

Effect of Devolved Funds on Service Delivery to West Pokot County in Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of devolved funds on service delivery to West Pokot County in Kenya. The specific objectives of the study was to; assess implementation of the projects funded through devolved funds to County of West Pokot, examine effect of equitable sharing of resources at county level, assess effect of public participation on decision making process of devolving funds to counties and to evaluate the effects of devolved funding on the service delivery of the people of West Pokot County. In this study a case study was adapted. The target population of this study included the management and staff working at West Pokot County government and members of the public who are the beneficiaries of the services devolved. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 80 respondents. This study made use of Questionnaires and document analysis as the main data collection instruments. Data was analyzed using descriptive (mean and standard deviation) with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Most respondents agreed that equitable sharing of resources through devolved funds increases infrastructure development, has increased living standards, has improved decision making on public funds, and through devolved funds increased economic growth at the County has been realized. Public participation process of devolved funds has improves infrastructure development. Public Participation process of devolved funds improves living standard in the County. Also, public participation improves decision making on public funds and finally, public participation improve economic growth at the County.

Keywords: Devolved funds, Service delivery, Decision making, Implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Citizen participation in government processes and decision-making was regarded as one of the cornerstone of a democratic dispensation. This is particularly important at the local level of government, because it is in local government where meaningful participation by citizens can have a direct impact on the quality of governance and service delivery, (Michael S. De Vries, P.S. Reddy, M. Shamsul (Editors), 2008). According to, Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into the 'Fiscal Devolution to Cities and City Regions', "The UK has a highly centralized system of taxation and expenditure, in an international context. The United Kingdom accorded the great reform Act of 1832 as the most radical constitutional change the country has ever experienced (Bogdanor, 1999). The parliament had been making decisions for most domestic affairs in the whole country and the people wanted self-government authority that shall strike a balance between the sovereignty and the supremacy of parliament. The centralized power was only vested under one supreme and Omni competent parliament.

Nigeria is the most decentralized country in the world (Rodden 2003) yet the rural sector where nearly 70% Nigerians live is plagued by vicious circle of poverty (Oyinlola 1999). This development is traceable to several factors including poor fiscal relations between the 3tiers of government and over-centralization of the control of the resources at the centre, inefficient management and inconsistent government policies due to frequent change of government especially during military regimes etcSaibu M.O PhD &Adedokun S.A d (1980–2004), Fiscal Federalism and the Growth of Nigerian Economy. According to, Victor Ayeni (2001) on public sector reform experience in developing countries it was established that most of the Cameroonians citizens felt that they were too far from the decisions making process and that

local realities are not usually considered (the centres where services are provided are usually located in the capital or provincial headquarters, far away from the majority of the people). The Public sector reforms in Ghana are designed to transfer political and administrative authority to District Assemblies which are the political authority at the level of the local government system. It was anticipated that empowering the people at the grassroots will enable them to improve delivery of services and living conditions at the local level. The programme is managed by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Uganda nationals were concern with decentralizing structures and systems in order to move decision making closer to regions and communities served, so as to increase managerial flexibility, Victor Ayeni (2001).

Therefore devolution describes a decentralization process, even in a constitutionally unitary state, giving a greater degree of self-rule to counties or self-identified communities, often ethnically based. Devolution involves the transfer of powers from a superior to an inferior political authority. More precisely, devolution may be defined as consisting of three elements: the transfer to a subordinate elected body, on a geographical basis, of functions at present exercised by ministers and parliament (Bogdanor, 1999). Administrative decentralization and widespread public participation on decision making were basic principles in the socialist's philosophy of leaders who staged the 1969 May resolution in the republic of Sudan. The coup was justified by the military as the only means of changing the old political order, in which "the people were denied their basic and legitimate rights as makers of political life of the country" (G.ShabbirCheema& Dennis A. Rondinelli, 1983).

The local authority transfer fund was established in 1999 through the LATF Act No. 8 of 1998. LATF at the local level is managed by the local authorities (County Council, Municipal Council, Town Councils). The Local Authorities Transfer Fund (LATF) Act of 1998 was enacted to enable the Central Government to set aside annually monies calculated at 5% of national annual income tax to supplement efforts by local authorities to provide services as required by the Local Government Act. The specific objectives of LATF were to: improve service delivery by local authorities to the public; enhance financial management by local authorities; and eliminate outstanding debts of local authorities (Republic of Kenya (RoK), 1998).

The Kenya Vision 2030, from the ministry of environment, water and sanitation sectoral plan (2013-2014), the role of government is to ensure sustainable exploitation, utilization, management, and conservation of environment and natural resources, and ensuring that accrued benefits are shared equitably, right to clean water in adequate quantities and increasing tree cover to 10% of land area as enshrined in the new constitution of Kenya. All these provisions require enormous resources beyond the ceilings required to attain them, similarly, the devolution process as enshrined in the constitution is and will continue to be a major challenge not only to the Ministry responsible for matters and institutions created under EMCA (1999) but also to other natural resources based institutions and respective legislations and regulatory framework. For the county government to meet efficiency and effectiveness of financial management it must integrate the elements of financial management by engaging professionalism in diverse fields and levels of management i.e. provision of proper accounting services, strong internal control systems, effective internal auditing, effective budgets, automated revenue collection systems, willingness and cooperation from top administrators to spend public funds prudently.

In Kenya devolution of funds entails equitable share of revenues collected nationally between the national government and 47 counties and decision making is at the county administration to decide on how the funds have to be utilized. The main objective of financial devolution is to foster the equitable distribution of public services and goods to every part of the country (Lamont J (2007) "Distributive Justice," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Policy making in the decentralized governance is an incremental process in which the weight of the existing commitments limits the scope for innovation. Each of the component territories in the United Kingdom has its own adapted structures for policy making and delivering of services. This factor makes administrative devolution successful and spending money for public services easier (Adams, 2002). Similarly, the Kenyan constitution grants counties to involve the publics in the formulation of customized policies for better service delivery.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objective:

The study aimed at analyzing the effect of devolved funds on service delivery to West Pokot County in Kenya.

Specific Objective:

The specific objectives of this study were:

- a) To assess effect of the projects funded through devolved funds on service delivery to County of West Pokot
- b) To examine effect of equitable sharing of resources on service delivery to West Pokot county
- c) To assess effect of public participation on decision making on service delivery to West Pokot county
- d) To evaluate the effects of devolved funding on the service delivery to West Pokot county

Research questions:

This research was guided by the following questions:-

- a) To what effect was implementation of development projects funded through devolved funds increase quality of life and service delivery to West Pokot County?
- b) What is the effect of equitable sharing of resources on service delivery to county residents of West Pokot?
- c) To what extent does public participation contribute to decision making and service delivery in the county of West Pokot?
- d) What is the effect of devolved funds through County government of West Pokot on the service delivery of the people?

3. JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

This study tried to define Kenya's current devolution challenges, opportunities and derive lessons learnt in the past two years of devolution in Kenya. The findings of this study may be helpful to both the National Government and Counties to enhance confidence in allocation of more equitable resources to enhance service delivery to citizens. The study is expected to contribute to existing literature on devolved funds and their effect on service delivery. Therefore, the findings of the study will be an attempt at bridging the knowledge gap in the existing literature on the impact of devolution on county government service delivery in West Pokot

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is based on the following theories;

Stakeholders theory:

According to Werhane (1998), the theory requires managers to articulate the shared sense of the value they create, and what brings its core stakeholders together. It also pushes managers to be clear about how they want to do business, specifically what kinds of relationships they want and need to create with their stakeholders to deliver on their purpose. Stakeholder theory is Managerial because it reflects and directs how managers operate rather than primarily addressing management theorists and economists. If devolved funding is to impact positively on the social economic welfare of the targeted people, the managers of the funds must articulate how to serve them and focus on delivering the purpose of these funds. This starts by identifying the county stakeholders who shall guide in selection of projects which shall be in align with the needs of various places through public participation.

Equity theory:

According to John S. Adams' (1960's) a behavioral psychologist, equity theory is based on a ratio consisting of inputs to outcomes. Inputs consist of contributions by an individual. An attribute is only considered an input if it is perceived as relevant by the individual. Inputs can include abilities, effort, performance, age, seniority, education, and other attributes. Outcomes are the rewards an individual receives for their inputs. Outcomes can include pay, benefits, status symbols, and even intrinsic rewards. The value of an outcome is determined by the recipient, so no outcome has a specific objective measure. In the context of this research, the people of Kenya have fought for the new constitution with expectations to benefit from equitable sharing of resources which has been a problem since independence. The input that people have made include the devolution of resources, power and decision making to counties, which the management and administration of funds at the county level shall be expected to convert all the resources into outcomes in form of economic growth and development of new projects, improved health care services, accessibility to clean drinking water, improved early childhood education, protection and promotion of cultural activities, responsiveness etc. The provision of the above services shall be the outcome of the devolved funds in the county. The people will evaluate the new system of governance and subjectively conclude if it has impacted on the economy positively. For devolution of funds to be successful in Kenya, the counties should keep focus on the balancing of inputs (resources) and the outputs (benefits) to the people of Kenya. The county government shall ensure that expenditures with respect to development projects shall pass through public participation to allow public prioritize on the projects to be undertaken by the county government.

Bureaucracy theory:

Weber believed in a more formalized, rigid structure of organization known as a bureaucracy. This non-personal view of organizations followed a formal structure where rules, formal legitimate authority and competence were characteristics of appropriate management practices. He believed that a supervisor's power should be based on an individual's position within the organization, his or her level of professional competence and the supervisor's adherence to explicit rules and regulations. The idea of bureaucracy is understood through the following characteristics; (a) well-defined formal hierarchy and chain of command distinguishes the level of authority within an organization. Individuals who hold higher positions will supervise and direct lower positions within the hierarchy, (b) Management by rules and regulations provides a set of standard operating procedures that facilitate consistency in both organizational and management practices. For example, when an employee is sick and cannot make it into work that day, he or she must call out to their direct supervisor (c) Division of labor and work specialization is used to align employees with their organizational tasks. This way, an employee will work on things with which he or she has experience and knows how to do well. The Max Weber raised the issue of division of labor and work specialization. For counties to be efficient in the management of devolved funds, they should have formal structures which define job establishments', its required competencies, and clear reporting lines and or the counties should respect the structures provided therein by SRC. The new constitution has made division of work between the county government and the national government as provided in the Fourth Schedule of the constitution of Kenya 2010.

Rational Choice Theory:

According to the Rational Choice Theory, human beings are prompted by their own goals and preferences. Human actions are regulated primarily by the information regarding the conditions under which a particular individual is going to work and would try to achieve his or her goal. It is almost impossible for the human beings to get whatever they desire for. Choice of goals along with the selection of a proper method to reach the previously set target is very important in the domain of rational choice theory. An individual should have a proper understanding of his or her own selection of goals and the consequences of that selection. Rational people always choose only those options that can offer good results. In this context the county government officials lead by the governor shall be in a better understanding of the needs of its county residents and prioritize resources towards achieving the needs of the people. The prioritization of needs shall follow the line of public participation through public hearings and county assembly to pass bills that promotes projects aimed at improving living standards of the county residence. For the counties in Kenya to be successful on implementation of its mandate, they should consider rational choice theory when allocating scarce resources to projects

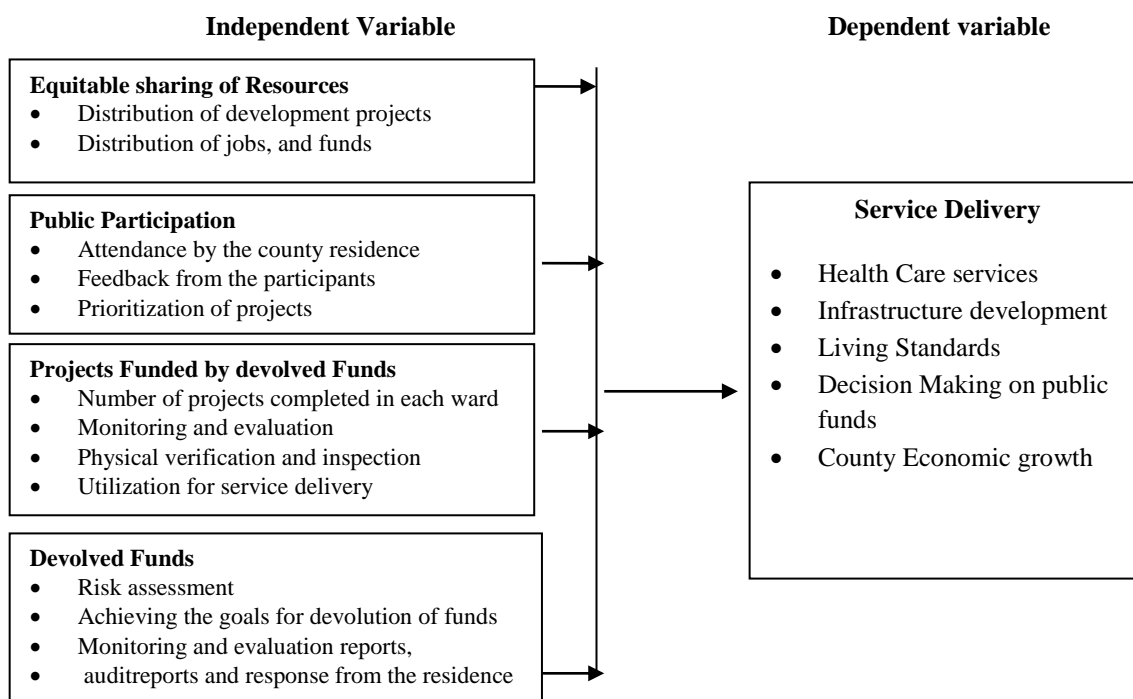
5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure Conceptual Framework

6. REVIEW OF VARIABLES

Equitable sharing of resources:

Equity is the quality of being fair or impartial. In the context of this research equitable sharing of resources means distribution of county resources in a fair or impartial manner. This does not mean equal distribution of resources

Public participation:

Public participation is the process by which an organization consults with interested or affected individuals, organizations, and government entities before making a decision. In the context of this research, public participation entails meeting county residence, collecting and incorporating their decisions, ideologies to the CIDP. Public participation is the processes that will enable county citizens interact with the county government with objective of developing CIDP inclusively to enable implementation of development projects that will prioritize needs for the common man.

Project funded by devolved funds:

These are development projects sponsored through devolved funds in Kenya with aim of achieving the Vision 2030 goals and increase economic growth in the country, and eliminate marginalization among Kenyan communities.

Devolved funds:

This are funds collected national by Kenya government and shared equitably among 47 counties in Kenya. These funds are shared based on CRA formula that takes into account population in the county, poverty level, and equal share among other variables.

Service delivery:

Service delivery is a set of principles, standards, policies and constraints used to guide the design, development, deployment, operation and retirement of service delivered by a service provider with a view to offering consistent service experience to a specific user community in a business context. In the context of this research the county government of west Pokot has to enable service delivery by creating the right conditions to ensure that delivery team at county level can do the right things for residence in the right way and at the right time.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN:

This study used quantitative research design since the respondents was subjected to largely closed- ended questions. The response categories from which participants may choose are “closed-ended” or fixed. The advantage of this inflexibility is that it allows for meaningful comparison of responses across participants and study sites.

Target Population:

According to Leedy (1993), he observed that nothing comes out at the end of a long and involved study that is any better than the care, precision, consideration and the thought that goes into the basic planning of the research and the careful selection of the population. The target population of the study was 60 respondents drawn from various parts of West Pokot County.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

The study used purposive sampling technique where 51 respondents representing the target population of 60 filled the administered questionnaires. This is because the technique was convenient to be used and the respondents are more knowledgeable on the subject of interest. The total target population of the study was 60 respondents who included 9 directors, 1 budget officer, 5 internal auditors, 5 accountants, and 35 support staff. Table 1 below shows the target.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to the interviewees’ at the county headquarters departments this was done after receiving permission from the Executive members to carry out research in the identified area of study. The study employed the use of questionnaires. The study employed content analysis, questionnaires methods and case studies.

The use of questionnaire was considered most appropriate so that consistency can be maintained in all the respondents on service seekers and in-depth interview of county officials who are responsible for county service delivery.

PILOT TEST:

McMillan and Schumacher, (1993) saw validity as the extent to which the inferences made based on scores from an instrument are appropriate meaningful and useful. It is the judgments of the appropriateness of a measure for specific inference or decision that result from the scores that generated. The purpose of validity in the study is to seek relevant evidence that confirm the answers found with the measurement device, which is the nature of the problem. The validity of the instrument was ensured through constructive criticism from the project supervisor who has had an extensive experience and expertise in questionnaire construction.

8. CONCLUSION

The R square value shown in Table 4.12 suggests that 78% of variation in the sharing of Resources, public participation, projects Funded by devolved Funds, and Devolved Funds on service delivery. The ANOVA table 4.12 indicates that the model fitted is significant since $p = 0.00$ is less than 0.05 the level of significance, hence it is concluded that there is a significant effect of the sharing of Resources, Public Participation, Projects Funded by devolved Funds, and Devolved Funds on service delivery therefore the null hypothesis of no combined effect is rejected. Also from the coefficient table 4.12 the model that was fitted on the data is given by $Y = -2.638 + 3.625X_1 + 2.303X_2 + 1.677X_3 + 3.067X_4$. From the table 4.12, it can be seen that sharing of Resources, Public Participation, projects funded by devolved Funds, and devolved Funds on service delivery because they all have P-Value which is less than 0.05 the significance level. Hence we can conclude that both sharing of Resources, Public Participation, projects Funded by devolved Funds, and Devolved Funds on service delivery, there by rejecting the null hypothesis. Most respondents agreed that equitable sharing of resources through devolved funds increases infrastructure development, has increased living standards, has improved decision making on public funds, and through devolved funds increased economic growth at the County has been realized. Public participation process of devolved funds has improves infrastructure development. Public Participation process of devolved funds improves living standard in the County. Also, public participation improves decision making on public funds and finally, public participation improve economic growth at the County.

The study recommends that:

The study established that implementation of the projects by the County Government devolved funds has had noticeable impacts. The researcher therefore recommends that more functions currently under the national government should be devolved to the County government for efficient implementation of the projects, (ii) Public participation was found to enhance efficiency in the utilization of devolved funds, therefore, policies should be put in place that strengthen public participation in the County governments

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