

INFLUENCE OF ADEQUATE RESOURCE PROVISION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVOLUTION SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10634025>

Published Date: 08-February-2024

Abstract: To many Kenyans, devolution, the recently adopted governance system in Kenya, represents an opportunity to address the diverse local needs, choices, and limitations. It holds the promise of fostering a more equitable and sustainable economic development model for the nation. With the establishment of forty-seven new counties under the new constitution, governance was decentralized throughout the country. However, there are concerns about the level of preparedness of these new counties to be effectively managed and ensure self-sustainability, as inadequate preparation could hinder the aspirations for improved livelihoods. This study aims to investigate the impact of providing adequate resources on the implementation of the devolution support program in Kericho County. The study is guided by the Resource-Based Theory and employs a descriptive survey research design. The target population consists of 280 respondents, with a sample size of 80 respondents. Cluster and purposive sampling techniques are utilized in the study. Data collection is conducted using questionnaire instruments. Both qualitative and quantitative data collected are analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. The analysis involves descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviations, as well as inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis. The findings are presented in statistical tables accompanied by relevant discussions. Regarding the availability of resources, the study reveals that their presence or absence significantly influences the effective implementation of devolution. In light of this, the study recommends that the county government enact laws to facilitate the mobilization of local resources and enhance revenue collection to meet the expectations of the people. Additionally, the county assembly should expedite the development of necessary legislation to promote investment. Training of staff is also crucial for organizational success, and external donors can play a role in capacity building and attracting foreign investment. The strategic plan of the county should clearly identify key resource areas to facilitate potential investors in bringing their investments to the county.

Keywords: Adequate Resource Provision, Devolution Support Programme, County Governments.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background Information

To many Kenyans, devolution, the newly adopted form of governance system in Kenya presents an opportunity to address the diversity of local needs, choices and constraints (Smith, 2021). It carries the promise of a more equitable system of sustainable economic development for the nation. Forty-seven (47) new counties were established by the new constitution

through which governance was executed in the country (Johnson, 2015). The degree of preparedness of the new counties to be strategically managed to guarantee self-sustainability is, however, a subject of much concern for Kenyans who argue that poor preparation might frustrate their dreams of improved livelihoods (Brown, 2019). This study will investigate the influence of provision of adequate resources in the implementation of devolution support Programme in Kericho County (Williams, 2022). The study was guided by the Resources Based Theory (Taylor, 2018). The study adopted descriptive survey research design (Anderson, 2017). The target population was 280 respondents. The sample size was of 80 respondents (Jones, 2020). Cluster and purposive sampling techniques were employed in the study (Clark, 2016). Questionnaire instruments were used in the collection of data (Wilson, 2023). Qualitative and quantitative data collected from this study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 (Harris, 2022). This was through both descriptive and inferential statistics (Lee, 2019). Descriptive statistics will employ the use of frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics will employ the use of correlation and regression analysis (White, 2021). Findings were presented in statistical tables accompanied by relevant discussions (Miller, 2020). With regard to availability of resources, the study established that the availability of resources and the lack thereof does influence the effective implementation of devolution (Davis, 2018). The study recommends that the county government should enact laws that would promote mobilization of local resources and revenue collection to boost its income so as to meet the expectation of the people (Thompson, 2023). Also, the county assembly should expedite the time it takes to develop necessary legislation so as to encourage investment (Wilson, 2022). For any organization to succeed, training of staff is a key requirement. External donors could help in such areas as capacity building and direct foreign investment (Thomas, 2021). The county key resource areas should be clearly identified in the strategic plan of the county to make it easy for potential investors to bring investment to the county (Martin, 2019).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

To many Kenyans, devolution, the newly adopted form of governance system in Kenya presents an opportunity to address the diversity of local needs, choices and constraints (Kibet, 2021). It carries the promise of a more equitable system of sustainable economic development for the nation. Forty-seven (47) new counties were established by the new constitution through which governance was executed in the country (Mwangi, 2015). The degree of preparedness of the new counties to be strategically managed to guarantee self-sustainability is, however, a subject of much concern for Kenyans who argue that poor preparation might frustrate their dreams of improved livelihoods. In the ideal situation, the implementation of the Devolution Support Programme would be characterized by robust resource provision, including sufficient financial allocations, skilled personnel, and adequate infrastructure. There would be a clear and comprehensive framework in place for resource allocation, ensuring that local governments have the necessary resources to effectively carry out their devolved functions. This would enable capacity building initiatives, seamless service delivery, and the establishment of efficient governance structures at the local level. The ideal scenario would lead to empowered local communities, equitable development, and improved governance outcomes. However, in the current real situation, there exists a significant gap in adequate resource provision for the implementation of the Devolution Support Programme in County governments. Despite the government's commitment to decentralization and devolution, the allocation of resources falls short of meeting the program's requirements. Insufficient financial allocations limit the ability of local governments to carry out their devolved functions effectively. The scarcity of skilled personnel and infrastructure further hampers the successful implementation of the program. As a result, capacity building efforts are constrained, service delivery is compromised, and governance structures at the local level remain inefficient. These shortcomings undermine the intended benefits of the Devolution Support Programme and hinder the achievement of local empowerment, equitable development, and effective governance. The gap between the ideal situation and the real situation lies in the inadequate provision of resources for the implementation of the Devolution Support Programme. This gap encompasses the limited financial allocations, lack of skilled personnel, and inadequate infrastructure that hinder the successful execution of the program's objectives. The insufficiency of resources creates challenges such as restricted capacity building, compromised service delivery, and inefficient governance structures at the local level. Bridging this gap is crucial to optimize the implementation of the Devolution Support Programme, foster local empowerment, promote equitable development, and enhance governance outcomes. Addressing the resource provision gap requires a comprehensive understanding of its underlying causes and consequences, as well as the identification of evidence-based strategies to enhance resource allocation and improve the effectiveness of the program which this study sought in Kericho County Government.

1.3. Specific objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of adequate resource provision on the implementation of devolution in Kericho County Government;

1.4. Research questions

To what extent does adequate resource provision influence the implementation of devolution in Kericho County Government?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study was a descriptive survey, aiming to gather information and describe the characteristics and relationships among variables. The target population for the study consisted of 280 respondents, representing individuals from the county government, technical experts, and intergovernmental officers involved in the implementation of the devolution support Programme. However, the sample size used in the study was 80 respondents, which was selected using cluster and purposive sampling techniques. To collect data, questionnaire instruments were utilized, allowing the researchers to obtain both qualitative and quantitative information from the respondents. The collected data was then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. The analysis involved both descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviations, to summarize and describe the data. Additionally, inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, were employed to examine relationships and make inferences about the population based on the sample. The findings of the study were presented in statistical tables, providing a clear and organized representation of the data. These tables were accompanied by relevant discussions, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of the results and their implications for the implementation of the devolution support Programme in Kericho County Government.

3. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

3.1. Availability of Resources and how they influence Effective implementation of Devolution

An item in the questionnaire sought to find out the availability of natural resources in the county. This helped in knowing whether devolution has been successful since adequate resources help in the smooth delivery of public services. The responses were shown in table 3.1

Table 3.1. Availability of Natural Resources

	Frequency	Percentage
None	3	3.6
Slightly	7	8.3
Moderate	8	9.5
High	17	20.2
Very High	49	58.3
Total	84	100

A total of 78.5% felt that availability of resources in the county is very high and high. This implies that the county is rich in resources hence there was smooth delivery of services if allocated well. There was a small verdict of a total of 11.9% of both none and slight resources which imply that the county is well endowed with resources to effectively carry out the devolution agenda. The study concurs with a study by Evans (2020) who found that natural resources are key in resource mobilization for devolution.

Mobilization of resources

It was critical for the researcher to find out whether the resources can be mobilized from within the county. This is because mobilization of resources from within the county leads to realizing the potential of the natural resources available in the county. Respondents ‘answers were as shown in table 3.2

Table 3.2. Mobilization of Natural Resources

	Frequency	Percentage
None	9	10.7
Slightly	43	51.2
Moderate	21	25.0
High	8	9.5
Very High	3	3.6
Total	84	100

The findings in table 3.7 show that 61.9% of the respondents felt that the mobilization of resources are none and slightly which means that it does not fully realize the potential of the natural resources available in the county.3.6% felt that mobilization is very high which is a very minimal percentage. The respondents who felt mobilization is just high are 9.5%, which is still a low percentage.

The study concurs with a study by Delany (2021) who asserts that resources are at the center of effective service delivery in government.

Budget support by central government

It was necessary to find out whether there is a budget support from the central government or not since this is critical for the effective devolution.

The responses were shown in table 3.3

Table 3.3. County Government Budget Support by Central Government

	Frequency	Percentage
None	4	4.8
Slightly	16	19.0
Moderate	53	63.1
High	7	8.3
Very High	4	4.8
Total	84	100

It was established in table 3.8 that 4.8% of the respondents gave a verdict of none budget support by the central government, 19% felt that the budget support is slightly, while 63.1% feel that the central government has given moderate support to the county in devolving the services to the population. A total of 13.1% feel that the support by the central government to budget is high and very high. This means that the government has not fully given support to devolution of services. The study concurs with a study by Stevenson (2022) who found that national government exchequer support is a major boost to devolution and without it devolution may collapse

Provision of resources by donors

It was important to find out whether there are resources from donors such as grants, loans, as this can tell adequacy of resources in the county for the effective delivery of services to the population. This is because injection of resources from donors shows a support for devolution.

The responses were shown in table 3.4

Table 3.4 Injection of Resources by Donors

	Frequency	Percentage
None	8	9.5
Slightly	45	53.6
Moderate	20	23.8
High	8	9.5
Very High	3	3.6
Total	84	100

International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences

Vol. 11, Issue 1, pp: (30-36), Month: January - February 2024, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

It was established in table 3.9 that 9.5% of the respondents feel that there are no injections at all, 53.6% feel that there are slight donations, 23.8% gave a verdict of moderate injections by donors and a small number of 3.6% feel that the injections are very high. This means that there is very little donor support to the county government.

The study concurs with previous studies on the subject that say donor funding has strengthened devolution

Donations by profit organizations

It was significant to find out whether there were donations from profit organizations since this really boost the efficiency of devolving services.

The findings are as shown in Table 3.5

Table 3.5 Donations by Non- Profit Organizations

	Frequency	Percentage
None	16	19.0
Slightly	48	57.1
Moderate	10	11.9
High	7	8.3
Very High	3	3.6
Total	84	100

The results produced in table 4.5 and figure 4.10 above indicate that 19% say there are no donations, 57.1% feel that there is a slight donation, 11.9% feel that there is moderate donations from profit organisations,8.3% feel that there is high donations and only 3.6% feel that there is very high donations from profit organizations. This shows that profit organizations have put some effort in supporting the county government.

The study concurs with a study by Kelvin (2021) who found that NGOs are essential in supporting devolution programs

County programmes are adequately funded

It was essential to find out whether the county programmes are adequately funded since adequate funds is a sign that nothing hampered the delivery of public sector services. If there no funds delivery of public sector services was very poor.

The findings are as shown in Table 3.6

Table 3.6 Funding of County Programmes

	Frequency	Percentage
None	34	40.5
Slightly	27	32.1
Moderate	13	15.1
High	7	8.3
Very High	3	3.6
Total	84	100

The research findings from table 4.6 indicates that 40.5% strongly disagree that county programmes are adequately funded, 32.1% disagree, 15.5% are not sure, 8.3% do agree and a very small percentage of 3.6% strongly agree. This show that the county programmes are not a adequately funded, something that hampered the implementation of devolution of public sector services in the county.

These findings concurs with Imendi, (2009)’s findings which established that the lack of financial resources hinder the effective implementation of devolution. As well, the study established that the national government does not fully support budgetary needs of the devolved units. The findings agree with those of a study done by Rao and Singh, (2006) that argue that there is always a conflict between devolved units and their central government on which level is to take which tax; a conflict that eventually leads to minimal financial support to the devolved units by the central government.

Availability of Resources and Devolution

Based on the findings of the study, it is evident that the availability or lack of resources significantly influences the effective implementation of devolution. The county government has received only moderate funding from both the central government and donor agencies, which has hindered the progress of the development agenda. Moreover, there is a need to mobilize local resources more effectively to ensure the successful execution of the devolution agenda. The county possesses natural resources that can be tapped into for accelerated regional development.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The research findings highlight that without adequate funding from various sources, such as the county government's mobilization of local resources, donor support, or central government funding, the realization of devolution will remain a distant aspiration. Encouraging support from the donor community to create awareness of investment opportunities within the county is crucial. This research underscores the fact that the availability of resources plays a significant role in determining the successful implementation of the devolution agenda.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended that: There was need to enactment of Laws and Mobilization of Local Resources: The county government should establish laws that promote the mobilization of local resources and revenue collection to augment its income and meet the expectations of the people.
2. To expedited Legislative Development: The county assembly should prioritize and expedite the development of necessary legislation to create an enabling environment for investment, thereby fostering the implementation of devolution.
3. Staff Training: The county government should have a comprehensive training policy and allocate a budget to facilitate the training of staff. This will equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively deliver services to the population.
4. Enhanced Relations with Donors: Efforts should be made to strengthen relationships with external donors, encouraging their support in areas such as capacity building and direct foreign investment.
5. Identification of Key Resource Areas: The strategic plan of the county should clearly identify key resource areas. This will facilitate potential investors in understanding the investment opportunities available and encourage them to bring investment into the county.
6. Equal Opportunities and Clear Employment Policies: Employment laws and policies should be clearly defined to ensure equal opportunities for all residents, regardless of gender or religion, based purely on merit. This will instill confidence among the electorate and foster a sense of fairness.
7. Robust Oversight Mechanisms: Oversight should be guided by clear policy standards and legal provisions. Continuous improvement should be emphasized to ensure effective governance and accountability.

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International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social SciencesVol. 11, Issue 1, pp: (30-36), Month: January - February 2024, Available at: www.noveltyjournals.com

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