

Abstract

This paper assesses whether by commercializing the provision of water services as part of water sector reforms, the government has reneged on its promise to provide water to its citizens as a basic human right. The study used secondary data and primary data from a household survey of 288 respondents, seven Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and 28 Key Informant interviews from seven (7) WSPs, namely, Mogombet, Chemosit, Boya, KIWASCO, SNWSCO, MIKUTRA and Nyasare of the Lake Victoria South Water Services Board (LVSWSB) umbrella. The study was conducted through human rights approach under governance theory, positing that the government in as much as it receives either resistance or competition from other interacting actors, still has an obligation to provide basic services, water provision included, to its citizens. The study used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the collected 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 findings were that water sector reforms has not benefited the consumers of water services in general, and women in particular. Instead it has impoverished the population further as expressed in the form of increased proportion of household income on water expenses. Secondly the government has concentrated more on regulatory and distributive aspects of water service provision than producing more water for increased access to a greater number of population, implying that more women still do not access quality water in the right quantity at the right time. The study recommended that , the “Service Provider” role of the state should be changed to that of a regulator and facilitator of services at the Counties’ level for increased popular participation in the governance of water provision services through community and private operators as well. This will therefore enhance the participation of women in the local level governance of water services, hence, increased access to water by virtue of being active participants in the determination of ownership, distributive, and management processes of water.