

Decentralisation as a tool in improving water governance in Kenya

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Abstract

Water governance remains barely understood in Kenya, despite the fact that water scarcity is endemic in the country. This study focuses on the role of decentralisation in water and sanitation services delivery in two sub-counties: Kiambu and Thika. The study uses primary data from a survey involving 766 respondents and secondary evidence from water agencies' records. Findings point to the need to adopt decentralisation particularly in stakeholder participation on water issues, power and role distribution in the Kenyan water sector. Decentralisation trends have been shown to enhance accountability, acceptance of pluralistic trends, and efficient and effective service delivery. Water policy revisions, enforcement and the proactive nature of water users are also prerequisites to better water and sanitation services delivery, if sustainable water management will be realised in the near future.

Keywords: Decentralisation; Governance; Policies; Water access and delivery; Water and sanitation services

Background

In Kenya, water governance culminates in three components: accessibility to resources, water services delivery, and participation in water management. In terms of accessibility, Kenya has annual per capita water below 700 cubic metres and is hence classified as water scarce compared to a world benchmark of 1,000 cubic metres (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2008). At least 50% of the rural population cannot access potable water despite government efforts to improve supply through the 1974 Water Act that sought to ensure potable water access was at a reasonable distance from users by 2000 (Ogendi & Ong'oa, 2009). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2005), sustainable access to clean water is 60% among the urban rich and less than 20% for the urban poor that comprise more than 50% of the total urban population in Kenya. In rural areas, the total access to potable water is less than 40% (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005). Inaccessibility of the resource complicates water sanitation during provision and encourages illegal connections on water leading to losses of about 50% of water supplied, as reported by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation (2005). To improve on accessibility, extension and rehabilitation of water infrastructure is ongoing in rural and urban areas through government funding. However, these efforts have been ineffective as Wambua (2004) observed, citing that the

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Kenyan Government invested only 3 US dollars per individual to water development annually and an additional 4×10^9 US dollars is required for adequate and effective access to the resource every fiscal year. The continued water access strain is attributable to the government's overlook on human population increases in reference to water demand-supply management using existing laws.

Water service delivery in Kenya has been devolved to the county levels as operational units. According to [Bellaubi & Visscher \(2014\)](#), these services are characterised by high rationing levels, poor coverage and low-quality delivery amidst massive losses. Laws regarding provision and consumption lack aspects of transparency and accountability of water delivered from the source to the users. Nairobi County which gets water from the Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC), which is a subsidiary of Nairobi county government, is a case example of the flaws in service delivery. Water supply is unreliable and coverage is minimal, particularly in the informal settlements prompting the drilling of boreholes and the privatisation of water resources by the affluent as [Moraa *et al.* \(2012\)](#) reported. The pricing of water among the poor in informal settlements who get it from private vendors is higher by 26 times compared to residents connected to piped water who pay for it according to the government tariff structure. Ultimately, this arrangement worsens the economic gap of residents since most of them depend on water for their livelihoods. Additionally, poor infrastructure, contamination and mishandling of the resource by vendors worsen water service delivery in Kenya as [Bellaubi & Pahl-Wostl \(2017\)](#) observed.

Citizen participation in water governance can be either direct or indirect. The latter describes the use of elected officials in policymaking on water management while the former describes the direct involvement of citizens in decision-making regarding water management. Participation, though present in Kenyan water management systems, is low and has ineffective feedback mechanisms which repress citizens from airing their grievances and taking action to redress flaws ([Moraa *et al.*, 2012](#)). The Kenyan Government has set up local institutions such as Water Resources Users Associations by WRMA (Water Resources Management Authority) and Water Action Groups by Water Services Regulatory Board to enhance citizen participation. The media, non-governmental institutions and research institutions at formal and informal set-ups promote participatory water governance, though their effect is minimal. Integrating the three aspects of water governance in Kenya is a challenge, which necessitates decentralisation during effective delivery of water services and concurrent maintenance of macroeconomic stability and strengthening policymaking action plans, which necessitates the current study.

Decentralisation reforms often have positive effects in water governance aspects of water access and clean water supply ([Yemek, 2005](#); [Laryea-Adjei & van Dijk, 2012](#)). Owing to the vested nature of Kenyan water resources by the state, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation spearheads water governance, management and services provision through the creation of institutions spelt out under the Water Act 2002 that was later revised in 2012. Through the Water Act, reforms focusing on commercialisation of water and decentralisation of management in a participatory approach were initiated delineating regulation responsibilities for various stakeholders. The principal mechanism to enhance transparency and accountability is underpinned on devolved water services provision and resource management under the Act. Under the Act, which is a legal framework on water resources management, the Ministry's role is limited to land-water reclamation, drainage, irrigation, policy formulation, implementation, evaluation, and resource mobilisation. Additionally, the WRMA, whose role is to conserve, map, regulate and manage water resources sustainably while involving stakeholders to guarantee fair allocation of water resources, was formed under the Act's provisions. This paper analyses various decentralisation types adopted by Kenya under the Water Act and helps to understand their influence in water services delivery.

Conceptual discussions

Decentralisation describes the transfer of responsibility, power, authority and resources to a low-level government from a higher-level one to enhance efficiency and effectiveness at policymaking, financial and service delivery stages (Laryea-Adjei & van Dijk, 2012). It refers to a focus beyond the public sector in resources and responsibilities transfer and can occur in three forms: administrative, fiscal and political decentralisation (Cohen & Peterson, 1999). Administrative decentralisation restructures governance to redistribute responsibility and offer public services at different levels. According to the World Bank (2000), administrative decentralisation is the transfer of authority to functional or regional authorities, corporations, public authorities, parastatals and subordinate government levels from the central government. Usually transferred responsibilities include information management, project implementation, staffing, budgeting, planning, maintenance and operation of subordinate government levels from higher ones or private sectors. Financial decentralisation refers to the capacity to raise adequate revenue at lower levels through transfers from higher authority or its local collection and have the power over its expenditure. Practices such as co-production, co-financing, cost recovery or self-financing, intergovernmental transfers of tax-generated revenue and borrowing for resource mobilisation by subordinate governments to central governments are examples of financial decentralisation (World Bank, 2000). Political decentralisation is transfer of authority to elected representatives and citizens to make public decisions through pluralistic politics at a localised level. The prerequisites of political decentralisation include a multi-party approach, effective lobbying and representation of interest groups, formulation of local governments, a strong legislature, and statutory and constitutional reforms (Laryea-Adjei & van Dijk, 2012).

The three forms of decentralisation result in three types of decentralisation: devolution, delegation and de-concentration (Cohen & Peterson, 1999). Devolution is the transfer of management, finance and decision-making powers to quasi-independent units of local authority with corporate ranks to have discretionary authority (Bossert & Beauvais, 2002). Delegation transfers public functions, administration and decision-making power to partial independent organisations that are not under total control by the government but must account to them. De-concentration refers to the redistribution of power within national agencies and sectoral ministries from the central authority. It is the weakest type of decentralisation since the accounting authority remains the central government that heads the various ministries and agencies (Laryea-Adjei & van Dijk, 2012). Decentralisation occurs based on role distribution in the form on institutional monopoly, distributed institutional monopoly and institutional pluralism states (Cohen & Peterson, 1999). Institutional monopoly has roles concentrated in one centre, distributed institutional monopoly has roles shared by local authority and the private sector but concentrated in one organisation, while institutional pluralism has roles distributed based on space or organisations. Distribution of roles and the involvement of various actors remains the stronghold of any form or type of decentralisation as Laryea-Adjei & van Dijk (2012) highlighted. Similarly, Awortwi (2004) and Helmsing (2000) emphasised the need for a multi-actor framework involving government players, indigenous institutions, non-governmental and community based organisations as well as citizens to enhance effective decentralisation. Cohen & Peterson (1999) claimed that decentralisation could be achieved through strategic reorganisation of reforms to redistribute roles using Figure 1. Quadrant I represents institutional monopoly while III represents distributed institutional monopoly. Quadrants II and IV represent centralised and decentralised institutional pluralism, respectively.

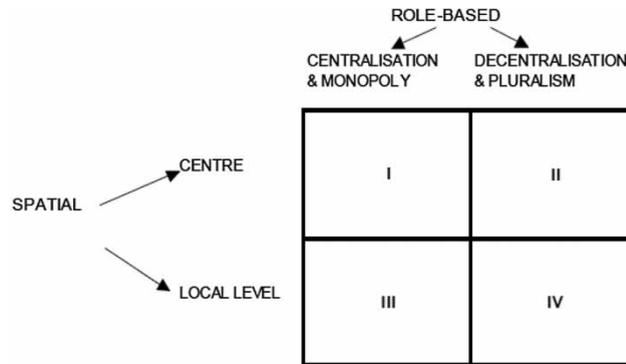


Fig. 1. Various decentralisation states and their respective roles.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to identify decentralisation types adopted in Kenya and assess their effect on water governance and service delivery. Specific objectives were as follows:

1. To analyse evolution of Kenyan water policies since independence.
2. To identify emergent role distribution and decentralisation types in the Kenyan water management system.
3. To assess the differences in decentralisation types adopted by Kiambu-west and Thika sub-counties.
4. To assess the performance indicators of decentralisation in the study areas.

Research questions

1. What changes has the Kenyan water policy undergone since independence?
2. What are the various role distribution and decentralisation systems adopted in the study areas?
3. Are there any differences in the decentralisation systems of Kiambu-west and Thika sub-counties?
4. What performance indicators measure the effect of decentralisation on water governance and service delivery?

Materials and methods

Description of study areas

Thika sub-county lies between longitudes $36^{\circ} 35'$ and $37^{\circ} 25'$ east and latitude $3^{\circ} 53'$ and $1^{\circ} 45'$ south of the equator (Moronge & Maina, 2015). It borders Machakos County to the East, Maragua sub-county to the north and Nairobi County to the South. It has an area of $1,960 \text{ km}^2$. Kiambu-west sub-county lies between longitudes $36^{\circ} 54'$ and $36^{\circ} 85'$ east and latitude $0^{\circ} 75'$ and $1^{\circ} 20'$ south of the equator (Wabwoba & Wakhungu, 2013). It borders Thika sub-county to the north and has a total area of

1,207 km². Both have an annual rainfall above 1,500 mm received in a bimodal pattern with the long and short rains being received between March and May and October and November, respectively.

Data collection

Data used in the study was collected from three sources:

1. Secondary sources including government official records from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation on delivery of water governance and policies since independence.
2. Interviews conducted with civil society managers and public service employees on their involvement in water governance and on effectiveness of water services.
3. A household survey in Kiambu-west and Thika sub-counties of central Kenya that are representative of water delivery approaches in Kenya. Interviews involving 766 households of the two sub-counties, 364 from Thika and 402 from Kiambu-west were carried out. Sample characteristics are described in the Appendix (available with the online version of this paper).

Research design and data analysis

To examine the level at which devolution objectives of Kenya's constitution are evident in water supply and sanitation services in the study areas, this research used several indicators that are derivatives of collected primary and secondary data. Indicators to assess decentralisation types were financial and administrative and provided clues on distribution or concentration of power during water services delivery. The choice of indicators was informed by three precepts:

1. Information derived from reviewed literature.
2. The focus on understanding information on the grassroots rather than in documented policy documents exclusively.
3. The need to understand water services delivery beyond civil service and legal norms that are prevalent in all Kenyan sub-counties.

From these principles, [Table 1](#) details the various characteristics and indicators used to understand the types of decentralisation and the level of power distribution or concentration.

The research assessed the reasons behind decentralisation differences of the two sub-counties using interviews from key informants who were mainly managerial personnel in government water and sanitation service delivery agencies. The forum provided more information on the role of regulations, national water laws and other factors that influence decentralisation and role predisposition in water services delivery.

The research used indicators of outcomes on water and sanitation services performance for the two sub-counties in the 2010 to 2015 period based on data availability from government records and the household survey. Aspects of sustainability, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness formed the criteria to assess performance. The indicators further helped in correlating decentralisation predispositions to performance. [Table 2](#) summarises the indicators used in each of the four aspects.

Table 1. Characteristics and indicators used to assess role distribution and decentralisation types.

Characteristic	Indicators
Political	❖ Involvement of different water users in various stages of service delivery
Administrative	❖ Involvement of civil organisations during service delivery
	❖ Responsibility to recruit, hire, lay off and remunerate workers
Partnering capacity	❖ Clearly spelt out responsibilities
	❖ Involvement of locals in planning, organisation and maintenance responsibilities
	❖ Clear layout of regulatory framework and involved activities
	❖ Involved parties in managing partnerships
Financial	❖ Responsibilities assigned to various partners
	❖ Ability to manage partnerships in the long-term
	❖ Existence of co-financing engagements
	❖ Local water sector revenues and allocations from central government transfers
	❖ Local water sector expenses from the central government under the sub-county control
	❖ Localised investments sourced from local earnings
	❖ Portion of income in the water sector raised and retained at the sub-county level

The logic model on input–immediate changes–outputs–outcomes assessed the effects of decentralisation on delivery of water services. In this context, subsequent policies and underlying laws served as inputs, the emergent role distribution and decentralisation type was the immediate result, institutional approach to water and sanitation services delivery at the governing level was the input, while the consequences on performance in the delivery level was the outcome. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used in data analysis.

Results and discussion

Evolution of water policy and legislation in Kenya

Kenya's water policy has undergone several transformations to accommodate decentralisation since independence in 1963. At independence, much emphasis was on participation of stakeholders including

Table 2. Performance assessment criteria.

Criterion	Indicators
Sustainability	1. Ability to use local skills and knowledge in operation/maintenance activities
Accountability	2. Emergence of local financing in new projects
	3. Frequency of auditing
Efficiency	4. Frequency of discussing audit reports at the sub-county assembly meetings
	5. Involvement of civil leaders in management, financing and planning of water sanitation/delivery services
	6. Changes in per capita water provision
Effectiveness	7. Duration taken to repair and improve water supply infrastructure
	8. Assessment of changes in water loss during delivery
	9. Area reliability on water sanitation and delivery services
	10. Assessment of coverage in water services provision

non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local citizens in organised self-help groups, Department of Water and the private sector in water governance in the spirit of *Harambee* (resource pooling for socio-economic growth) (Ngigi & Macharia, 2006). In this context, locals had greater say on water resources development projects compared to the central government. The focus of post-independence policy was on service delivery for agricultural, industrial and domestic use. However, challenges such as weak land and environmental laws, limited funding and investment in additional water projects and lack of skills and resources superseded the policy's intentions (Ngigi & Macharia, 2006).

Existent Kenyan water policies draw their roots from the 1974 Water Act (Chapter 372) of Kenya's gazetted laws. The result of the act was the National Water Master Plan whose motive was to guarantee access to potable water for household use by 2000. To realise the plan, the government was a key player in human and financial resource mobilisation and in policy formulation and regulation on the use of water nationwide. This would be achieved through improved water infrastructure for water transmission, construction of reservoirs and sinking of boreholes. The Department of Water Development (DWD), which was a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agriculture, became an independent Ministry of Water and Irrigation to enhance supply infrastructure development. These changes shifted the once decentralised water management system towards centralisation. Constraints of increased population, inefficient land and water resources use and limited government funding culminated in a demand–supply imbalance, particularly in the late 1980s. Consequently, the government realised that a centralised water management system was ineffective and stakeholder involvement in a 'handing over' process and the revision of 1974 Water Act were imperative considerations. Consequently, a National Policy on Water Resources Management and Development (1999) was launched and adopted by the legislature under Sessional Paper No. 1. In this policy, development, management and conservation of water resources were priorities in an integrated approach involving increased stakeholder participation. Additionally, a new water master plan for 2005–2009 was drawn to address emergent water challenges. However, its preference for privatisation of water resources was contested with claims that it favoured rich consumers and exploited the poor (Ogendi & Ong'oa, 2009). These complaints necessitated further revision of the 1974 and 1999 Acts to the 2002 Water Act that was deemed more inclusive in reference to decentralisation.

The 2002 Act was a breakthrough for decentralised water governance in Kenya due to its emphasis on power and role redistribution to lower governance levels and particularly the local communities. Through it, the Catchment Advisory Committees (CAC), Water and Sewerage Companies with autonomous Board of Directors, Regional Water Service Boards, Water Services Trust Fund and Water Appeals Board were formed (Mumma, 2005). These bodies had different responsibilities and actors towards effective water governance. However, due to poor governance, limited funding and its misappropriation, the bodies lacked a multi-sectoral approach in carrying out their mandate resulting in a conflict of interest and disintegration (Olum, 2009). The lack of harmony by various government agencies called for further revision of the Act to the Water Bill (2012) whose mandate has been to enhance conservation and management by incorporating the water service boards towards Integrated Water Resources Management.

Emergent role distribution and decentralisation types

This study showed that improved pluralism and decentralisation in water services delivery was an immediate effect in both sub-counties. The effect was higher in Thika sub-county compared to

Kiambu-west, which could be because NCWSC had a concentrated approach to water delivery and did not consider any partnerships with the Nairobi County government for improvements. Thika on the other hand, had partnerships with Thika Water Services Company and Athi Water Services Board (AWSB) in a more de-concentrated system. In Nigeria, partnerships of water agencies with the community and NGOs resulted in improved decentralisation of roles and powers (Akpabio & Ansa, 2013). The two sub-counties had synonymous approaches during sanitation that favoured decentralisation, though both human resources management and funding were managed from the central authority. Comparatively, pluralism was more prevalent in Thika compared to Kiambu-west that was skewed to a concentrated governance structure during provision of water sanitation services.

In reference to outputs, the research showed that Thika sub-county uses pluralism and delegation approaches in water and sanitation service delivery at a decentralised governing level. Community organisations, private companies, NGOs and government institutions were actively involved in responsibility sharing. Plural arrangements and spatial decentralisation in the area resulted in opportunities for external funding and skill improvement from stakeholders who were not government-controlled. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2015) observed that plural multi-level approaches were funding leverages for improved water services in developing countries. Kiambu-west sub-county used de-concentrated and distributed types of decentralisation in water and sanitation services delivery. Roles were concentrated within the NCWSC structure though spatially distributed from its headquarters in Nairobi to Kikuyu town of Kiambu-west. In sanitation services delivery, outsourcing of management for 33% of its sanitation facilities signalled considerable transition to decentralisation and pluralism. The study’s findings on decentralisation types and role distribution are shown in Figure 2. In the two sub-counties, limited control of human resources and fiscal decentralisation were evident disincentives of devolution, as has been reported in Malawi,

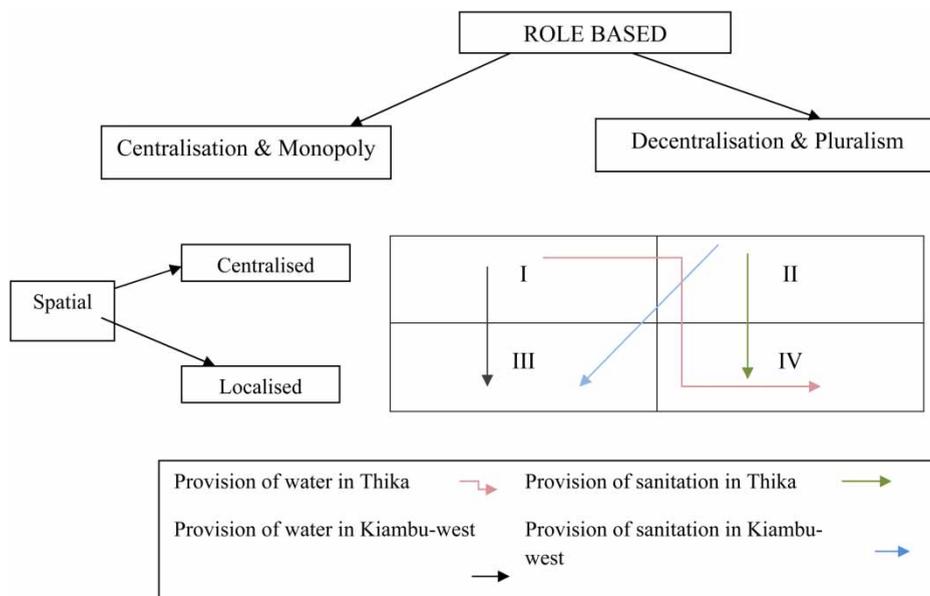


Fig. 2. Decentralisation types and role distribution.

Senegal, Mozambique, Rwanda and Ghana among other African countries (Water Partnership Program (WPP), 2010).

Differences in decentralisation in the study areas

Kiambu-west and Thika sub-counties had different approaches to water services delivery. In Thika, AWSB takes a portion of the local government roles and THIWASCO operates in a de-concentrated leadership system during water delivery, while in Kiambu-west, NCWSC operates in a more centralised system. Although decentralisation was more evident and acceptable in Thika than in Kiambu-west, non-revised water policies to accommodate decentralisation were highlighted as hindrances to improved service delivery by the informants. Emphasis was paid to the role of NCWSC, which is a public utility that hardly involves the local government during water supply in Kiambu-west. The informants expressed the need for firm policies towards decentralisation of water services and delivery. [Moraa et al. \(2012\)](#) highlighted similar challenges in Lang'ata and Embakasi sub-counties of Nairobi County stating that policy revisions and reinforcement were essential during decentralisation uptake in the water sector. In Tanzania, policy revision was cited as the basis for improved water governance using a need-based allocation system ([Jimenez & Perez-Foguet, 2010](#)).

The local government in Thika played an active role in service provision and hence took advantage of the decentralisation opportunity, unlike in Kiambu-west. The results in [Table 3](#) show that Thika sub-county government had an active role in water delivery compared to Kiambu-west county government because of devolved power in the former compared to the latter. NCWSC had an active role in sanitation though not as in Thika's THIWASCO. Secondary information from the Thika sub-county and key informants confirmed the preference for pluralism even before the active involvement of the AWSB. Key informants attributed the trend to increased poverty in the sub-county necessitating local action, donor interests in projects geared towards poverty alleviation, increased waterborne disease prevalence necessitating partnerships to reduce them, and the proactive nature of the local government to meet the citizens' expectations contrary to the situation in Kiambu-west associated with the affluent. [Mutondo et al. \(2016\)](#) concur with this supposition citing that poverty, increased occurrence of water-based diseases and better governance in Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe are the main steer towards decentralisation in the water sector.

Table 3. Role distribution during water services delivery from key informants and secondary data.

	THIWASCO	NCWSC	AWSB	WRMA	CAC	Non-state partners in Thika	Non-state partners in Kiambu-west
Regulation	a		a				Extremely limited role
Oversight	a						
Brokerage			a				
Operation and maintenance	a					a	
Financing	a					a	
Budgeting	a		a			a	
Planning	a		a			a	
Policymaking				a	a		
Leadership	a		a				

^aIndication that role is played.

Thika sub-county government alongside willing partners enhanced the leadership and role distribution in provision of water and sanitation services evident from their prowess in organisation, participatory planning, and monitoring or evaluation meetings incorporating locals. Furthermore, they have taken advantage of skills from the private sector and NGOs to mobilise resources and enhance their skills in water supply and delivery as the key informants attested. The sub-county government also expedites the role of state and non-state agencies involved in water services delivery and sanitation. [Diep et al. \(2016\)](#) made similar observations in Senegal and Burkina Faso, whereby decentralisation tendencies in water management enhanced partnerships between the government, NGOs and private sector for improved service delivery.

Performance indicators from the two study areas

Sustainability of water and sanitation services in both sub-counties was a challenge as shown in [Table 4](#). Thika was active in using local knowledge and skills for operation and maintenance but Kiambu-west outsourced the skills. There was overreliance on foreign aid to finance new projects. This observation could be a result of a poor climate in both counties to implement decentralisation acceptably due to political influence. Similar evidence was reported in Saint-Louis and Bobo-Dioulasso cities of Burkina Faso, whereby poor local and international financing of water projects, limited involvement of locals, political interference and unplanned expansion of settlement areas hindered the success of decentralisation efforts ([Diep et al., 2016](#)).

Thika reported better performance in accountability compared to Kiambu-west as shown in [Table 5](#). The former had increased public participation and enhanced information flow during water services provision, which is attributed to adoption of plural arrangements in the area. The latter had a concentrated nature of information management where the government restricted participation and hence

Table 4. Sustainability.

Indicator	Kiambu-west	Thika
Use of local knowledge and skills	Mostly outsourced	Locally sourced
Portion of local financing to water projects	8%	6%

Table 5. Accountability.

Indicator	Kiambu-west	Thika
Participation mechanisms	Announcements done via mainstream media	Announcements circulated at community gatherings and mainstream media
Number of government audits	Once every year	Once every year
Knowledge of audit by sub-county government	Knowledge retained by local leaders	Knowledge retained by local leaders
% of respondents who know about water price changes	28%	46%
% of respondents who received evaluation feedback	4%	36%

Table 6. Efficiency.

Indicator	Kiambu-west	Thika
% water losses	45%	15%
Average repair time in 2010	3 days	3 days
Changes in repair time in 2015	No change	Reduced by 56%

accountability to consumers. In both sub-counties, households that participated in decision-making had better access to water and sanitation services ratifying the affirmative role of decentralisation in improved water supply and sanitation. Furthermore, they were informed on fluctuations in water prices and received evaluation feedback on invested water projects. The findings concur with a study by Yemek (2005) that showed that fiscal decentralisation resulted in better accountability to water users and improved value for water in South Africa.

In terms of efficiency in water and sanitation services provision, Thika performed better than Kiambu-west (Table 6). Thika sub-county made notable efforts in reducing water losses during supply as evident from their prompt responses to repair leakages. Additionally, they mobilised external and local financial investments in water projects proactively. Households that had better response in water repair were facilitated by THIWASCO and AWSB rather than the central government via NCWSC charged with overseeing maintenance.

In the 6-year period, Thika was more efficient in enhancing accessibility to and reliability of water services compared to Kiambu-west (Table 6). This observation is attributed to the pluralism and delegation roles of THIWASCO that worked jointly with AWSB, hence achieving better service delivery. NCWSC on the other hand largely controls water coverage and sanitation services in Kiambu-west. The different decentralisation types in the sub-counties also justify the changes in safe coverage with Thika recording a 15% improvement compared to 5% in Kiambu-west. Similar trends are reported in Bangladesh where decentralisation improved efficiency in water service delivery through shared roles of local and central government (Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) Brief, 2014). In Ethiopia and Fiji, devolution of powers and roles resulted in efficient water services delivery as controlling agencies and citizens worked in congruence (Pathak *et al.*, 2008).

Effectiveness in delivery of water and sanitation services in Thika were better than in Kiambu-west as shown in Table 7. This observation could be because of the role played by THIWASCO particularly in oversight, role brokerage and participatory leadership. Additionally, THIWASCO has strategies to pool human and financial resources through partnerships to improve their services delivery, which resulted in better coverage and water supply reliability. Similar observations were made by World Bank (2011a)

Table 7. Effectiveness.

Indicator	Kiambu	Thika
% change in service coverage	2010 = 33%	2010 = 47%
	2015 = 38%	2010 = 62%
Flow of water reliability	2010 = 5 days	2010 = 2 days
	2015 = 3 days	2015 = 3.5 days
% of households with clean environments	29%	38%

that highlighted the need for decentralisation in effective water services delivery in South Africa. In Albania, effective water service delivery improved due to social, administrative, economic, institutional and legal decentralisation of governing agencies (World Bank, 2011b).

Recommendations

From the current study the following recommendations can be made:

1. There is a need to formulate and implement reforms that accommodate hybrid decentralisation types and pluralism in provision of water and sanitation services.
2. There is a need to build central government-local citizens relations to enhance water services provision. Such arrangements entail strengthening existent decentralisation reforms to cover administrative, fiscal and political challenges in service delivery and deepen pluralistic decision-making.
3. Existent reforms should be revised to give precedence to aspects of accountability, accommodate brokerage, oversight and participation of locals in a bottom-top approach, and adoption of technology to enhance water services delivery.
4. Monitoring and evaluation in implementing decentralised water projects is necessary to accommodate revisions in case there are deviations.
5. There is a need to address governance in the water sector holistically by considering all social, legal economic, institutional and administrative fronts since they influence service performance.

Conclusions

It is evident that Kenyan water policy has evolved over time to accommodate decentralisation though much more needs to be done in terms of revision and enforcement of existent legislation. Decentralisation tendencies are being adopted in the study areas but they remain elusive, as there is concentration of power and roles in the central governments. Additionally, Thika sub-county depicts more decentralised water management tendencies and ultimately, better service delivery compared to Kiambu-west. The study sheds light on some factors influencing performance of water and sanitation delivery services and concludes on the need to build central government-local citizens relations for enhanced provision in Kenya. The findings also point out policy implications necessitating the alignment of existent water agencies with decentralisation reforms outlined by legislation. The study provides evidence to correlate decentralisation to improved water governance and services delivery and hence the need for its adoption.

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