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**CHALLENGES TO SERVICE DELIVERY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS: A CASE OF NYERI COUNTY**

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## CHALLENGES TO SERVICE DELIVERY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS: A CASE OF NYERI COUNTY

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### ABSTRACT

*The general objective of the study was to explore challenges to service delivery in County Governments with a case study of Nyeri County. The specific objectives were to identify the relationship between ethical bottlenecks and service delivery and to establish the effect of policies and legislation on service delivery. The target population was the Nyeri county officials and key informants in the County. The target population included 77 senior officials of the County government of Nyeri, these were from the county executive and the Members of the County Assembly. Eighty (80) key informants were also targeted and included religious leaders, chiefs and social workers. Data was collected using a semi structured questionnaire. Questionnaires were used to gather data for the study. Data collected was processed, coded and analyzed using computer programme - Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for windows. The study found that: Although the Executive and the MCAs ruled out any effect of ethical bottlenecks on the county performance, it was highly seen as the cause of poor county performance by the key informants. There was a significant relationship between quality service delivery and relevance of existing policies and strategic plans but there was a no significant relationship between quality service delivery and need to improve CIDP. The study recommended that the county government of Nyeri should have a well-defined performance management plan with clear indicators and timelines and the Executive, the MCAs and the residents need to hold consultative meetings to create synergy, harmony and monitor the performance of the county without compromising the roles given to each one of them by the county government Act 2012 and the constitution of Kenya 2010. There was need to improve the existing policies and legislation so as to improve service delivery in the county.*

**Key Word:** Ethical Bottlenecks, Policies and Legislation, Service Delivery

## INTRODUCTION

Devolution, the transfer of power from a central government to subnational (like counties, regional, or local) authorities has been practiced in many parts of the world for decades. In many countries where devolution is practiced, the various unitary systems of government enjoy liberty to run and govern their regions like independent states (Haus, 2010). However, such powers of the local government can be withdrawn by the central government at any time. This explains the reason behind some countries enshrining devolution in the constitution. According to Korir (2013), devolution is one among several forms of decentralization, which is a characteristic of all governments globally. Vertical decentralization offers a vote, while horizontal decentralization, offers voice (Kauzya, 2007). This therefore implies the how and why governments decentralize are key considerations significant for the choice between alternative modes of decentralization. A study of decentralization in 30 African countries established that no country preferred the model of centralization. The study further posited that decentralization was not considered undesirable rather it was found to be difficult to effect and sustain (Ndegwa, 2012).

Throughout history, governments in the developing world undergo pressure from the public and civil societies to centralize power. This is especially so in countries where some feel marginalized. In the developed world, people increasingly sought to reduce the power of central governments by devolving power to local or regional governments from the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Krishan, 2010). The preference of devolution has been experienced in many parts of the world. France and the United Kingdom for instance serve as notable instances where devolution was applied in the late 1990s. This was despite of the fact that France was one of the most centralized states in the world (Jackson,

2013). Back then, the public at all levels had to solely rely on the central government based in Paris, the capital city, to give approval for all major decisions made by the regions, departments, and communes. This encompassed any major decision touching the populace in any major way. However, the size and responsibility of the national government grew making it necessary to devolve power.

Devolution became a major political issue in the United Kingdom in the beginning of the early 1970s (Charles, 2012) Many people in Scotland and Wales began demanding greater control over their own affairs, a trend reflected in a rise in support for the Scottish National Party (SNP) and Plaid Cymru (Party of Wales). In 1979 the Labour Party government, supported by the SNP and Plaid Cymru as well as the Liberal Party, held referenda that would have devolved power, but they were rejected by voters in both Wales and Scotland. It is notable that the majority of voters in Scotland actually favoured devolution.

Due to the requirement that such projects should exceed the two-fifths of the electorate for passage, it was not passed into law. The project was however passed during the 1980s and 90s, arising from increased support for devolution in both countries.

Burugu, (2010), avers that governance systems employed by many developing countries have borrowed heavily from their colonizers. This may implicate that their style of devolution may not be compatible with the situation in the ground due to socio-cultural, political and economic sub-systems in the local states. Kauzya (2007) asserts that in terms of Public administration, historically African countries have experienced fused, personalized and at best highly centralized governance systems and practices.

Devolution is viewed in many countries as a way to dampen regional, racial, ethnic, or religious cleavages, particularly in multiethnic societies, such

as Kenya. The WHO (2012), defines "decentralization" as a variety of concepts which support reorganization of financial, administrative, or service delivery systems. The WHO therefore posits that the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations and/or the private sector is a complex multifaceted concept. Different types of decentralization should be distinguished because they have different characteristics, policy implications, and conditions for success.

Ndulo (2013), states that the first phase of devolution involved the Majimbo system immediately after independence, the local authorities system, the Constituency development fund and the current County government system. The constitution of Kenya (2010), set the objects of devolution as including promotion of democratic accountable exercise of power, and facilitation of decentralization of state organs, their functions and services, from the capital of Kenya.

Kenya's devolution is touted as among the most ambitious in the world, transferring key functions and financing to an entirely new level of sub-national government (WHO, 2012) A significant portion of public finances and responsibility was deployed in 2013 in less than a year, instead of over the planned three-year transition period for service delivery in health, agriculture, urban service and local infrastructure.(Mabruki, 2015).

Service delivery is a component of business that defines the interaction between providers and clients where the provider offers a service, whether that is information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses value as a result. Good service delivery provides clients with an increase in value build more on the service delivery section to capture the services that are devolved.

Nyeri County is one of the 47 counties in the central region of Kenya. Its capital and largest town is Nyeri town. The county has a population of 661,156 and

covers an area of 2,475.4 Km<sup>2</sup> (Nyeri County Strategic Plan 2014-2018).

The was guided by an integrated development plan of 2014-2018 that seeks to integrate existing and proposed master plans to promote coordination among the various stakeholders within the county.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the year 2010, Kenya promulgated a new constitutional dispensation that advocated for a devolved system of governance. The provision in the Kenyan constitution is that the national government and the county government are "distinct and inter-dependent and shall conduct their mutual relations on the basis of consultation and cooperation" (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Part of funding for the county governments comes from the county revenue collection while the other part is financed by the national government. In 2016, the revenue collected by Nyeri County Government was 65.60% of the annual local revenue target, registering a revenue deficit of 34.4%, as in the Annual Government Budget Implementation Expenditure Report. According to the Nyeri County Budget Review and Outlook Paper 2016, the fiscal performance of the fiscal year 2015/2016, the development expenditure had an absorption rate of 63% against the recurrent expenditure absorption rate of 90%. This is of serious concern to the electorate who expect improved service delivery.

The Annual County Governments Budget Implementation Review Report (2016) of the office of the controller of budget for the same fiscal year observed that there was a failure by the County Government to establish an internal audit committee to oversee financial operations in the county, a departure from the Public Finance Act 2012. Also, the county had not constituted the County Budget and Economic Forum as required by the Public Finance

Management Act. These glaring omissions by the county government has a bearing on use of the public funds, consequently affecting development and service delivery in the county.

Despite the nation's effort to provide a platform for better service delivery to the electorate through the mandate of the County governments, development in some parts of the country still wants. The County Government of Nyeri is among the counties whose performance is seen by some as wanting. Many hindrances have been posited in relation to service delivery in Nyeri. The County Government of Nyeri is among the 5 county governments whose MCAs have attempted to impeach a sitting Governor. There were many issues which were fronted as the reasons for the impeachment for the then sitting governor of County Government of Nyeri. Among these, the most critical were ethical bottlenecks, policies and legislation, political interference and availability of resources. These issues impact on the efficiency of the County Government, with the electorate at the receiving end. This study identified the above mentioned reasons as the most pressing and sought to study them.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study was guided by four specific objectives seeking to address the challenges to service delivery in the County Government of Nyeri. The study specific objectives:-

- To establish the effect of ethical bottlenecks to service delivery in Nyeri County.
- To identify the effect of policies and legislation on service delivery in Nyeri County.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Agency Theory**

This theory is also referred to as the Principal-Agent Theory. This theory was pioneered by Stephen Ross and Barry in 1973 (Ross and Barry

2012). The theory was adopted by Batley (2004) and Kayode et al (2013) who examined organizational relationship as tension between the "Principal" who demand a service and the "Agent" who provides it. The model assumes that actors are motivated by rational self-interest.

According to Arwoti (2012), the thrust of the "principal-agency theory is about the relationship between the principal agent and its effect on services on the demand-side".

The theory is seen as problematic since it is particularly salient on the demand-side of public service delivery, "which arises from the fact that clients, politicians and frontline providers have divergent interests compounded by the fact that multiple principal-agent problems result in the delivery chain" (Hyden and Olowu, 2010). In a competitive market system, the initial and subsequent bidding processes provide principals/clients with information about trade-offs between quality, quantity, and price (Brown and Potoski, 2013). In the absence of a competitive market place as the case of service delivery in Nyeri County, the principal may find it difficult to determine whether the prices and service quality offered by the agent are reasonable because it cannot weigh one bid against the other, and in the event of failure its options are limited.

Critics however argue that the agency-theory model is one-sided because it negatively characterizes an agent's behaviour as self-seeking, and ignores agent loyalty, pride, and professionalism in aligning with the principal's goals (Davis, Donaldson and Schoorman, 2007). They argue that some agents are not overwhelmingly motivated by self-interests, and may well place value on collective goals for example community based organizations. The steward does not have to be altruistic – merely recognize that mutual benefit ultimately delivers greater personal benefit.

Another criticism of the agency theory is that it omits opportunistic behaviour by principals (Waterman and Meier, 2008). This is especially so in public services where politicians and bureaucrats stand to gain personally from colluding with private agents.

The Principal-Agency Theory however provides a good basis to understand the relationship in which one party (the principal) delegates work to another (the agent), who performs the task (Jensen and Meckling, 2006). Even though the principal is dependent upon an agent whose interest differs from his own, Collier (2007) argues that the principal is not powerless to the extent that he is in charge of remuneration. Various mechanisms can be used by the principal to align the interest of the agents to his own. Thus, the primary control mechanisms for the principal are dependent on: i) the performance measurement and evaluation system, ii) the reward and punishment system, and iii) the system for assigning decision rights to client – voice and accountability.

The theory in connection with this study shows how the Principal (in this case, the Nyeri County electorate) can manage the self-interest of those empowered to act on their behalf (i.e. the Agents: county government officials, politicians, legislator, among others) so that it will be aligned with the purposes that they (the principal) wish to achieve.

There is a problem in Nyeri County Government of service delivery. This problem arises not just from conflict of interest but also from the privilege access of the agents to information and resources. The agent who has been employed to provide services to the electorate have tended to use their superior knowledge and access to resources to divert benefits in their own direction. This theory describes the situation and is relevant since it shows that the electorate (principal) is not powerless as is the public opinion but can indeed dictate the way the services are delivered. Constitutional avenues like the recall clause can be applied. The effect of

ethical bottlenecks will be guided by the Grounded Theory.

### **Grounded Theory**

Grounded Theory is a powerful research method for collecting and analysing research data. A general obstacle in the way of survey findings –and thus data collection methods in the quantitative research paradigm –is the imposition of the meaning of concepts. Researchers draft questionnaire items with the intention to collect data and make interpretations of that data; often within environments that are foreign to them. In turn, respondents are required to respond to these items that contain concepts with which they rarely converse on a day-to-day basis. This would inevitably distort the findings and create validity problems for the quantitative researcher.

This theory was pioneered by Glaser (1967). Glaser prefers the theory since it allows an accurate and correct analysis of the status enabling professionals to intervene with confidence to help resolve the participant's main concerns. In the theory, it is impossible to quantify or measure service quality. He stated that it is impossible to test them in a straightforward manner like in manufacturing. While developing ways of measuring quality, it is extremely hard to focus on controlling expenses and work flows which are the measurable variables, while under-investing in the more intangible factors of service capacity and service quality.

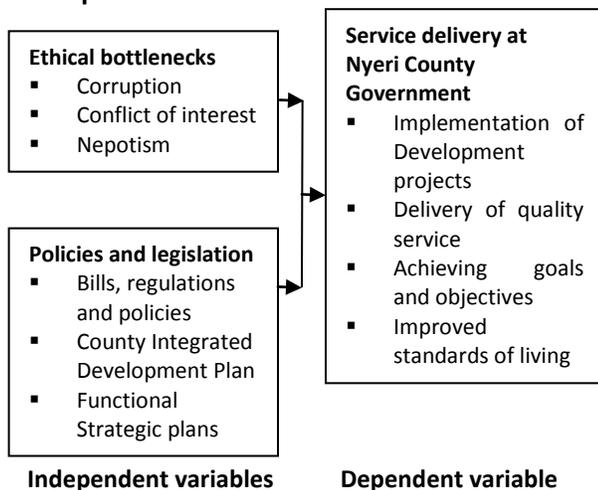
This scenario can easily dictate mediocre levels of service quality, poor customer satisfaction, low customer loyalty, and high turnover of service personnel. This has the capacity to interfere with the overall service delivery system. This would in turn shift the major cost component from operating expenses to costs of poor quality.

As a result, there would be a poor financial performance calling for tightening of expenses and work flows. Service delivery quality would be eroded and this becomes a repetitive cycle. The

effect of policies and legislation will be guided by the Grounded Theory.

The GT has however not escaped criticism. Critics of this theory argue that the subjectivity of the data leads to difficulties in establishing reliability and validity of approaches and information. Again, they argue that it is difficult to detect or to prevent researcher-induced bias. This seems to cast the theory into questionable analysis. Lastly, on the presentation of results, the highly qualitative nature of the results can make them difficult to present in a manner that is usable by practitioners. Therefore, it may be worth noting that the GT is best when complimented with other quantitative methods.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### Ethical Bottlenecks

Ethical bottlenecks in the confines of this research can be defined as the hindrances to compliance to moral values while offering services to the electorate in the county government. Among the ethical bottlenecks is corruption, conflict of interest and nepotism. Corruption is a universal problem which has proven to be hard to tackle. This is indiscriminately distributed both in the developed and developing world. The developing countries are

however more vulnerable and display such tendencies (Pellegrini & Gerlagh, 2007).

However, Pellegrini & Gerlagh (ibid) posits that corruption, manifesting itself in different forms under different environments and contexts, is impossible to get a universal definition. Generally, corruption can be viewed as abuse of a public office or power to advance personal interests.

An act passed in Kenya (Corruption and Economic crime Act, 2003) defines corruption as: an offence under any of the provision of section 39 to 44, 46 and 47, bribery or fraud, embezzlement or misappropriation of public goods, abuse of office or breach of trust or an offence involving dishonesty in connection with any rate or imposed levy under any act or under any written law relating to the elevation of persons to public office. Corruption is multifaceted and can be categorized into petty, grand, administrative, political, passive or active corruption (UNDP, 2008). Klitgaard (2010) posits that for corruption to thrive there needs to be monopoly and discretion. On the other hand, accountability has been known to effectively deter corruption. Klitgaard (2010) came up with the model showing the relationship between corruption, monopoly, discretion and accountability.

The model shows that corruption is equivalent to the sum of monopoly and discretion, then taking away accountability. Accountability in the model is considered as the act of being held responsible for action/deeds carried out. Maina (2013) posits that the presence of discretion powers and monopoly acts as incentives for corruption, affecting service delivery.

To Maina (ibid), corruption levels will be high if opportunities for discretion powers given to the public officers are great and monopoly exists while accountability is low or lacking.

On the other hand, in the presence of accountability, corruption can be reduced.

The County government act (2012) requires 30% of employees to be of either gender, physically challenged and from a different county. This is not the case in Nyeri County since the Nyeri County Human Resource Capital does not meet this threshold. In Nyeri County, one of the allegations for the impeachment of the governor was abuse of power (Ngunyi, 2016). Since the roll-out of county governments after the 2013 general elections, a section of Kenyan citizens have expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the county governments. According to 'Is it my business? A national opinion poll on devolution and governance' by Transparency International Kenya conducted and published in 2014, over half of the sampled citizens - 53% stated that they were dissatisfied with the county governments, 28% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and only 18% stated that they were satisfied.

Devolution is one of the main drivers of the Constitution, and it is important for county governments to get concerned with the high levels of dissatisfaction amongst its citizenry. When asked the reason for their dissatisfaction, the main reason given was that there was no development yet - 54%, while 19% stated that there were unfulfilled campaign promises. Other 13% stated the reason for discontentment as nepotism/ethnicity/corruption. This clearly indicates that county governments have not achieved the objects of devolution which are safeguarded in the Constitution. It also indicates that citizens are more aware of these objects, and have high expectations of the county government to enhance service delivery and set a development agenda. The above foregoing clearly shows that nepotism is an hindrance to service delivery in county governments.

### **Policies and Legislation**

The county governments in Kenya have two organs which are the County Assembly and County

Executive. These two organs work together to develop and implement some policies, growth plans and county budgets. The role of the county government is however limited in terms of policy formulation since in sensitive policies, it needs to operate in partnership with the National Government. This is well spelt out in the fourth schedule of the Constitution (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The constitution is not clear on what consist of "country's national development plans, policies, and revenue sharing". This creates a form of ambiguity which can actually impair development and service delivery at county level. The Fourth Schedule of the Constitution shows that issues of policy legislation are clearly the role of the national government.

Clause 8 of The County Government Act, 2012 further outlines roles for the county assemblies to include: vetting and approving nominees for appointment to county public offices; performing the roles set out under the Constitution; approving the budget and expenditure of the county government; approving the borrowing by the county government. Approving county development planning; and performing any other role as may be set out under the Constitution or legislation. This apparent duplication of roles and ambiguity no doubt influences service delivery at county level.

The County Government Act (2012) also requires all the county governments to put in place a County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). The provision in Clause 5 in *The County Governments Act, 2012* gives specific functions to county governments, these are legislative functions through the county executive and assembly which includes drafting and approving policies and legislation which do not contradict those enacted by the national government.

Since "Every county government shall decentralize its functions and provision of its services to the extent that it is efficient and practicable to do so."

(Article 176 (2) of the Constitution), county governments are expected to dispense governance and service delivery responsibilities to smaller governing units. This should be done without creating bureaucracy so as to enhance service delivery. If bureaucracy sets in, it will mean the objective of devolution is not achieved in the long run. Functional strategic plans consists the departmental goals and objectives with the specific issues to be addressed for them to meet their goals and objectives, the action taken on these issues have a significant effect on service delivery and vice versa. (Resnick, 2011).

Since the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010, several laws on devolution have been enacted including: The urban Areas and Cities Act, 2011; The County Governments Act, 2012; The Transition to Devolved Government Act, 2012; The Intergovernmental Relations Act, 2012 and The Public Finance Management Act, 2012.

Other relevant laws that have been enacted in the different sectors to support implementation and operationalization of Nyeri County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017 devolution include: the National Government Coordination Act, 2012, and the County Governments Public Finance Management Transition Act, 2013. The Kenya Vision 2030 is the country's development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030. It aims to transform Kenya into a newly industrializing, "middle-income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030". The Vision is based on three pillars namely; Economic, Social and Political.

Through the CIDP County's flagship, priority projects and programmes have been identified to drive the aspirations of the Vision, 2030. The projects and programmes in the CIDPs were identified through various consultative forums such as; ward consultation, the line departments and the Nyeri we want conference.

## **Service Delivery**

Following the promulgation of the new constitution and the establishment of county governments, expectations of Kenyans have been raised. Kenyans now look upon development projects delivered by county government the hope from historically skewed development. Service delivery at county governments is hoped to address the inefficiency in public service.

Consequently, Kenyans everywhere more than ever before, expect their county governments to design and implement high impact development projects that have the capacity to make a real difference in their lives, since development projects have become the principal means through which public services are being delivered in the counties.

As a result, county governments must design and implement projects that not only make a difference in the lives of their county residents, but must execute development projects and interventions that deliver public value (Kayonde et al., 2013).

Prior to the new constitution in Kenya, development projects were perceived as favours from political godfathers. However, there has been a paradigm shift occasioned by the new constitution.

Actually, the spirit of devolution has so excitingly infected the nation to the extent that Kenyans now see development projects as a right. Kenyans irrespective of their levels of education, have become increasing aware that development projects are not favours brought to them by some benevolent county leaders, but are their constitutional rights. This has put to task the role of county governments to implement development projects (Waweru, 2015).

## **Empirical Review**

### **Ethical bottlenecks and Service Delivery**

The political patronage manifests itself in public appointments; judicial, legal and policy frameworks; politics of ethnicity and tribal balancing; corruption

and impunity in public service; and economic influences of corruption. Public procurement is one major area that ethical bottlenecks are prevalent in county governments (Bex 2015).

Regrettably, the realization of the objectives of the county governments has been constrained by extreme corruption in Local Government. Corruption remains a major problem which has constrained local government especially in Kenya from contributing meaningfully to the upliftment of the standard of living of the local people.

This problem is manifest in almost every local government area in Kenya. It is rife in the area of revenue declaration by collectors, to award of contracts, and embezzlement of local government funds by Governors, Members of County Assembly and other officials of local governments (Adeyemi, 2012).

DfID & World Bank (2012) notes that the public procurement sector reform in developing countries has historically gone through three main phases: increased emphasis on the importance of capacity building, fiscal stability, and focus on the actual quality of public services delivered.

However, this in effect alienates the more complex and usually undercover influence of politics on the key sectors of public service such as public procurement, and hence the need to unravel the influence of political patronage on the operationalization of Public Procurement Law in Kenya.

Kenya's devolution structure presents massive challenges for political and administrative restructuring by encouraging fragmentation of the state along partisan, regional and ethnic lines or is seen as 'decentralizing corruption', leaving citizens worse off if local elites are able to capture resources to the detriment of the majority, or when the newly established counties fail to put in place the systems needed for effective and transparent service delivery (Bex, 2015).

### **Policies and Legislation and Service Delivery**

Policies making concept denotes the execution of policy decision through a directed change in the environment with a view to attaining the objectives at an acceptable and anticipated cost. For a county government to achieve its mandate in service delivery, there needs to be not only good policy making but more importantly, timely policy implementation.

Policy implementation refers to the enforcement of legislation. Policy implementation and policy-making are interrelated (Lambright 2011).

Also policy-making and policy implementation at times occur concurrently. The purpose of researching policy implementation is to determine under what condition and circumstances a positive correlation between policy objectives and desired results can be obtained.

Public policy is dynamic and it has to be adapted to changing circumstances (Bex, 2015). Therefore policy changes should be introduced gradually for its success.

County governments need to base their policies on realistic perceptions of the relation between changes in the behaviour of the target group and the achievement of policy goals. At times the behaviour and attitude of the target group is the objective of policy. Therefore at the policy implementation stage this condition must be borne in mind. For efficient service delivery, legislators and executive officer must support the policy programme. This is effectively done through allocating resources for the implementation of policy. At times it may be necessary to obtain support from an active pressure group so as to influence local government action. Hence, this condition has an influence on successful policy implementation (World Bank, 2012). It is important to note that policy implementation is dependent on relations between the county government and the national government.

The local government policy is subject to review and approval by institutions at central government level and this can influence policy implementation and ultimately, service delivery.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research used the ex post facto research design. The target population included 3021 employees of the County government of Nyeri and key informants. The study used systematic random sampling technique to draw a sample from the County executive members and Members of the county Assembly. Questionnaires were used to gather data for the study. A pilot survey was conducted in order to ascertain and detect any ambiguities, questions that could not be easily understood or poorly constructed and even those that were irrelevant.

Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

**FINDINGS, DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

Out of 48 respondents, all the respondents did not comply. The questionnaires that were returned were 44. This translated to the response rate being 94.44%. The resulting reliability coefficient (reliability index) was 0.78 and way above 0.7 which is universally accepted as reliable (Polit, 2009). There were 14 (31.81%) single and 30 (68.19) who were married. This showed that a majority of

the respondents were married people. 59.09% were male while 40.90% were female respondents, showing that at least 30% were from either gender, meeting the constitutional threshold as stipulated in Constitution of Kenya 2010. 2.4% had attained primary level, 13.33% had secondary school level, 17.7% had technical level, 38.6% had college level and 27.3% had university level. This showed that the largest group of respondents had attained an educational level of college (38.6%) and the majority of the respondents had an education level which would enable them to articulate the items in the questionnaire.

**Service Delivery**

For the ease to determine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, it was necessary to explore the county performance from the perception of the Members of County Assembly, The County Executive Officers and the Key Informants.

Five likert scale responses on ratings for the county performance in service delivery based on statements (1 poor, 2 – fair, 3 – good, 4 – very good 5 – excellent) gives the results. The scores of very good” and “excellent” were taken to represent a mean of 3.5 to 5.0. On the other hand, the scores of “good” were taken to represent a mean of 2.6 to 3.4. Lastly, the score of “fair” and “poor” were taken to represent a mean of 1.0 to 2.5. The results are tabulated in table 4.5 overleaf.

**Table 1: Frequencies of Service Delivery**

		Healthcare performance	Agricultural Performance	Roads infrastructure Development	Education delivery
N	Valid	44	44	44	44
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.30	2.5000	3.4000	2.9000
Median		2.00	3.0000	3.5000	3.0000
Mode		2	3.00	4.00	3.00
Std. Deviation		.823	.70711	.69921	.56765
Variance		.678	.500	.489	.322

From table 1, the study established that healthcare performance was rated as generally fair (M=2.3), agricultural performance was rated as fair (M=2.5), roads and infrastructure development was rated as good (M=3.4) while education delivery was rated as good (M=2.9). Standard deviation for all the above variables was small; 0.823, 0.707, 0.699 and 0.567 respectively.

Roads and infrastructure was rated the highest at 3.4 due to the improved road network within the county, the county fiscal strategy papers for the 2014/2015, 2015/2016 confirms that the county had 3092.73kms of classified roads.

Among these, 450km are of bitumen, 1390,59km of graveled roads and 1252kms of earth service at the time when the county government started its mandate, these were roads done from independence, within a period of almost four years the department has graveled an additional 652kms and graded 942km of road spread through the county, an additional 23 bridges have been constructed in the county. Consequently, these must have rated the department relatively higher because they are physical structures which can be seen and are used by the residents of the County.

Education ranked second at 2.9 to infrastructure possibly because of the over Ksh 100 million annual bursary fund awarded to the less disadvantaged students in the county, this was actualized by the Nyeri county Elimu fund act 2015. Agriculture

comes rated relatively low at 2.5 possibly due to lack of impact by the agricultural extension Officers whose services are apparently not felt by the Nyeri residents. Health services came last at 2.3 rating possibly due to the various hospital closures resulting from the frequent strikes by health workers, the perennial lack of essential drugs in the health facilities and the poor proximity of the health facilities to the residents.

### Ethical Bottlenecks

The first objective of the study sought to establish the effect of ethical bottlenecks to service delivery in Nyeri County. Since the three categories of respondents were considered prone to view issues from different perspectives, it was necessary to analyses their responses separately. Five likert scale responses on ratings for the effect of policies and legislation on service delivery based on statements (1 –strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neutral, 4 – agree 5 strongly agree) gives the results. The scores of “strongly agree” and “agree” were taken to represent a mean of 3.5 to 5.0. On the other hand, the scores of “sometimes” were taken to represent a mean of 2.6 to 3.4. Lastly, the score of “disagree” and “strongly disagree” were taken to represent a mean of 1.0 to 2.5. Table 2 shows the opinion of the executive on ethical bottlenecks on service delivery in the County Government of Nyeri.

**Table 2: Opinion of the Executive on Ethical Bottlenecks**

		Bribe solicitation	Nepotism	Intra-business competition
N	Valid	10	10	10
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		1.6000	2.9000	2.5000
Median		1.0000	3.0000	2.5000
Mode		1.00	3.00	2.00 <sup>a</sup>
Std. Deviation		1.07497	.56765	.52705

From table 2, the study established that bribe solicitation was not considered as a prerequisite for

service delivery. The respondents generally chose strongly disagree (M=1.6).

On nepotism for securing employment, the respondents chose sometimes (M=2.9), while business competition with suppliers as a hindrance to service delivery, the executive generally chose strongly disagree (M=2.5). Standard deviation for all the above variables was small; 1.074, 0.567 and 0.527 respectively. From the findings, the executive did not completely deny that there was corruption, nepotism and conflict of interest within the county government. However, their opinion was that levels were not substantial to service delivery.

The findings are incongruent with the argument of Bex (2015). In the literature, Bex posited that Kenya’s devolution structure presents massive challenges for political and administrative

restructuring by encouraging fragmentation of the state along partisan, regional and ethnic lines or is seen as ‘decentralizing corruption’, leaving citizens worse off if local elites are able to capture resources to the detriment of the majority, or when the newly established counties fail to put in place the systems needed for effective and transparent service delivery (Bex, 2015). It is therefore possible that the executive were defensive of the state of corruption in the county government.

Further, the study sought the opinion of the Members of the County Assembly. Table 3 gives the results.

**Table 3: Opinion of Members of the County Assembly on Ethical Bottlenecks**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bribe solicitation	14	1.00	4.00	1.8571	1.16732
Nepotism	14	2.00	4.00	2.8571	.66299
Business competition	14	1.00	5.00	2.5714	.93761
Valid N (list-wise)	14				

From table 3, the study established that bribe solicitation was not considered as a prerequisite for service delivery. The respondents generally chose strongly disagree (M=1.85). On nepotism for securing employment, the respondents chose sometimes (M=2.85), while business competition with suppliers as an hindrance to service delivery, the executive generally chose strongly disagree (M=2.57). Standard deviation for all the above variables was small; 1.167, 0.662, and 0.937 respectively.

The opinion of the MCAs was almost similar to that of the executive in that corruption, nepotism and conflict of interest were not substantial to service

delivery in the county. Their position is not consistent with the argument of Bex (*Ibid*), who posits that the political patronage manifests itself in public appointments; judicial, legal and policy frameworks; politics of ethnicity and tribal balancing; corruption and impunity in public service; and economic influences of corruption.

Lastly, the key informants’ opinion was also sought. Table 4 gives the results.

**Table 4: Opinion of Key Informants on Ethical Bottlenecks**

		Bribe solicitation	Nepotism	Business competition
N	Valid	20	20	20
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		4.3000	4.3000	4.2000
Median		4.0000	4.0000	4.0000
Mode		4.00	4.00	4.00
Std. Deviation		.57124	.65695	.69585

From table 4, the study established that bribe solicitation was considered as a prerequisite for service delivery. The respondents generally chose strongly agree (M=4.3). On nepotism for securing employment, the respondents chose strongly agree (M=4.3), while business competition with suppliers as an hindrance to service delivery.

The key informants generally chose strongly agree (M=4.0). Standard deviation for all the above variables was small; 0.57124, 0.65695, and 0.69585 respectively.

Interestingly, the opinion of the key informants differed greatly from that of the Executive and the MCAs. Their opinion was consistent with the argument of Bex (ibid). From the results, it is indeed possible that the MCAs and executives were defensive, knowing that they have a role to play in the current situation. The problem with this view would be that the key informants represent an outsider's perspective of the situation. Equally significant is the fact that the study was conducted

during the campaign period for the 2017 general elections.

The key informants, like the entire electorate, are vulnerable to the wise, sometimes deceiving arguments of aspiring contestants. This notwithstanding, the MCAs and the Executive are unlikely to accept when there are issues of ethical bottlenecks which may implicate them . Consequently, if indeed the issues are present, it is unlikely that the MCAs and Executive will do anything in trying to arrest the situation. This would put the county in the receiving end where the electorate will scarcely be satisfied with the service delivery due to ethical bottlenecks.

#### **Policies and Legislation**

In order to meet the second objective “to identify the effect of policies and legislation on service delivery in Nyeri County” a Pearson chi-square test of association was run. Table 5 shows the case processing summary.

**Table 5: Case Processing Summary on Policies and Legislation**

	Valid		Cases Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Hindrance policies * quality service delivery	44	100.0%	0	0.0%	44	100.0%
Relevant policies * quality service delivery	44	100.0%	0	0.0%	44	100.0%
Need improve cidp * quality service delivery	44	100.0%	0	0.0%	44	100.0%

Relevant strategic plans * quality service delivery	44	100.0%	0	0.0%	44	100.0%
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The study sought to explore the relationship between hindrance of policies, relevance of policies, need to improve CIDP and relevance of strategic plans and service delivery in the county

government. This was done through responses from the 44 total of MCAs, Executive Officers and Key Informants. Following are the Pearson chi-square results.

**Table 6: Crosstabs on Policies and Service Delivery**

			Quality service delivery	
			Very Good	Total
Relevant of policies	Disagreed	Count	30	30
	Neutral	Count	6	6
	Agree	Count	4	4
	Strongly agree	Count	4	4
Total		Count	44	44

Table 6 shows that out of the 44 respondents, 30 “disagreed” that the services at the county were of

very good quality, 6 were “neutral”, 4 “agreed” while 4 “strongly agreed”.

Following are the Pearson chi-square tests.

**Table 7: Pearson chi-square Tests on Policies**

	Value	DF	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	1.955 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000
Likelihood Ratio	2.199	1	.532
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.151	1	.283
N of Valid Cases		44	

From table 7, we have a Pearson chi-square of 1.955<sup>a</sup>, with 1 degree of freedom, which is significant at least at the <.001 alpha level ( $p=.000$ ). Thus we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between quality service delivery and relevance of policies.

This finding supports the fact that good policies are critical in effective strategic planning and implementation.

Following are the results for need to improve CIDP with quality service delivery.

**Table 8: Crosstab for CIDP on Service Delivery**

			Quality service delivery	
			Very Good	Total
Improve CIDP	Disagreed	Count	4	4
	Neutral	Count	30	30
	Agree	Count	7	7
	Strongly agree	Count	3	3
Total		Count	44	44

Table 8 shows that out of the 44 respondents, 30 were “neutral” that the services at the county were

of very good quality, 7 “agreed”, 4 “disagreed” while 3 “strongly agreed”.

**Table 9: Pearson chi-square Tests on CIDP Improvement**

	Value	DF	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	.861 <sup>a</sup>	3	.835
Likelihood Ratio	1.239	3	.744
Linear-by-Linear Association	.031	1	.860
N of Valid Cases	44		

From table 9, we have a Pearson chi-square of 0.861<sup>a</sup>, with 3 degrees of freedom, which is not significant ( $p=0.835$ ). Thus we can conclude that there is a no significant relationship between quality service delivery and need to improve CIDP.

The CIDP is a document which was done in 2013 in the very early days of devolution, nor the authors or the residents understood clearly the devolved

functions in relation to service delivery and county residents priorities, it later came out in several stakeholders meeting which the researcher attended that there was no proper public participation during the drafting of the CIDP, this has resulted in the above scenario.

Following are the results for relevance of strategic plans and quality service delivery.

**Table 10 Crosstab on Functional Strategic plans and Service Delivery**

		Quality service delivery		
		poor	Good	Total
Relevance on Functional strategic plans	strongly disagree	1	0	1
	Disagree	3	0	3
	Neutral	0	0	0
	Agree	19	0	19
	strongly agree	20	1	22
Total		43	1	44

Table 10 shows that 20 of the respondents “strongly agreed” that relevant strategic plans led to “very good” quality service delivery while 19 of them “disagreed” that relevant strategic plans led to “good” quality service delivery, 20 strongly agreed

while 1 strongly agreed that they indeed led to good quality.

The results suggest that there is a great association with strategic plans and quality service delivery in the perception of the respondents. Following are the chi-square tests.

**Table 11: Pearson chi-square Tests on Functional Strategic plans**

	Value	DF	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	1.955 <sup>a</sup>	1	.003
Likelihood Ratio	2.199	4	.699
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.059	1	.303
N of Valid Cases	20		

From table 11, we have a Pearson chi-square of 1.955<sup>a</sup>, with 1 degree of freedom, which is significant ( $p=0.003$ ). Thus we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between quality service delivery and relevance of strategic plans.

The findings rhyme with the argument of Bex (2015) who stated that functional strategic plans consists the departmental goals and objectives with the specific issues to be addressed for them to meet their goals and objectives, the action taken on these issues have a significant effect on service delivery

and vice versa. It is critical to note that the strategic plans are specific, measurable, achievable and time bound and hence used in the performance management plan.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study established that the executive did not completely deny that there was corruption, nepotism and conflict of interest within the county government. However, their opinion was that levels were not significant to service delivery. It is possible that the executive were defensive of the state of corruption in the county government. The opinion of the MCAs was almost similar to that of the executive in that corruption, nepotism and conflict of interest were not significant to service delivery in the county.

The opinion of the key informants differed greatly from that of the Executive and the MCAs. The key informants felt that that corruption, nepotism and conflict of interest were significant to service delivery in the county. The problem with this view would be that the key informants represent an outsider's perspective of the situation. On the other hand, the MCAs and the Executive are unlikely to accept when there are issues of ethical bottlenecks which may implicate them. Consequently, if indeed the issues are present, it is unlikely that the MCAs and Executive will do anything in trying to arrest the situation. This would put the county in the receiving end where the electorate will scarcely be satisfied with the service delivery due to ethical bottlenecks. The findings suggest that there is a significant relationship between quality service delivery and relevance of policies. It was also established that there is a no significant relationship between quality service delivery and need to improve CIDP. Also, the results suggest that there is a great association with strategic plans and quality service delivery in the perception of the respondents.

### **Conclusion of the Study**

Although the Executive and the MCAs rule out any effect of ethical bottlenecks on the county performance, the key informants felt that it was highly significant. The probable reason for this is that the key informants represent an outsider's perspective of the situation. Therefore, it was more likely that the outsiders' perspective holds more truth than the MCAs and the Executive who had a role to play in service delivery.

There was a significant relationship between quality service delivery and relevance of existing policies and strategic plans but there is a no significant relationship between quality service delivery and need to improve CIDP. Therefore, the existing policies and legislation have relevance in delivery while the CIDP is not consistent with the needs and priorities of the electorate in Nyeri County.

### **Recommendations of the Study**

The following recommendations were made from the study:

The county government of Nyeri should have a well-defined performance management plan with clear indicators and timelines. Therefore, the Executive, the MCAs and the residents need to hold consultative meetings to create synergy, harmony and monitor the performance of the county without compromising the roles given to each one of them by the county government Act 2012 and the constitution of Kenya 2010.

There is need to improve the existing policies and legislation so as to improve service delivery in the county. There is need to tone down political interference specifically brought in by party wrangles and institutional abuse of power so as to create a better environment for service delivery.

### **Areas for Further Research**

The following are recommendations for further research:

In a bid to ensure that issues affecting the performance of the county government of Nyeri are consistent within all the stakeholders in the county, it is necessary to conduct a study on the issues causing a divergent view of the factors affecting the performance of the County Government of Nyeri

between the executive, the MCAs and key informants.

Although the study spells out the relevance of bills, policies and functional strategic plans in service delivery at the county level, it is critical to understand their quality by studying the factors influencing the passing of policies and legislation by MCAs in the County Assembly of Nyeri.

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