWU, 'Submissions on the Local Government Service Commission and Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2010', 3rd March 2010, Lusaka

²⁹ *Ibid*

Councillors were not able to critically analyse a situation before a decision is made.

Therefore it can be seen from the above that the power to appoint staff had a negative impact of the relationship between the officers and the Councillors. It also brought about accusations of their being abuse of power in that the Council was employing people based on nepotism and tribalism rather than on merits.

3.3 The Effect of having the power to dismiss on the administration of Councils

Councils under the section 90 (b) Act were responsible for the dismissal of their staff. This power was granted to Councils with good intention as it was to enable Councils initiate and carry out all the disciplinary procedures without waiting for the Commission to confirm an officer's dismissal which took too long and cost Councils a lot of money which was spent paying officers who were not working their salaries pending the decision of the Commission. Having the power to dismiss allowed Councils to quickly dispense matters.

However this power like most powers affected the administration of Council in that Councils abused the power to dismiss and used it as weapon to intimidate officers who were not doing what they wanted. Sometimes officers were dismissed over trivial reasons merely because Council had the power to do so. This further resulted in the officers not performing or carrying out their duties diligently for fear that some of the decisions they make would not please the Councillors and they would lose their jobs.

3.4 The Provincial Local Government Appeals Board

However, the power to dismiss by Council was subject to appeal to the Provincial Local Government Appeals Board. The Act under section 93(1) stated that

The Minister may, by statutory order, establish a provincial local government appeals Board in each Province which shall consist of a Chairman and not less than three or more than seven other members.

The main functions of the Board were;

- 1) To hear the grievances for the officers relating to promotions or demotions.
- 2) To review the disciplinary cases from the Council and employees of that Councillor
- 3) To hear appeals on disciplinary matters from officers and employees of the Council.

However, it is important to note that when the Board was established it was on a part-time basis this was clearly stated under section 93(2) of the Local Government Act. The Board was also established to make sure that there was speedy dispensation of justice and a cheaper means of resolving employment issues between aggrieved officers and the Councils involved. The establishment of the Board was perceived to be a good idea as there was a Board in each province handling the disputes of the Councils in those provinces unlike the previous Commission which was situated in Lusaka but had to address grievances of all Councils in the country which in due course turned out to be quite a costly and time consuming operation as the Commission had to travel to the affected Provinces.

The Board was also made a part-time Board to address the problem of having full time Board members who would have required salaries whereas the part-time Commission proved less costly as the Board members would only be given allowances for the times they were sitting.

As the Board was meant to be a better alternative to the Commission, restrictions as to who could be a Board member were also imposed and such restrictions were set out under section 93 (3) of the Local Government Act which stated that;

- A person shall not be qualified for appointment as a member of a Board if-
- (a) He holds the office of President of the Republic;
 - (b) He is a member of the National Assembly;
 - (c) He is a Councillor;

- (d) He is employed in any Council;
- (e) He is a member of any staff association of a Council, a trade union or any other similar organisation.....

The idea behind the restrictions was so that the Board could be an impartial Board, one that would not have conflicts of interests. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the Board was unbiased and independent, section 104 of the same Act made it an offence to influence the Board in anyway it stated that;

A person who otherwise than in the course of this duties directly or indirectly by himself or by any other person in any manner whatsoever influences or attempt any decision of a Board shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable upon conviction to a fine.....

The Board were also provided immunity from court proceedings or suits that would arise against them whilst conducting their duties. This was done under Section 97 and it can be argued that this provision was granted to enable the Board to operate without any intimidation from anyone.

However, 15 years after the establishment of the Board it can be noted that the very ideas that established the Board, are the very things that led to its abolishment and further the re-introduction of the service Commission. The Board can be described as having fallen short of its glory and this was due to the following reasons;

a) Part-time Board - it can be argued that being a part-time Board greatly contributed to the lack of efficiency in the Board's performance as the members would only meet occasionally to sort out the grievances presented to them. It can also be argued that though the Ministry of Local Government did notice that meetings were occasional, there is a possibility that it was over looked and seen as a means of cost saving on their part as they would have little allowances to pay if the meetings were occasional. The fact the Board was part-time was thought to be cost saving but it turned to be detrimental and unjust to many officers and Councils

b) The Independent Board - the fact the none of the members of the Board worked for Council or was Councillor or a member of a trade union, can also be argued to have contributed to the failure of the Board. This is in that, the Board being so independent did not get the insight that they needed to address the grievances expediently and efficiently, as they would have had to spend some time consulting and familiarising themselves with the procedures and regulations in the local authorities to help them make the right decisions, which was good and thorough on their part but time consuming.

c) Another argument that was put across was the fact that the Minister appointed the Boards which meant he apparently had some form of influence over them despite the fact that the Act tried to protect the Board by giving it immunity and making it an offence for the Board to be influenced. Reverend Zulu in a debate in the national Assembly over the establishment of the Board, suggested that the Minister would have some form of upper hand and could have been able to intimidate the Board in the appointment and dispensation of their duties.³⁰

It is for the reasons above that the PLGAB failed in its operations which in turn led to its abolition. It is unfortunate however that despite many efforts I was unable to locate any former members of the Board so as to get their views or thoughts on how they thought they carried out their operations.

An aggrieved officer's ability to go to the Board had what could be argued as a good effect on local government administration, this is because it ensured that Councils would not dismiss staff over trivial matters. The Board acted as monitor to Council's decisions over dismissals and where a person was wrongfully dismissed they could be re-instated. However the only drawback to this was that the Board was part-time and it would take long deliberating on a matter.

³⁰ Zambia, National Assembly Debates (11^h August 1995), p, 427.

3.5 **Conclusion**

The period between 1996 – 2010 can be described as a challenging time for Councils and also served as a eye opener or an experiment to find out if Councils could operate without a Commission *which had always existed since Zambia gained independence.* However, having looked at this period the very events that led to abolishment of the Commission seem to have led to the abolishment of the PLGAB and it also suggests that Councils were not ready for the powers handed down to it nor where the ready for the much talked about and suggested decentralisation policy.

CHAPTER 4

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) ACT NO.6 OF 2010

4.0 Introduction

The Local Government (Amendment) Act No.6 of 2010 was enacted so that it would help Councils resolve their employment problems regarding the recruitment, dismissal and discipline of employees. It did this by taking away powers given to the Councils under section 90 Local Government Act and establishing the Local Government Service Commission. The main function of the Commission is to provide the right human resource for all local authorities so as to enable them provide good service delivery to their respective communities. In order for local authorities to provide good service delivery it was important for them to have the right people in the right offices who would ensure that services to the public were delivered effectively, which could not be done if the people meant to be ensuring effective service delivery were not qualified for the job. The Commission therefore has to make sure that all Councils have qualified and skilled staff to manage the Council administration and to ensure effective service delivery to the public. Section 105 (2)(e) of the Act empowers the Commission to train officers and provide the standards for the promotion of officers within Councils making sure officers in the Councils were qualified and skilled. This is a new power on the part of the Commission as previously all training of staff was normally done by Council and not the Commission.

The Commission was also created as a means for government to cure the alleged abuse of powers in Councils by Councillors and Chief Officers, on the dismissal of employees. This is in that Councils were accused of dismissing staff over trivial issues and the introduction of the Commission was meant to put a stop to this abuse. They were also meant to reduce the number of professional staff running away from rural areas and make sure they were retained by payment remuneration and provision of more facilities to be used at the employee's disposal.

4.1 Functions of the LGSC

The Local Government (Amendment) Act under section 91 sets out what the Commission's main functions were and these included:

- a) To exercise responsibility in respect of all matters relating to principal officers and officers in the Councils.
- b) To do all such things as are necessary or incidental to the regulations of service with Councils
- c) The other function of the Commission is to harmonise the salaries in all local authorities and make them uniformed so that the transfer and the secondment of officers from one Council to the other is made easy and would not be detrimental to any Council. Currently the salary structures and conditions of service differ between Councils which makes the transfer of officers between Councils difficult as some officers are better paid in their Council as compared to the other Council they are going to, and in order to rectify, the Council where he is transferred would have to give the officer the same benefits and salary he was receiving which could be inconveniencing and costly to the Council which did not request for the officers.

4.2 Problems the Commission had to resolve

The main problems faced by before the introduction of the Commission included their lack of qualified and skilled chief officers, failure by some Councils to pay their staff adequately and finally the disregard and abuse of power by some Councillors and chief officers in exercising their power. The Commission attempted to resolve the above problems as follows;

- 1) By making sure that the Councils had sufficient qualified staff especially chief officers or at least an equal number of chief officers in each Council. This had to be done in order to resolve the problem of having too many unqualified staff within the Councils. This resolution would enable the Commission recruit the necessary staff needed in the Councils with the guidance and recommendations of qualified the chief officers. The qualified and

skilled chief officers would also tend to serve as the Commission's ears and eyes within the Councils as the Commission is not always available to monitor the behaviour or action of the officers. The Commission however, found resolving this problem challenging as they discovered that in some Council there were practically no chief officers and if there were any, that officer was not qualified or skilled enough for the position they were holding. To overcome this hurdle they attempted to transfer officers they believed had the potential of being chief officers into these in-equipped Councils from other Councils.

- 2) They attempted to resolve the failure by Councils to pay their staff adequately by trying to harmonise salary structures in all Councils. The Commission found that some Council were having difficulties paying their staff due to the fact the Councils themselves had either set their salary structures too high that as result they could not afford to maintain it. The problem also became more apparent where the Commission transferred officers from a Council that paid its officers a lot more than the Council that the officer had been transferred to. This lack of uniformity in salary scales made the process of transferring officers difficult as the receiving Council had to rectify this problem would be by paying the officer the same amount of money and giving him the same conditions and benefits he was entitled to at the Council he came from. This However, proved quite costly especially to the smaller Councils who in most cases would not afford to pay their staff such huge sums of money but had no choice as the decision came from the Commission and because they needed that officer's expertise. The Commission therefore tried to harmonise the salary scales so as to avoid these problems making the transfer of officers much easier.
- 3) The final problem the Commission tried to resolve was abuse of power and disregard to the service regulations by Council. The local Government (Amendment) Act when enacted attempted resolve this by taking away the Council's power to appoint, dismiss and discipline officer and instead gave this power to LGSC. The Commission where now to appoint,

dismiss and transfer officers. However they were to dismiss and appoint upon the recommendation of Council which they could either accept or reject. This approach worked in that if Councils wished to dismiss any officer they had to make sure it their reasons for dismissal where legitimate and valid enough to be recommended to the Commission. However, the Act abolished the Service Regulations and empowered the Commission to make regulations for Councils regarding their power and duties. This power was given under section 105 of the Act which states that - The Commission may, with the approval of the President, make regulations governing service with a Council and the powers and duties of Councils with regard to their principle officers and officers.

4.3 Impact of the 2010 Commission on Local Government Administration

The 2011 Commission, since its appointment was active for 10 months before it was dissolved by the President in February 2012. It has made a lot of transfers within the Councils in attempt to resolve and balance the number of qualified officers. The Commission has also been able to confirm the employment of at least 200 staff within the Lusaka City Council alone and is now in the process of recruiting more officers. The advertisement for the recruitment was seen in the Zambia Daily Mail of 20th February 2012.

In an interview with the former Secretary of the Commission Mrs M. Kapanda, she was able to disclose that, the Commission had submitted their draft of Service Regulations to the President for his approval so there can be some prescribed regulations and procedures which can be used to govern the welfare of staff.

Acknowledging that there are positive steps that have been made by the Commission during the short period of time it is important to look at the impact of its introduction and functions of

Councils. We shall assess the impact of the Commission's power to appoint, transfer, dismiss, make prescribed conditions of service and harmonise salary scales.

The Commission's power to recruit staff for Councils was given as an attempt to resolve the issue of Council officers and Councillors merely recruiting people on grounds of nepotism and tribalism rather than on merit. It is a positive and reasonable move however; it has left Councils in a difficult position. This is in that where there are vacancies that need to be filled urgently; Councils will not be able to do so and will need to wait until they make a recommendation to the Commission to recruit someone for that particular post. The process of recommendation will most likely take long and that particular Council's need will not be taken care of urgently which in turn led to Council having someone inexperienced or unqualified to fill in the vacuum whilst waiting for the Commission to respond. Whereas if the Councils had the power to appoint, there would be a higher chance of them finding someone who is qualified and able to do the job well in the quickest time, despite that person being a relative of someone. The other thing that seems to be popular in terms of the administration of Councils as a result of these unfilled vacancies is that they have led to a number of unnecessary reshuffles within the Council with some officers being forced to perform duties which they cannot manage or which they are not qualified for. The fact that the Commission is the appointing authority has also been criticised for also diverting the officer's allegiance from Council to the appointing authority.

Secondly, the power of the Commission to transfer officers of one Council to other Councils was seen a welcoming idea and it helped Councils benefit from other Councils' qualified and skilled officers who may help other Councils be as successful as the others. However, the transfer of officers has been criticised as the transfers are normally done without consultation of the affected Councils and the officer themselves. The effect of the transfer as well tends to be overlooked by the

Commission in that; at times a Council may have trained that particular officer and probably hoped to benefit from the training, only for the officer to get transferred. Other officers tend to be so valuable to be particular Council and are responsible for a number of programs within that Council, to transfer them to another Council will therefore put that particular Council to a disadvantage as it may take some time for the Council to find an efficient replacement of that officer. The other issue tends to arise from the transfer of officers is that of the cost in terms of paying of salary of the transferred officer by the receiving Council. The Commission tend not to consider the cost of the transfer on a particular Council making the administration of that particular Council difficult as they are not able to make consistent budget for instance in terms of their salaries.

Lastly the Commission's power to discipline staff was given in good faith to avoid there being dismissals of staff over trivial things. It was done as protective mechanism for staff to enable them carry out their duties without being intimidated by Councillors and chief officers, who were then in charge of discipline. Nonetheless the impact on the administration of Councils because of this has been negative. This is in that, with the Commission disciplining the officers it makes it difficult for Councils discipline staff who are not performing the duties diligently as they have to wait for the Commission. It also affects the Councils because the chief officers of the Councils are the ones who can monitor the actions of officers unlike the Commission who do not operate from Council premises and are never in the town long enough to monitor the performance of the staff.

Where Councils have suspended staff pending the decision of the Commission it has turned out to be a costly exercise as the Councils would have to continue paying the officer his salary until the Commission makes their decision which could take long. For instance with if the Commission had suspended an officer pending its decision and like the current state, the Commission is dissolved, the Council shall continue to pay that officer until the decision by the new Commission is made

which is very costly on the Council affected. Whereas if the Council itself were handling the disciplinary process they would try and resolve the matter in the quickest time possible to avoid paying out money for services which aren't being rendered.

4.4 Conclusion

The introduction of the Commission was very encouraging as it brought with it the view that staff would begin to work more professionally, that it would stop the purported abuse of power by Councillors and officers. However, it appears that this Commission despite the good intentions that established does not guarantee the fact there will be no more abuse of power in the way Councils are run. It has good intentions behind its establishment but the question however remains whether the impact it is has on Councils' will benefit the Councils or simply put them in predicament worse than they were before the Commission.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will make conclusions on the study and thereafter shall go on to make recommendations. The basis of the conclusions shall be upon the above four chapters. This chapter shall provide a conclusion on the Local Government (Amendment) Act No.6 of 2010 and the re-introduction of the Local Government Service Commission and its impact on Local Government Administration. Recommendations shall follow thereafter, the aim being to find a lasting solution to the concept behind the Local Government Service Commission and also the future of Local Government Administration.

5.1 Conclusions

In 1964 the very first Local Government Service Commission was set up in Zambia, it is vital to look at the background to the setup of this Commission. Research has revealed that the state of affairs in 1964 were such that a Local Government Commission was required as there was going to be a major change in Government as Northern Rhodesia was in the process gaining its independence. During this transition, there was a wide spread idea of localisation. Mr Nkumbala in one of the debates defined localisation as a situation where priority is given first to the people of the country before people from outside are considered.³¹ Hence it can be concluded from that state of affairs which saw about 3000 European employees at risk of losing their jobs in the civil service it was necessary that Commission be put in place in order to help the 3000 employees maintain their jobs. The Commission was also meant ensure that the recruitment of employees was based on merit.

Hon. Burney at one point stated that;

..The policy of this government has been to fill in posts in the civil service on the basis of merit and not to have a Commission to ensure this would be to merely Africanise the system

³¹ Northern Rhodesia, Parliamentary Hansard Debates(31st January 1963).

and disregard merits.³²

Therefore looking Mr Burney's speech it is clear that the Commission's intention were to make sure people were employed on merits and not simply on the basis that they were Africans and this also served the intention the Government of the day had to try and secure the jobs of the Europeans as the majority of Local People at the time were not educated let alone qualified. It was also stated by one MP that the intention of the Commission will be to assist Local Authorities to find the right staff, the correct qualified staff as more qualified staff were required. He further stated that the Commission would be acting in the lines of a recruiting agent for the local authorities.

Therefore having looked at the debates it can be concluded that the Commission was introduced mainly to ensure the new government would recruit staff on merits and not merely on the basis that they were Africans so as to avoid the system being full with unqualified people which the majority of people were at the time. Thus it can be seen that since the introduction of the Commission in 1964 its functions have been kept the same to ensure that they deal with all staff matters in Councils with some minor changes in terms of structure and powers. As a result of this, the question that tends to follow is whether the Commission has served its purpose or not and whether looking at the current state of affairs the Commission is needed.

It can be argued that the Commission since its introduction especially looking at its intention has served its purpose in that it has made sure that Councils have employed staff who are qualified and as there is more qualified people in the country as compared to the number of qualified people in 1963. There is therefore no need to a Commission to ensure employment is on merit as the Councils themselves have qualified staff and can recruit qualified staff from the vast number of educated people in all fields searching for jobs.

³² Northern Rhodesia, Parliamentary Hansard Debates (23rd January 1963).

This then brings to us look in more detail at the functions of the Commission since 1964. In 1964 the functions of the Commission was to establish salary scales, conditions of service, prescribe qualifications and regulate the procedure which was to be followed in the hearing of disputes and appeals to the Commission. The 1974 Commission was responsible for all local authority personnel, it had the power to appoint, exercise disciplinary control, dismiss and transfer employees of all Councils. The 1980 Commission shall however not be included in this comparison as it was joint Civil Service and Local Government Commission. The 1991 Commission had the power to appoint, dismiss, and prescribe conditions of service and salary structures and also to hear disputes and appeals to the Commission. The 2010 Commission's functions are to appoint, dismiss, transfer, and prescribe conditions of service, regulation and salary structures.

Looking at these functions of the various Commissions it is clear that all the Commissions, with the exception of the 1974 Commission, have the similar if not the same functions. Which brings us to the conclusion that the Commission has not necessarily achieved anything neither is it bringing in new ideas as it merely circle of abolitions which in turn led to the re-introduction of the same Commission that was abolished. The trend in Commission also suggests that main problems with Local Government administration are the appointment, dismissal, prescribed conditions and salaries which are quietly clearly not being solved by the introduction of the LSGC.

The reasons for the abolishment of the Commission also appears to reoccurring in that the Commission are abolished for reasons such as being too expensive, delay in the dispensation of cases brought before it, transferring officers without prior consultation of the officer and affected Councils and prescribing conditions of service without regard to the capacity of Councils to meet the conditions. Despite the reasons as to the abolishment of predecessor Commissions being available it appears there isn't a Commission that has attempted to address the problems that lead to

the abolition instead it appears to be merely a vicious circle of abolitions and re-introduction, that is in effect preventing the development of the Local government administration. The legislation therefore can be criticised as not doing enough to affect local Government administration in a positive way.

Assessing the Local Government (Amendment) Act No.6 of 2010 in more detail it is evident that it too has not been enacted differently from the previous. If anything it appears to be poorly drafted and the fact that it did not make regulations to be followed by Council before the Commission was appointed roughly a year after it was enacted proves this. Interviews carried out at the Commission itself also revealed that Commission had simply overlooked the issues that led the abolition of the 1991 Commission which should not be the case. The Commission should have inquired or better consulted with members of the previous Commission to try and find ways in which to improve their service. However, there appears to be one major change within the Act that may assist Councils in their administration. Section 5 (b) of the Amendment Act provides that;

The Government shall make specific grants to the Council concerned for the salaries of principal officers and officers of a Council

This provision though it has not practically effected on shall address the problem Councils not being to have the capacity to pay salaries according to the prescribed conditions and salary scales, provided it is implemented.

5.2 Recommendations

In light of the above findings it can be seen that the Local Government Service Commission currently is not serving its functions and is probably not the best way forward towards the development and improvement of the Local Government Administration. It is hereby recommended that the Local government Service Commission be abolished as it is in contravention with the idea decentralisation which involves the transfer of responsibilities, authority, functions and power to

provincial, district and sub-district levels³³. The Commission does not allow for there to be transfer of such power and responsibility at local level as it operates on a national and central level. The idea behind Local Government is so that it can empower the local authorities in case to make decision and they cannot do this with the existence of the Commission. It is inevitable that once given these powers there will be will problems incurred and a possibility of there being abuse of the power given, however this can be overcome and resolved by Government putting in good monitoring standards to ensure that the power is not abused.

If the existence of a LGSC is to be insisted upon then it recommended that the Commission make the following changes;

- 1) That becomes a part-time Commission run by professionals who have extensive knowledge and experience in Local Government Administration. This will solve the problem of having a costly full-time Commission
- 2) That there be established Provincial Part-time Commissions in each province who in turn report to a National Commission. This will address the issue of the Commission taking too long to deliberate on matters brought before them as they too busy handling matters elsewhere, if we have a provincial Commission it would ensure that matters are handled expediently. It would also give aggrieved officers the chance to appeal to decisions made two levels the provincial and if not satisfied by the decision of the provincial Commission appeal to the National Commission. The problem of cost of the Commission will also be addressed as they are part-time Commissions at a provincial level and will not sit every often as the their case load will reduced, unlike a full-time Commission operating at national level and who have to sit often because of their work load.
- 3) The other recommendation is for the power to appoint and discipline officers to revert back

³³ Republic of Zambia, *The National Decentralisation Policy*, November 2002

to the Council with the Commission acting as an overseer to actions of the Councils. This will work as follows, the Councils would have power to appoint their own employees with authorisation of the Provincial Commissions and once they have appointed the staff the Provincial Commission would confirm the employment of the staff so as to ensure the staff was genuinely employed on merit as opposed to nepotism or tribalism. The same would apply in terms of discipline of officers, Councils would be able to discipline and the Provincial Commission would be used as an appellate body with further appeal to the National Commission.

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