ABSTRACT

The study investigated how public-private partnership arrangements have performed in the provision of water services in Kenya. This is with a view to explain the extent to which this increasingly preferred public service delivery approach has improved access to water in terms of coverage, affordability, quality of water and customer service.

The broad objective of the study was to investigate outcomes of the Private -Public Partnership policy for provision of water as a public good as a challenge in Kenya. Specific objectives are as follows: First, to analyze the nature and scope of Public- Private Partnership arrangements in the water sector; secondly, to examine the gains from organizational managerial strategies in the provision of water services, and finally, to analyse appropriate interventions adopted to enhance the accessibility of water services notably by vulnerable consumers.

The study used secondary data and primary data from a household survey of 288 respondents, seven (7) Focus Group Discussions, and 28 Key informant interviews from seven (7) WSPs (Mogombet, Chemosit, Boya, KIWASCO, SNWSCO, MIKUTRA and Nyasare) of the Lake Victoria South Water Services Board (LVSWSB) umbrella. The study was conducted under two mutually reinforcing theories: governance theory and public choice theory. We used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the data. The techniques included use of content analysis of secondary data, frequency tables and cross tabulations to measure the central tendencies and dispersions.

The main finding was that public institutions that have adopted more private sector participation have performed better than those that have not, hence the more the public private sector partnership, the better the quality of public service delivery.
Highlights of findings specifically include the following: that there are various stakeholders, both institutional and individual involved in water service provision either through interventions or as facilitators, for example, the government through WSTF provides funds to community water projects in the provision of water services.; there is more private participation independence as WSPs increasingly become less involved together with the government in service operations and management; the existing policy on organization of water resources management does not guarantee effective popular participation given the formal governance structure; community water projects with more public private sector participation implemented better, on average, the required managerial strategies such as Enterprise Design; Operational roles; Network management; and Human resource functions.

The study recommended first, a realignment of the national water regulatory agency (WSRB) to be in charge of both service provision and resource management. Secondly, the “Service Provider” role of the state should be changed to that of a regulator of services and facilitator. The idea is to make a shift which necessitates strengthening of institutions responsible for planning, implementation and management of water resources. Water service operation should be left to the community and private operators. Third, the Water Service Trust Fund (WSTF) funding level should be enhanced substantially to finance community or private water operators with viable proposals to provide water to the community without having to go through Water Service Boards.