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## **The impact of decentralized governance on service delivery in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya**

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### ABSTRACT

The difficulty with service delivery remains a hard task to resolve among devolved governments. Implementation of devolution has resulted in mixed outcomes. While in some regions it is tipped as a model for improving service delivery, in other areas it has failed to deliver its mandated functions. Inadequately distributed resources, un-prioritised services, poor health and education and housing and roads among others are major problems affecting both urban and rural counties alike. Devolution as a system of governance was introduced after the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010 to respond to the public demand for an efficient and effective public sector. However, 10 years after this move, the efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery has continued to face many bottlenecks at the resource distribution, citizen participation accountability and transparency and service delivery as identified in the literature review. This article aimed at analyzing the effect of devolution system of governance on service delivery in Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. Various theories were explored linked to the various variables considered under the study. These are: The Soufflé theory, The social capital theory, The principal Agent theory and lastly the Accountability theory. Eventually the soufflé theory was selected as being more responsive to the study's variables as it gives the best explanation on linkages between various variables of devolved system of governance and how they are related to the outcomes, that is, service delivery. The conceptual framework outlines the independent variables, as resource distribution, citizen participation accountability and transparency while the dependent variable is service delivery. Study took a quantitative approach that emphasizes objective measurements and statistical, numerical analysis of data. The study adopted

a descriptive and correlation research designs to facilitate determination and explanation of variable relationships and used a simple random sample of 154 respondents obtained from a target population of 3,125 employees of Uasin Gishu County. The sampling frame consisted of county executive members and employees, member of county assembly office staff, county assembly service board members, county governor officers and county government staff. Regression analysis, multiple regression and correlation were run to determine the relationship between resource distribution, citizen participation accountability and transparency and service delivery following a multivariate regression model. It was established that devolved system of governance and all its three components were satisfactory predictors of service delivery having significantly strong effects. The study concludes that devolution devolved system of governance (R-square of 0.482; p value <0.05) has effect on service delivery and can be a crucial model of improving public service delivery in Kenya. The article recommended that devolved system of governance can be effective model for improving service delivery.

Keywords: Impact, governance, service delivery, Uasin Gishu County and Kenya

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## INTRODUCTION

This article focused on the effects of devolution system of governance on service delivery in Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. The article investigated on activities within the scope of the issues addressed by the objectives of the article, hence ensuring the article findings contribute towards realization of the main aim of the article. The article reviewed related prior literature of the study. The article further was framed by five research questions which were tested by research findings and scientifically analyzed. The article targeted Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. The interest of this article was on the impact of devolution on access to healthcare services in Kenya. This contributes to the wider literature on public service delivery decentralization which to date remains largely debatable. This article will be beneficial to several stakeholders including the national government of Kenya, the county government of Uasin Gishu and all the other devolved governments, the society, scholars and researchers. The study will inform national government of effective and efficient policy formed suitable for the devolution system that would lead to realization of optimum service delivery in county governments in Kenya. The county governments are expected to play critical functions in improving service delivery to the people. This article might informs the county assemblies and county executive on the areas within which devolution of fiscal power, political power and administrative power can improve service delivery to the people as was expected by the Kenyan citizens when reviewing the constitution. The members of county assembly may use the findings of this article to better align or revise the existing county legal framework, to promote service delivery in the counties. This article finally established policy recommendations, which can be used by county assemblies and county executives to improve service delivery in county governments. The local population may also benefit from this article by explaining the link between devolution and service delivery. The roles of the local population in enhancing improved service delivery to themselves and sustainability of such services.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Has devolved system improved public service delivery by the County and Government of Uasin Gishu?

Has devolution increased public participation, empowerment and quality of service delivery by the County Government of Uasin Gishu?

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most studies dwelt on single function or variable which cannot be taken to represent the whole performance measurement of devolved system functions. There is still a gap in knowledge that has to be filled in view of the service delivery in Kenya based on the decentralized operations. This article endeavored to explore this subject; in particular the way county Uasin Gishu County government in Kenya has performed of the decentralized functions. Despite the many studies on impact of decentralization on service delivery, very few have studied Sub-Saharan contexts and especially Kenya which recently promulgated a unique form of decentralization, and that is celebrating 10 years since its implementation. Devolution has been argued to improve service delivery in some countries and worsen it in others. The main aim of this article was to find out if devolution system has improved the provision of public services in Kenya.

## DATA AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study took a quantitative approach that emphasizes objective measurements and statistical, numerical analysis of data. The study adopted a descriptive and correlation research designs to facilitate determination and explanation of variable relationships

This study was embedded on the naturalist and positivist philosophical foundation forms of inquiry, which are loosely referred to as the qualitative and quantitative methods respectively. It followed a simple random sample of 154 respondents obtained from a target population of 3,125 employees of Uasin Gishu County. The data collection instrument used was a semi-structured questionnaire. This study therefore sampled Uasin Gishu County one of the forty-seven counties in Kenya, targeting critical officers in the implementation devolution system of governance to deliver services to Uasin Gishu County citizens. The sampling frame consisted of county executive members and employees, member of county assembly office staff, county assembly service board members, county governor officers and county government staff. The sample size required for the study was determined by using a 95% confidence level and a sample error of 5% using the sample size was determined based on these registrants. Peers and a panel of senior research experts reviewed the instrument for construct, face and content validity as qualitative validity and reliability was also determined. A pilot study involving 33 staff from Uasin Gishu County was carried out and Cronbach alpha afterward computed to check internal consistency ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Regression analysis, multiple regression and correlation were run to determine the relationship between resource distribution, citizen participation accountability and transparency and service delivery following a multivariate regression model to determine the relative effect of each of the independent variables on service delivery. Moreover, an F-test was analyzed to test if two population variances are equal. A test of significance of R was also done including the test of significance for R squared.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The response rate was 87.4%. According to Kothari (2004) a response rate of above 50% is adequate for a descriptive study. Cooper and Schindler (2003) argue that a response rate exceeding 30% of the total sample size gives enough data that can be used to generalize the characteristics of a study problem as expressed by the opinions of few respondents in the target population. Consequently, the response rate of 87.4% was notably adequate for the study and considered good representative to provide information for analysis and obtain conclusions. The findings showed that 58% of the respondents were male while 42% were female. This implied that majority 58% of the respondents were male, an indication that there was a reasonable gender representation in the study. It was also shown that majority 41% of the respondents were in the age bracket of 35-44 years. This reflects the current trend of the Kenya population indices of which majority are the youthful population members with 53% having attained degree as the highest level of education enhancing good understanding of survey issue and provision of valid response. The results in Figure 1 indicated that respondents had high expectations from devolved system of governance towards public service delivery. There were expectations including improved availability and accessibility to basic public goods and services, equitable distribution of public goods and services, transparent responses from county authority, balanced social, environmental and economic service provision, enabled improved citizen livelihoods and wellbeing, poverty and hunger eradication programs and food security, nutrition healthcare and basic education. The highest frequency was scored on food security, nutrition healthcare and basic education indication that most respondents expected that their county government should enhance their status of food security, nutrition and basic education as a priority.

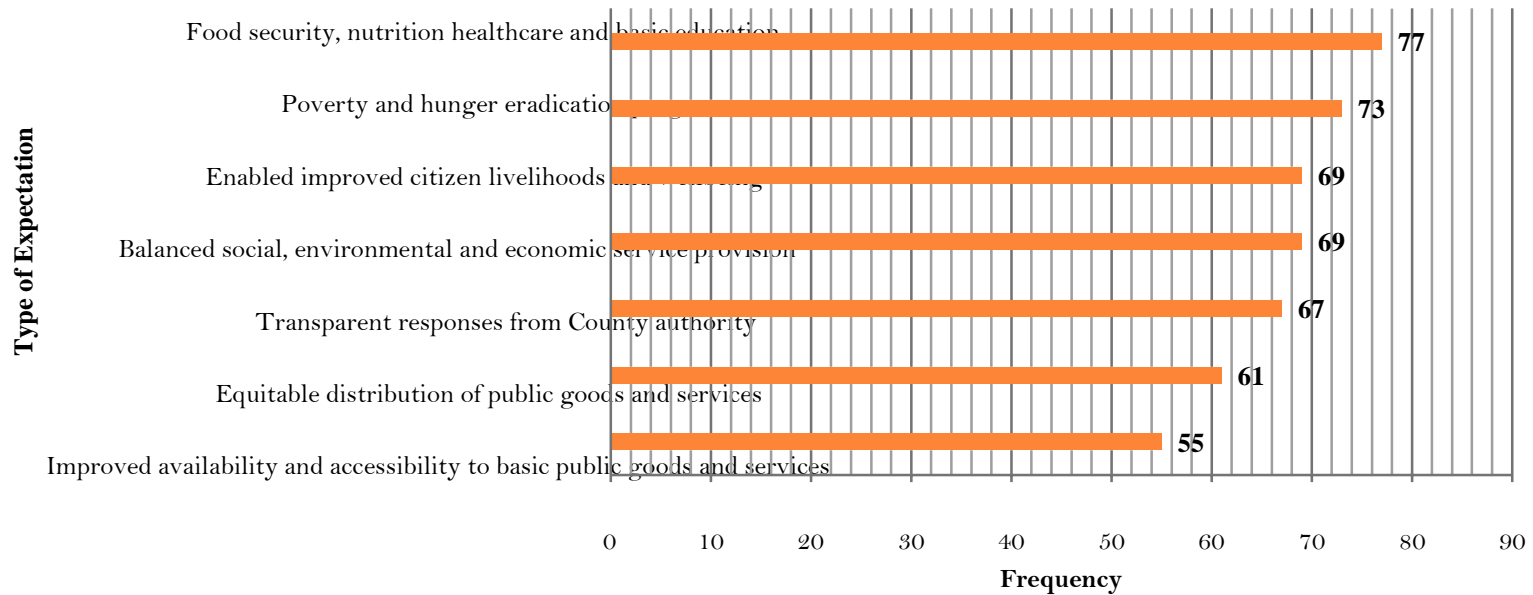


Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by their Expectations

The overall mean of the responses was 4.24 points which indicates that majority of the respondents agreed that resource distribution enhances improved service delivery. The standard deviation of 0.83 indicates that the responses were closely varied. It meant that resource distribution is a critical component of devolution system of governance and can be fundamental in equitable distribution of resources, which will enhance improved delivery of public services. This was consistent with Munoz, Acosta and Moreno (2006) that devolved leadership improves the political involvement of the people in public decision making and strengthens democracy and spurs the country's development efforts.

Measures of Devolved System of Governance of County Government  
 Table 1: Measures of Devolved System of Governance of County Government in Kenya

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Overall, service delivery has been on a steady increase over the last 12 months	14(5.8%)	14(5.8%)	57(21.6%)	108(41.5%)	61(26.0%)	3.7412	1.05740
Overall, quality of health and basic education, quality of social wellbeing and welfare value	19(7.2%)	34(13.1%)	97(38.0%)	80(31.7%)	24(9.4%)	3.2210	1.04002
creation has been improving for the last 5 years							
Transport and communication network growth has improved equitably	0(0.0%)	52(20.5%)	77(30.3%)	63(24.8%)	62(24.4%)	3.5315	1.07293
Food security and nutrition access and availability has been enhanced	19(7.2%)	61(24.0%)	92(36.2%)	75(29.5%)	7(2.8%)	2.9606	.97317
Adequate resources are distributed for improved service delivery	0(0.0%)	26(10.2%)	148(58.3%)	49(19.3%)	31(12.2%)	3.3346	.82105
Composite Score						3.35750	0.99301

NB: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Not Sure, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

The results in Table 1 show that respondents basically indicated that they were well versed with the measures of devolved system of governance with the composite mean and standard deviation scores of 3.35750 points and 0.99301 points respectively. The composite mean score of 3.35750 points imply that the respondents were not sure of these measures as would be used in measuring devolved system of governance effects. Specifically, 108(41.5%) of the respondents agreed that in overall, service delivery has been on a steady increase over the last 12 months. Similarly, on overall, quality of health and basic education, quality of social wellbeing and welfare value creation has been improving for the last 5 years, 97(38.0%) were not sure that their County government quality of health and basic education, quality of social wellbeing and welfare value creation has been improving for the last 5 years. Besides, 77(30.6%) were also not sure on the measure that transport and communication network growth has improved equitably while 92(37.2%) of the respondents were not sure on the measure that food security and nutrition access and availability has been enhanced and finally 148(57.5%) respondents were uncertain that adequate resources are distributed for improved service delivery.

TABLE 2: CORRELATION BETWEEN DEVOLVED SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

		Service Delivery	Devolved System of Governance
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
devolved System of Governance	Pearson Correlation	.694**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### Fitness of Model

The fitness of model explains the relationship between devolved system of governance and service delivery. Devolved system of governance was found to be satisfactory variable in determining service delivery. This was supported by the coefficient of determination also known as the R-square of 0.482. This means that devolved system of governance predicts 48.2% of the variations in the service delivery. These results further mean that the model used to link the relationship between devolved system of governance and service delivery was satisfactory.

TABLE 3: MODEL FITNESS

Model	Coefficient
R	.694 <sup>a</sup>
R Square	.482
Adjusted R Square	.480
Std. Error of the Estimate	.643525

The ANOVA results indicate F statistic of 142.020, which was greater than f critical of 5.8 implying that the model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variable, devolved system of governance was a good predictor of service delivery. This was also supported by the reported p=0.00 which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level.

TABLE 4: ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	61.238	1	61.238	142.020	.000
Residual	106.504	212	.431		
Total	167.742	213			

Table 4 results revealed a positive relationship between devolved system of governance and service delivery ( $\beta = 0.240$ ). The relationship was also significant at 5% level of significance (P- value=0.000). This finding implied that an improvement in devolved system of governance by one unit led to a 0.539-unit improvement in service delivery.

TABLE 5: REGRESSION COEFFICIENT

	$\beta$	Std. Error	beta	t	Sig
(Constant)	1.593	0.169		9.429	0.000
Devolved system of governance	0.539	0.045	0.694	11.917	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

The specific model is; Service delivery= 1.593 + 0.539X1 Where; X1 = Devolved system of governance. Connection of each devolved system of governance with service delivery. After describing the general connection between devolved system of governance adopted by county government of Uasin Gishu and their service delivery, the study sought to find out the relationship between the devolved system of governance approaches adopted and the service delivery. Regression analysis was applied to determine the predictive power of the influence of the devolved system of governance on service delivery of county government of Uasin Gishu.

TABLE 6: MODEL SUMMARY OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.694 <sup>a</sup>	.482	.480	.59597	.482	113.137	2	210	.000

<sup>a</sup>. Predictors: (Constant), distribution, citizen participation and accountability and transparency

The results in Table 6 indicate that the three constructs of devolved system of governance (resource distribution, citizen participation and accountability and transparency) that were investigated in this study explain only 48.2% (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.480) influence on the dependent variable (service delivery). Therefore it posits that other factors are contributing to 51.8%, out of the scope of this study, which are controlling service delivery at the county government of Uasin Gishu.

TABLE 7: MODEL SUMMARY OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	85.418	6	14.236	42.640	.000a
	Residual	82.467	211	.334		
	Total	167.885	217			

Predictors: (Constant), distribution, citizen participation and accountability and transparency Dependent Variable: Service delivery. The significance value (p) for the relationship between devolved system of governance (resource distribution, citizen participation and accountability and transparency) and service delivery at the county government of Uasin Gishu was (p=0.000 < 0.05) and indicated that the relationship between devolved system of governance and service delivery was statistically significant, therefore, the linear regression model was valid predictor.

## CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

		Service Delivery	Resource Distribution	Citizen Participation	Accountability and Transparency
<b>Service Delivery</b>	PearsonCorrelation	1.000			
	Sig.(2-tailed)				
<b>Resource Distribution</b>	PearsonCorrelation	.787**	1.000		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000			
<b>Citizen Participation</b>	PearsonCorrelation	.698**	.464**	1.000	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
<b>Accountability and transparency</b>	PearsonCorrelation	.721**	.198*	.212**	1.000
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000	0.011	0.006	
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					



a strong relationship between resource distribution and service delivery since equitably distributed resources enables equitable service delivery. It means the changes in one variable are strongly correlated to change in the second. Given that 0.787 is also positive, therefore, a unit value increase in resource distribution leads to increase in service delivery. There is a statistical significance between resource distribution and service delivery ( $p=0.000$ ).

The fitness of model explains the relationship between resource distribution and service delivery. Resource distribution was found to be satisfactory variable in predicting service delivery.

This was supported by the coefficient of determination also known as the R-square of 0.6194. As a result, resource distribution explains 61.94% of the variations in service delivery. Equally, citizen participation had a Pearson's r correlation of r .698 at p value =0.000 indicating a strong positive relationship between citizen participation and service delivery. With a coefficient of determination, R-square of 0.487204, it means that citizen participation explains 48.72% of the variations in service delivery.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.513	.169		8.951	.000
	Resource Distribution	.212	.053	.296	4.023	.000
	Citizen Participation	.020	.053	.028	.375	.004
	Accountability and Transparency	.020	.009	.107	2.071	.003

TABLE 9: COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION: DEVOLVED SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

a. Dependent Variable: Service delivery

The results indicated the coefficient of correlation test and the established that when the three devolved system of governance components are considered and made constant at zero, then service delivery will be effective at 1.513. From these findings, it can be concluded that, devolved system of governance has a significant effect on service delivery. Further, at 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, the relationships between all the three devolved system of governance and the service delivery were all significant. This is because the statistically significant value (p) of each devolved system of governance component was less than 0.05, meaning that the relationship between each component of devolved system of governance and service delivery was statistically significant.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings established that resource distribution had a strong positive relationship with 61.94% explaining service delivery ( $R^2=0.6194$ ). There was a positive relationship between resource distribution and service delivery ( $\beta =0.240$ ). The relationship was also significant at 5% level of significance ( $P\text{-value}=0.000$ ). This finding implied that an improvement in resource distribution by one unit led to a 0.240- unit improvement in service delivery. It was also revealed that a positive relationship between citizen participation and service delivery ( $\beta =0.370$ ). The relationship was also significant at 5% level of significance ( $P\text{-value}=0.000$ ). This finding implied that an improvement in citizen participation by one unit led to a 0.370- unit improvement in service delivery. The results revealed a positive relationship between accountability and transparency and service delivery ( $\beta =0.203$ ). The relationship was also significant at 5% level of significance ( $P\text{-value}=0.000$ ). The results provided sufficient statistically significant evidence to signify the relationship. The study concludes that devolution devolved system of governance has effect on service delivery and can be a crucial model of improving public service delivery in Kenya. It establishes the effect of resource distribution, citizen participation and accountability and transparency on service delivery. The study confirms the theoretical claims that devolved system of governance exists to achieve the goal of enhanced service delivery.

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