



# Institute of Social Studies

## **DECENTRALISING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN UGANDA: A CASE OF KASESE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT.**

By

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A research paper submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the  
Degree of Masters of Arts in Development Studies (Public Policy and Administration)  
of the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague

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November 1999

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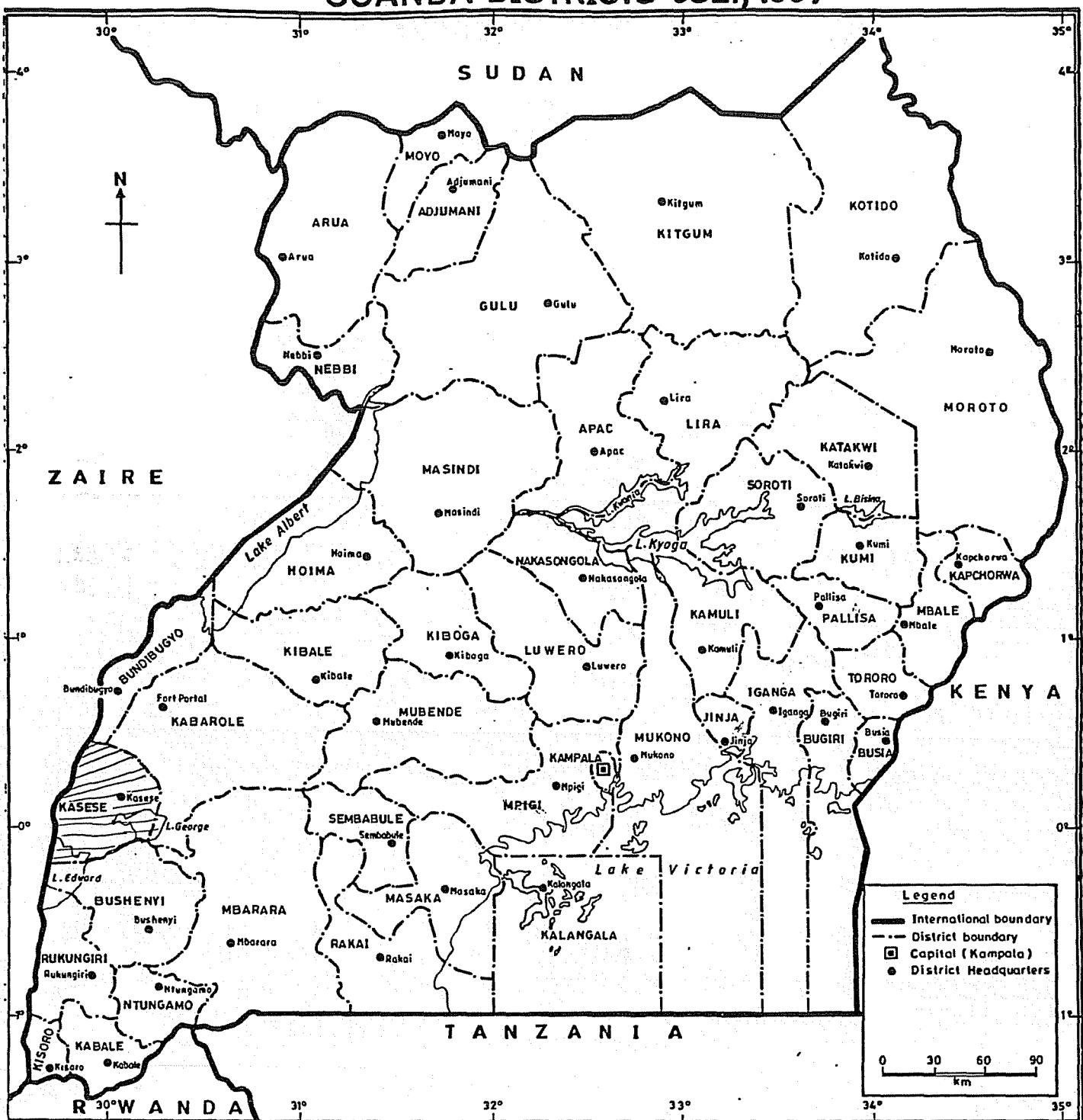
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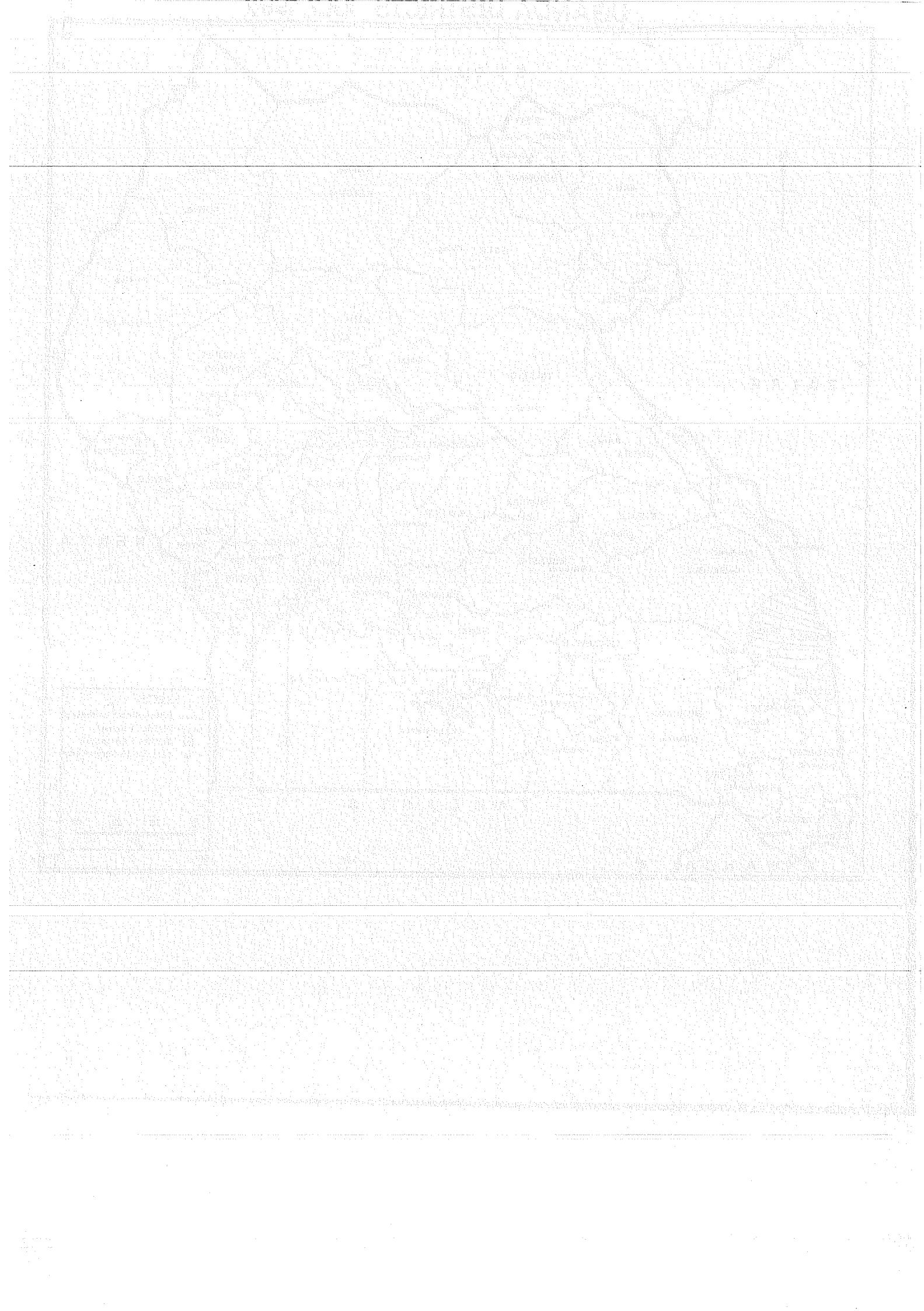
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# UGANDA DISTRICTS JULY, 1997





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people and organisations have helped in the preparation of this research paper. Not all can be mentioned here due to space problem but my thanks to all are hereby registered.

First and foremost, special gratitude goes to my first supervisor, Dr Olowu Dele who introduced to me theories on decentralisation in specialisation OPT.302. His vast knowledge and experience on decentralisation in Africa and the continued counselling and guidance assisted me greatly to focus my area of study.

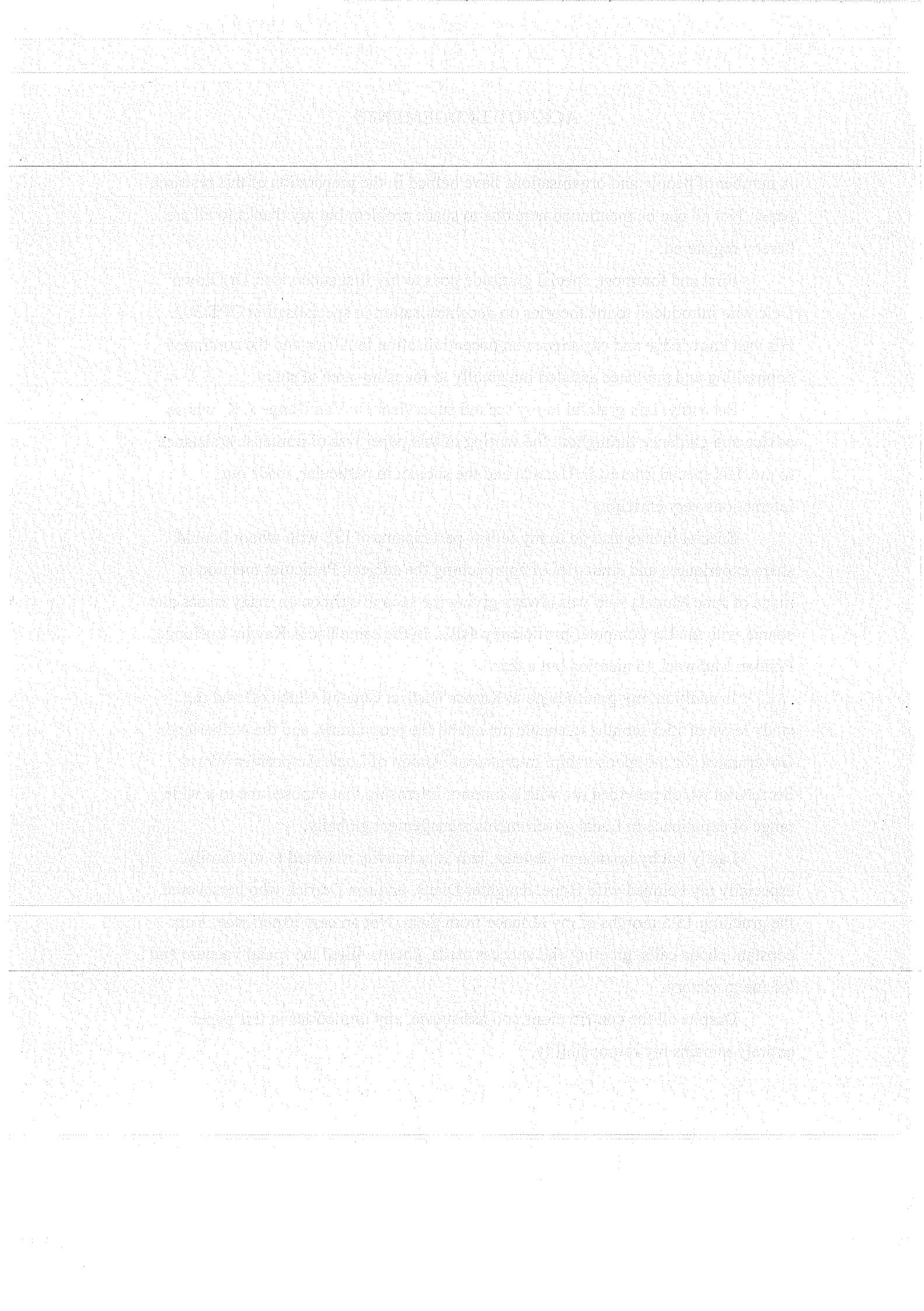
Secondly, iam grateful to my second supervisor Dr Van Donge J. K. whose advice and guidance throughout the writing of this paper was of immense assistance to me. His special interest in Uganda and the subject in particular, made our interactions very enriching.

Special thanks also go to my fellow participants at ISS with whom I could share experiences and strategies of approaching the subject. Particular mention is made of June Munala who was always giving me second opinion on many issues and shared with me her computer proficiency skills. In the same line is Kawila Lushinge, Pontian Muhwezi, to mention but a few.

In addition, my gratitude go to Kasese District Council which offered me study leave of 15.5 months to enable me attend the programme, and the Netherlands Government for the sponsorship. International Union of Local Authorities World Secretariat which provided me with a summer internship that exposed me to a wide range of experience in Local governments management globally.

Lastly but by no means the least, iam very heavily indebted to my family, especially my beloved wife Hope, daughter Diana, and son Derrick who persevered the gruelling 15.5 months of my absence from them. Not an easy experience. Your constant phone calls, greeting and success cards, photos, filled the social vacuum and led me to victory.

Despite all the contributions and assistance, any limitations in this paper entirely remains my responsibility.



## **DEDICATIONS**

This piece of work is dedicated to my wife,

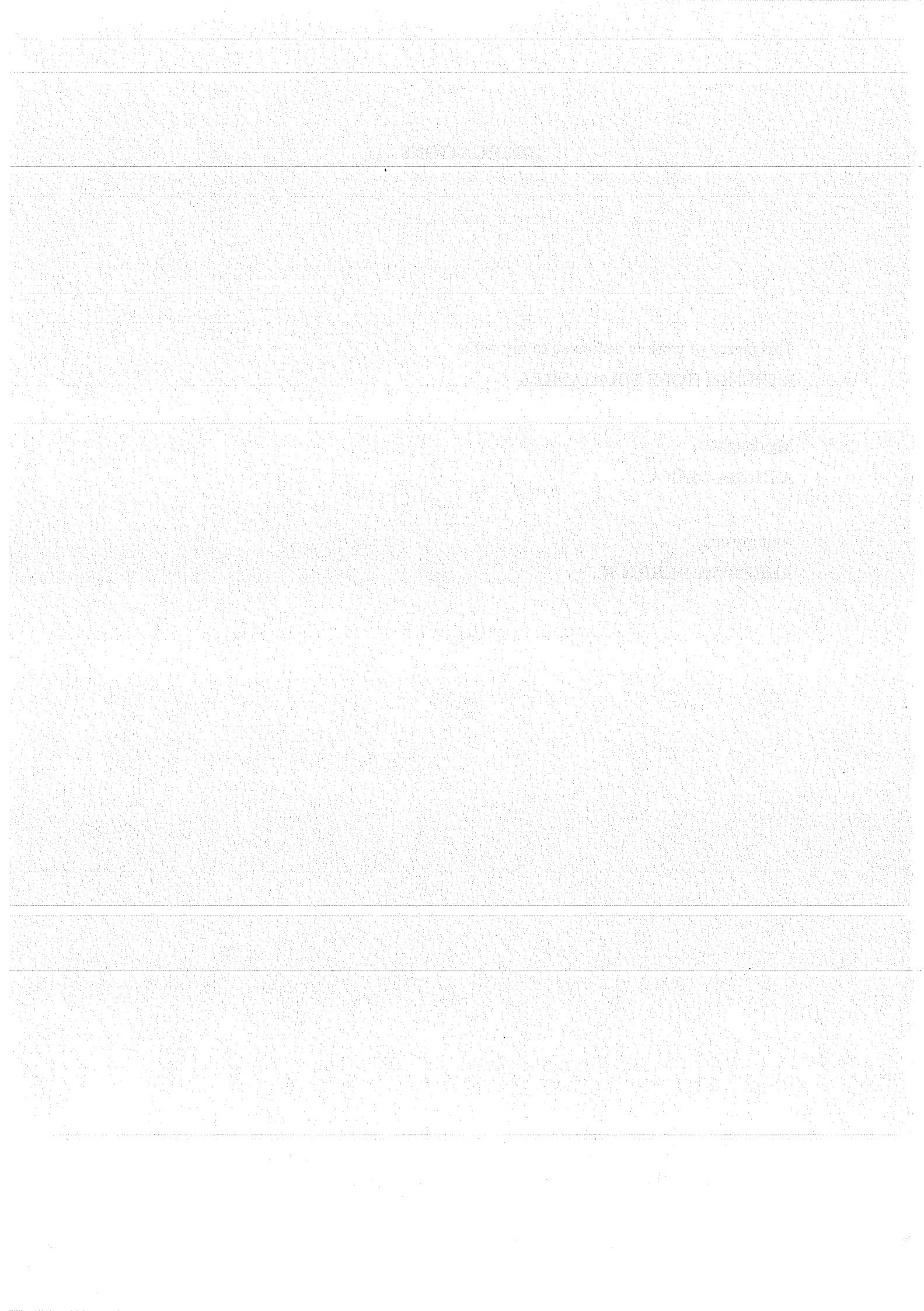
**BARUNGI HOPE MBAHAMIZA**

My daughter,

**ASHABA DIANA**

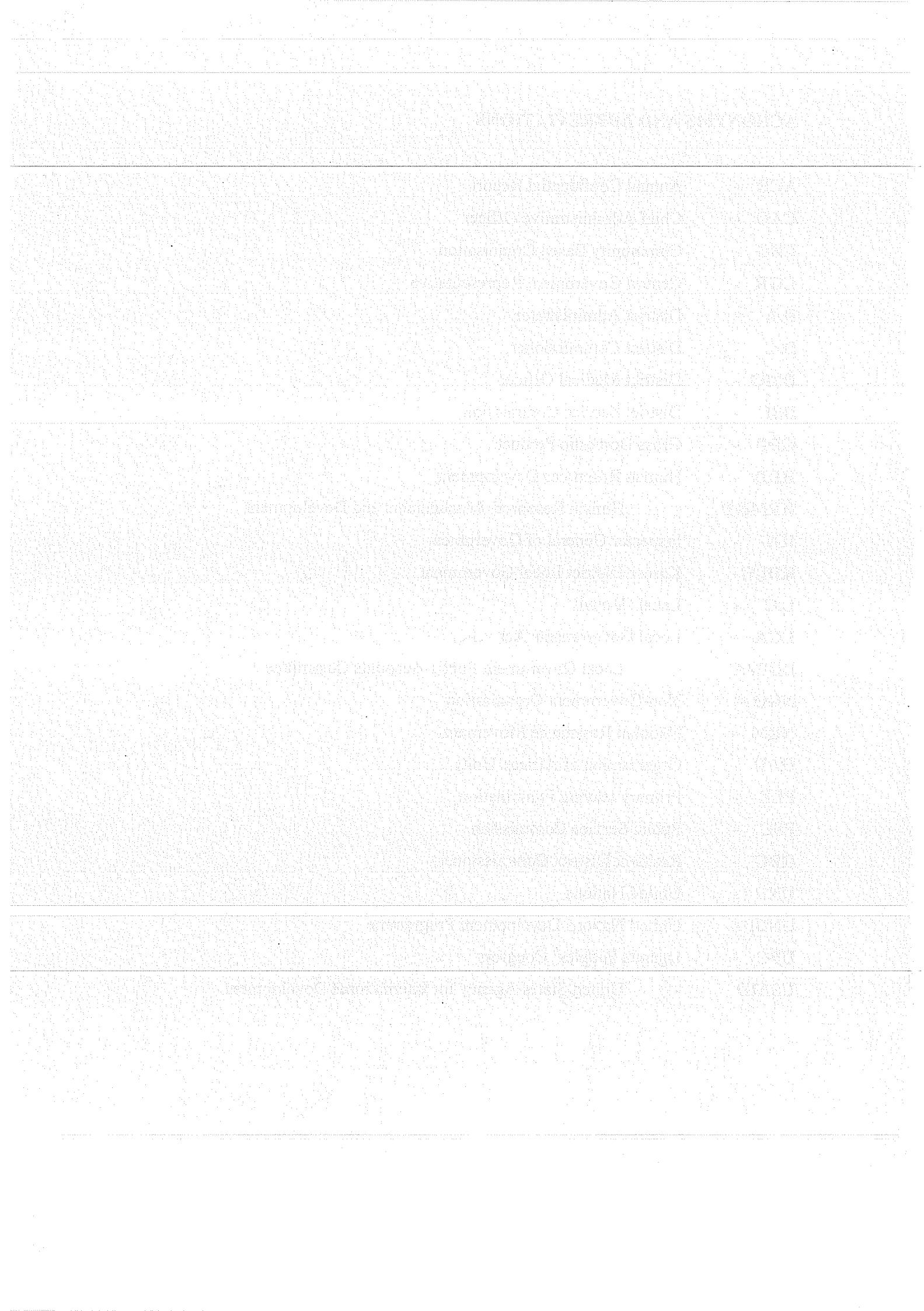
And my son

**AHEEBWA DERRICK.**



## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACR</b> -	Annual Confidential Report
<b>CAO</b> -	Chief Administrative Officer
<b>CBO</b> -	Community Based Organisation
<b>CGR</b> -	Central Government Representative
<b>D.A</b> -	District Administrator
<b>D.C</b> -	District Commissioner
<b>DMO</b> -	District Medical Officer
<b>DSC</b> -	District Service Commission
<b>GDP</b> -	Gross Domestic Product
<b>HRD</b> -	Human Resources Development
<b>HRM&amp;D</b> -	Human Resources Management and Development
<b>IGG</b> -	Inspector General of Government
<b>KDLG</b> -	Kasese District Local Government
<b>L.C</b> -	Local Council
<b>LGA</b> -	Local Governments Act
<b>LGPAC</b> -	Local Government Public Accounts Committee
<b>NGO</b> -	Non-Government Organisation
<b>NRM</b> -	National Resistance Movement
<b>OAU</b> -	Organisation of African Unity
<b>PLE</b> -	Primary leaving Examination
<b>PSC</b> -	Public Service Commission
<b>RDC</b> -	Resident District Commissioner
<b>UN</b> -	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b> -	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UPC</b> -	Uganda Peoples' Congress
<b>USAID</b> -	United States Agency for International Development



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Map of Uganda showing Kasese District

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION.

#### 1.1 Background

Uganda is located in East Africa. It is a land locked country sandwiched by Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and The Democratic Republic of Congo. It occupies a total area of 236,040 sq. km with land area covering only 199,710 sq. km. The economy is mainly agrarian peasant based with a small monetised sector. Agriculture accounts for more than 57% of GDP employing more than 80% of the national labour force. The economy was vibrant in the first few years after independence but registered steady declines in the 1970's and 80's largely due to mismanagement and the declining world prices of coffee and copper the main exports. The oil crisis of 1970's only helped to worsen the situation. The economy started to regain credibility after the current National Resistance Movement (NRM) took power in 1986. Since it came to power, many reforms have been implemented to revive the economy. These include liberalisation of the economy, privatisation of many state owned enterprises, strict financial discipline, export promotion and import substitution drives among many others. The reforms have so far registered tremendous progress. Inflation has been brought down from over 200% in 1986 to less than 10% in 1998. The economy has registered annual growth rate of GDP from negative figures in 1986 to approximately 7% in the last 2 years. Economic reforms coupled with other public sector reforms like democratisation, decentralisation, constitutional reform has put Uganda's picture again in countries registering progress on the African continent.

Uganda government attained political independence from the British on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1962. The immediate post-independence constitution had devolved a lot of powers to local authorities. This was later to be reversed by the change of the national constitution in 1967. The powers earlier accorded to local authorities were taken to central government. Local authorities became severely constrained as they lost much of the financial and administrative powers. One can comfortably assert that local authorities were reduced to mere implementing arms of central

government without independent powers to make decisions over their finances, personnel and other matters related to their effective management. They heavily depended on directives and instructions from central government, which greatly eroded their capacity to plan and deliver services to the population.

Without powers to make independent decisions over their resources, local authorities became grossly ineffective and inefficient. Performance standards were appalling and at one time their relevance became questionable. Due to the political turmoil that characterised Uganda's political scene, this went on for a long period of time up to 1986 when the process of centralisation had to be reversed in favour of decentralisation. Decentralisation in the form of giving local authorities powers over raising local revenue and utilising it on locally identified programs and projects was adopted. Local authorities were given political, financial, administrative and planning powers in their respective jurisdictions. The powers were however not devolved enough. Central government retained much more powers and local authorities were again found to be toothless. A lot of responsibilities had been delegated to them but without corresponding resources both financially and otherwise to execute them. The centre retained powers over appointments, promotions, disciplinary action and transfers of majority of personnel deployed in local authorities. The staff appointed and posted to local authorities were not responsive to local councils they served since they were answerable to their respective ministry headquarters. They in many instances received funding directly from their mother ministries without involvement of the local councils they were serving. Their performance could not be easily monitored since their immediate supervisors were not in close reach. The dual system of personnel in local governments where some staff were taken to belong to local authorities and others to central government worsened the situation. Since local authorities lacked adequate resources, they could not afford to remunerate the local staff to the level of central government despite the fact that they were to enjoy equal terms and conditions of service. With the absence of a responsive and accountable civil service in local governments, service delivery considerably declined.

For effective and efficient delivery of services, it was realised that local governments cannot achieve much without having an effective personnel system providing them with powers to appoint, deploy, control and discipline officials. This was to call for cessation of the dual system of administration which had tended to preserve the sectoral approach to development, promoting the duplication of effort, operational inefficiencies, wastage of resources and encouraging a strong sense of departmentalism.

Government in 1992 officially and formally adopted decentralisation policy, believed to address the above problems. An enabling legislation was passed in 1993. The object of the law was to provide for decentralisation of functions, powers and services to local governments, to increase democratic local control and participation in decision making and to mobilise support for development, which is relevant to local needs.

In consolidation of the effort achieved by statutory legislation, decentralisation principle was later to be embedded in the national constitution of 1995. It was made explicitly clear in the constitution that the state shall be guided by the principle of decentralisation and devolution of governmental functions and powers to people at appropriate levels where they can best manage and direct their own affairs (Uganda Constitution, 1995:2). The constitutional provisions were later to be operationalised by the enactment of The Local Governments Act, 1997, setting the framework for the management of local governments under democratic decentralisation.

Under the new arrangement, each district local government was given autonomy to manage its own staff. Independent District Service Commissions (DSC) were to handle the appointments, confirmation, promotion and dismissal of all staff employed by the district local governments (Local Governments Act, 1997:44). All field administration staff of central government deployed in districts at that material time were deemed to have been appointed by the respective District Service Commissions and to henceforth become employees of the district councils. The system adopted approximates a separate personnel system with minimal intervention from central government.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Staffing is the most vital element of any program of decentralisation for development purposes. A government may organise effectively for decentralisation, mark out optimum areas for administration, allocate functions rationally between units at different levels and arrange for popular participation and representation in the program, but the success of the program will, depend largely on the availability of qualified staff for sustained work in small towns and rural areas, the rapport between the staff and the people, the ability of the staff members to work effectively together and the administrative and technical support they receive (UN,1962:45).

The devolution of power to local governments to exercise full control over their staff has been met with mixed reactions. The reactions can for the sake of analysis be categorised as both administrative and political. Administratively, the issue can be seen from the perspective of both local and central government bureaucrats in the civil service. Civil servants in local government, and in particular those formerly belonging to central government have expressed great dislike for the system. They see it as narrowing their career prospects as there is no freedom of movement from one district to another and between central government and local authorities. The structures in local governments are limiting and prospect for promotion of senior civil servants almost non-existent. They fear too much undue interference by the politicians in the performance of their duties and the risk of one losing his job in case he fails to compromise. The matter is not even helped by the supposedly independent District Service Commission, which is feared to be prone to manipulation by the local politicians. The district council appoints it, though with the approval of the national Public Service Commission (PSC). Their terms of remuneration are set and met by the district council. With low level of education throughout the district, it is possible that some members of DSC may not be holding academic qualifications nearer to those of senior district bureaucrats. Their technical competence to handle the job may be in doubt. The DSC put aside, civil servants also have low opinion on the local councillors who are in most cases of very low level of education. There is no academic qualification needed for one to become a local government councillor. Central government bureaucrats on the other hand majorly received the separate personnel system negatively as it cut down their empires where they had powers to

direct, discipline, transfer staff. Their reaction can therefore be understood in that context to begin with. What could however have been their genuine concern was the capability of the districts to carry out all this added responsibility. Since they lost direct control of their former field staff, they feared that enforcing uniform national standards could be a problem. Manipulation by local politicians could lead to the appointment of ill-qualified staff who would not match the requirements of the tasks. Service delivery would be politically driven without due regard to other concerns of national importance.

Politically, decentralisation is very important since it involves redistribution of power. Local politicians received decentralisation of human resources management with great excitement. They had been demoralised with the decentralisation that had not given them full powers over the staff serving their local authorities. The excitement was in one sense genuine since the staff would now have undivided loyalty in favour of the local councils. Civil servants would hopefully be more accountable and responsive to the local needs. They would now monitor their performance and take or recommend necessary action in case of need. On the other hand, some of the excitement was not with good intentions. Some local politicians interpreted the decentralisation of human resources management as giving them chance to acquire jobs for their relatives and political supporters. Since they have some power in appointing the DSC, they had a feeling that they could in one way or the other influence the appointments and other personnel functions. This was reinforced by the fact that they now had powers to establish and abolish offices in the district structures. This is not a point to be under-rated given the history of Kasese district as will be shown in the next chapter. The issue of local people joining the district public service was at the heart of the struggle to obtain a separate district from Toro kingdom. Decentralisation was seen as a dream comes true. Other politicians see the opportunity of manipulating the civil servants to fulfil their political ambitions. There was every opportunity since all civil servants in the district were now answerable to the local politicians.

The response from national politicians varied. There was a group, which felt this was a big step in the democratisation process and others who felt districts lacked the capacity to handle the added workload. The argument was supported by the worry

that districts would not get the calibre of staff who could constitute competent DSC. Others of course were worried that district councils were being made very powerful which would threaten their status quo as power centres in the district derived from their advocacy and lobbying role with central government. In the case of Kasese district, the researcher's personal experience indicates that all national level politicians from the district strongly supported the move since it was very popular among the population and would reduce pressure on them by their constituents to lobby them for jobs from central government. They would now forward them to local politicians who had been given the powers. The stakeholder analysis on decentralisation as presented by Lubanga<sup>1</sup> in Nsibambi (1998:77), and presented below as table 1.1 captures some of the reactions at the national level.

**Table 1.1. Stakeholder Analysis on decentralisation in Uganda.**

<i>Stakeholders</i>	<i>Reactions to decentralisation</i>
Donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- supported decentralisation because they were fed up with corruption and tardiness of bureaucracy at the centre. Resources would not reach local governments.</li> <li>- Donors supporting vertical programmes still want more control at the centre.</li> <li>- Some donors do not approve of the block grant system. They prefer central government financial transfers earmarked programme by programme (vote system).</li> </ul>
Central civil servants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not support decentralisation because of loss of power and control over logistics and funds. Loss of patronage occasioned by power to post and transfer staff was resented.</li> </ul>
District Administration Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly support decentralisation because they have gained more control over professional staff, funds and logistics.</li> <li>- And because of independence to make decisions without frequent reference to the centre.</li> </ul>
District professional Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mixed response: support decentralisation for increased access to resources and relative independence from the centre.</li> <li>- But fear for promotional outlets and advancement.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Lubanga was Secretary to the commission of inquiry into local government systems in Uganda in 1986. He later became Director of Decentralisation Secretariat; Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government and he is currently serving as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education.

They do not trust local politicians. Also feared for possible whimsical management of the personnel function and victimisation.

#### District non-professional

Staff - Generally undecided about decentralisation. Did not see any immediate benefit.

- Many have been retrenched; those in service have insecure jobs. Retrenchment under the civil service reform was erroneously regarded as a decentralisation imperative.

- Others have gained through better payment from local financing initiatives.

#### National politicians

- Some support the federal system of government and heightened autonomy. They felt decentralisation measures did not go far enough.

- Others support a certain degree of decentralisation but preferred certain powers to remain at the centre.

#### District politicians from the centre.

- Highly support decentralisation and prefer greater autonomy.

The heart of the problem lies in the fact that the district local government may not have adequate resources to attract, develop and retain competent staff to run the district services. The devolution of human resources management was not matched with equivalent fiscal and financial decentralisation. Locally raised revenue is very low and there is great dependency on central government transfers. Such a situation does not accord the local government opportunity to design and implement an attractive incentive scheme for her staff.

Decentralisation of human resources management presents a problem of distribution of roles between politicians and civil bureaucrats. Local politicians have been placed in full control of the district public service. Without clear definition of roles, there is room for clash jeopardising service delivery in the district local government. The interface between politicians and bureaucrats presents issues of

efficiency and political acceptability. The challenge is striking a balance between the two values without one overriding the other. Some critics argue that Uganda's decentralisation policy seem to have been pushed by the political aspect without due guarantee for efficiency. The same group asserts that no capacity was first built for the politicians on how to reasonably exercise those powers and there was a danger for abusing them deliberately or otherwise.

Lastly is the issue of centre-local relations. Decentralisation of human resources management faced stiff opposition from central government bureaucrats as can be seen from the above stake holders analysis. Much as the political will to devolve powers was high, the bureaucracy in central ministries was strongly opposed to it. Since central government commands much of the technical and financial powers, it was feared that forces towards re-centralisation would reverse the trend, or if not, stifle local efforts to consolidate their autonomy.

In that regard, the central question for this study will be *to find out the changes registered in the local government performance as a result of decentralising human resources management and development.*

Other subsidiary research questions are:

1. What impact has been registered in personnel management practices like recruitment and selection, confirmations, promotions, training, staff performance appraisal, and discipline matters?
2. What structural and institutional mechanisms have been put in place to improve staff performance?
3. How has the decentralisation of human resources management and development enhanced effective and efficient service delivery in the local government?
4. How have the issues of accountability and responsiveness been impacted by the new policy trend?
5. What is the role of central government in the process since local governments have been accorded autonomy to manage their own staff?
6. How is the relationship between elected and appointed officials affecting performance?

7. Is there adequate capacity in the local government to face the challenge of effecting and sustaining good performance?

### **1.3 Specific Objectives of the Study.**

1. To examine whether the management of personnel function has improved with the decentralisation of human resource management and development.
2. To examine the impact of decentralisation of human resources management and development on service delivery by the district local government.
3. To analyse how the decentralised human resources management and development has impacted on the centre-local relations.
4. To identify problems confronting the running of a decentralised system of human resources management and development and make recommendations to alleviate them.

### **1.4 Hypotheses**

1. Devolution of human resources management and development leads to improvement in personnel management practices in local governments.
2. Civil servants' accountability and responsiveness improve with the decentralised human resources management and development in place.
3. Poor role clarification between politicians and civil servants adversely affects effective and efficient performance in local governments under decentralisation.
4. A clear mechanism of central government control is still necessary under decentralisation if local governments are to responsibly exercise the powers functions devolved to them to manage their own affairs.
5. An effective decentralised human resource management needs corresponding fiscal and financial decentralisation to be sustained.

### **1.5 Empirical Justification of the Study**

Democratic decentralisation, otherwise known as devolution, has not stood the test of time in many developing countries, especially in Africa. All along, there has been resistance from nation states to give wide ranging powers to local governments for

fear that it would compromise the process of nation building where by direction from the centre is considered very crucial for national integration. There was also lack of trust in local governments in terms of capability to run their own affairs.

The successful implementation of any policy relies heavily on the administrative machinery put in place for execution. The organisational structures, capability and motivation of staff involved all combine with other non-human factors like finance and equipment to make policy implementation a success. In policy studies and research, it is unfortunate that the human element has not been accorded the priority it deserves. There has been a tendency to believe that once a policy is well designed, what is needed next is provision of finances and the rest will follow. Whether out of deliberate act or sheer neglect, the human element in policy implementation has not been taken seriously. This has been disproved over time as many well designed policies however well financed, have become failures. It is against this background that the researcher was motivated to look into this, otherwise neglected area, for it could give a way forward in understanding as to why many well designed and funded policies have been failing.

Decentralisation in developing countries has not met with the expected success. However, one notes that in many of those failures, central government has decentralised responsibilities for planning, finance mobilisation and utilisation, but it has not devolved the human resource management aspect. Cases in Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, can serve as test cases (Wallis: 1989, Mawhood: 1983, Olowu & Wunsch: 1995). Uganda's decentralisation policy has been unique from the previous ones in Africa in a way that it is focused on devolution rather than deconcentration, which has been common. It is a first of its kind, and may be recently South Africa, where substantial political, financial and administrative powers have been devolved to local governments. The study will draw lessons from the Ugandan experience, which other countries in the region could learn from in designing future decentralisation programmes.

The decentralisation of human resource management and development to local government as pointed out earlier was received with mixed reactions. There is up to the present time a big debate in Uganda's public service circles as to whether

decentralising human resource management was a right thing to do or it was just rushed to gain political capital at the expense of effective public service management. Others claim the policy was donor driven and might not be sustainable if donors pull out. This study will make a contribution to this discourse that will guide policy makers and implementers on planning for a way forward.

Lastly, but by no means the least, since the researcher is a practitioner in local government, he wanted to widen his understanding and knowledge in the sphere of decentralising human resources management.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

Decentralisation is a very wide concept with several dimensions. One can talk of the constitutive dimension, the operational dimension and the governance dimension. The constitutive dimension deals with grand norms for instance, the fundamentals of sharing power between state and society; state and the market/non market actors. The operational dimension would be concerning itself with sharing of power between the core and sectoral ministries and/or sharing of power between central and field administration. This could comfortably be described as deconcentration or bureaucratic decentralisation. On the other hand, the governance dimension deals with the sharing of power between the executive and other branches of government or actual devolution from central government to sub-national governments, parastatals or public corporations. Others speak of territorial as against functional dimensions of decentralisation. In this respect, this study will be tackling the governance dimension and specifically where power has been devolved from central government to lower level governments. It combines both functional and territorial modes of decentralisation.

Uganda has a total of 45 districts, 13 municipalities, 950 sub-counties, 39 municipal divisions and 51 town councils, all, which constitute local governments. There is no provincial or regional level of administration. Decentralisation has been extended to various levels of local councils in different areas. At least each level has been given some power of some sort depending on its hierarchy in the political ladder. Human resource management and development has however been decentralised only up to the

district level. Lower level local governments do not have powers to appoint, promote or dismiss staff. Each district has one body, the DSC, which serves all local governments in the district. The chief executive of the district council, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), has power over all public officials in the district wherever they are deployed except in the case of municipal and town councils. They can be transferred from one locality to another within the district.

Kasese district has been chosen for this study for a number of reasons:

- The district occupies an almost middle position in Uganda. Its creation in 1974 puts it at the centre between those districts created at independence in 1962 and the most current ones of 1990's.
- In terms of financial resources, with its locally raised revenue of almost 800 million Uganda shillings, it falls in the middle level, if districts were to be ranked on the criteria of local revenue base.
- Kasese district potentially had a conducive political atmosphere for the implementation of decentralisation policy. Unlike some other districts in the country, Kasese district has been experiencing political stability in the period under review. This is very important since decentralisation is essentially a political process.
- Decentralisation policy in Kasese district can be described as having been demand driven. As described in the next chapter, the people of Kasese and the neighbouring Bundibugyo district practically fought for local self-governance from 1962 under the Rwenzururu movement. Critically analysed, what they were fighting for can be likened to democratic decentralisation though that terminology was not used at the time. It would be interesting to find out how the policy has fared since the people demanded it.
- The researcher wished to use his personal experience in Kasese district local government where he has served for close to 8 years as an administrative officer. This would make access to the relevant data less difficult and would be able to tap other information that may not be documented or easily accessible to an outsider.

The middle position occupied by the study in terms of history and resource endowment may depict an average picture of what is taking place in other local governments in Uganda. It should however be appreciated that a sample of one district out of 45 may not be representative enough. When applying the findings to other districts, care should be taken of the context in which they are being used.

The study has looked into the input and output aspects of human resources management and development. The input aspect has covered issues that are required by the human resource to perform effectively and efficiently. The output aspect has covered what has been achieved as a result of the input. Managing the human resource is not for its own sake. It is anticipated that if well managed, the human resource is supposed to produce results. This can be expressed in terms of improved service delivery in the case of local governments.

### **1.7 Methodology and Sources of Data**

The research describes how the management of human resources in Uganda's local governments has been changing over time. This has been of course going along with the nature of centre-local relations at any given time.

An appraisal of the role played by decentralising the management of human resource in the effective and efficient delivery of services is made. Trend statistics depicting the situation before and after decentralisation are given with the possibility of establishing causal-effect relationship. Institutional and structural arrangements put in place by the constitution and statutory legislation; principles and practices established are analysed to find out their facilitative role on effective performance in local governments.

The study has relied heavily on analysing secondary data and literature on decentralisation generally and the human resource aspect in particular. Statistics from Kasese district local government, Uganda's national constitution, legislation on local authorities in Uganda, progress reports from the district and Ministry of Local Government, literature at International Union of Local Authorities and similar studies done by other people in the area have been used.

The author's own experience having worked in local governments and at the forefront of implementing decentralisation policy in Uganda in the last 8 years, of which 7 have been in Kasese district, has been of great use.

Lastly, the author had an opportunity of sharing experience with some civil servants working in local governments in Uganda but studying in the Netherlands about their view on the whole system and practice of decentralised human resource management in local governments. Personal experience from these officers, some of whom have been working at Ministry of Local Government headquarters in senior positions, enriched the study with practical experience on the ground.

### **1.8 Organisation of the Paper**

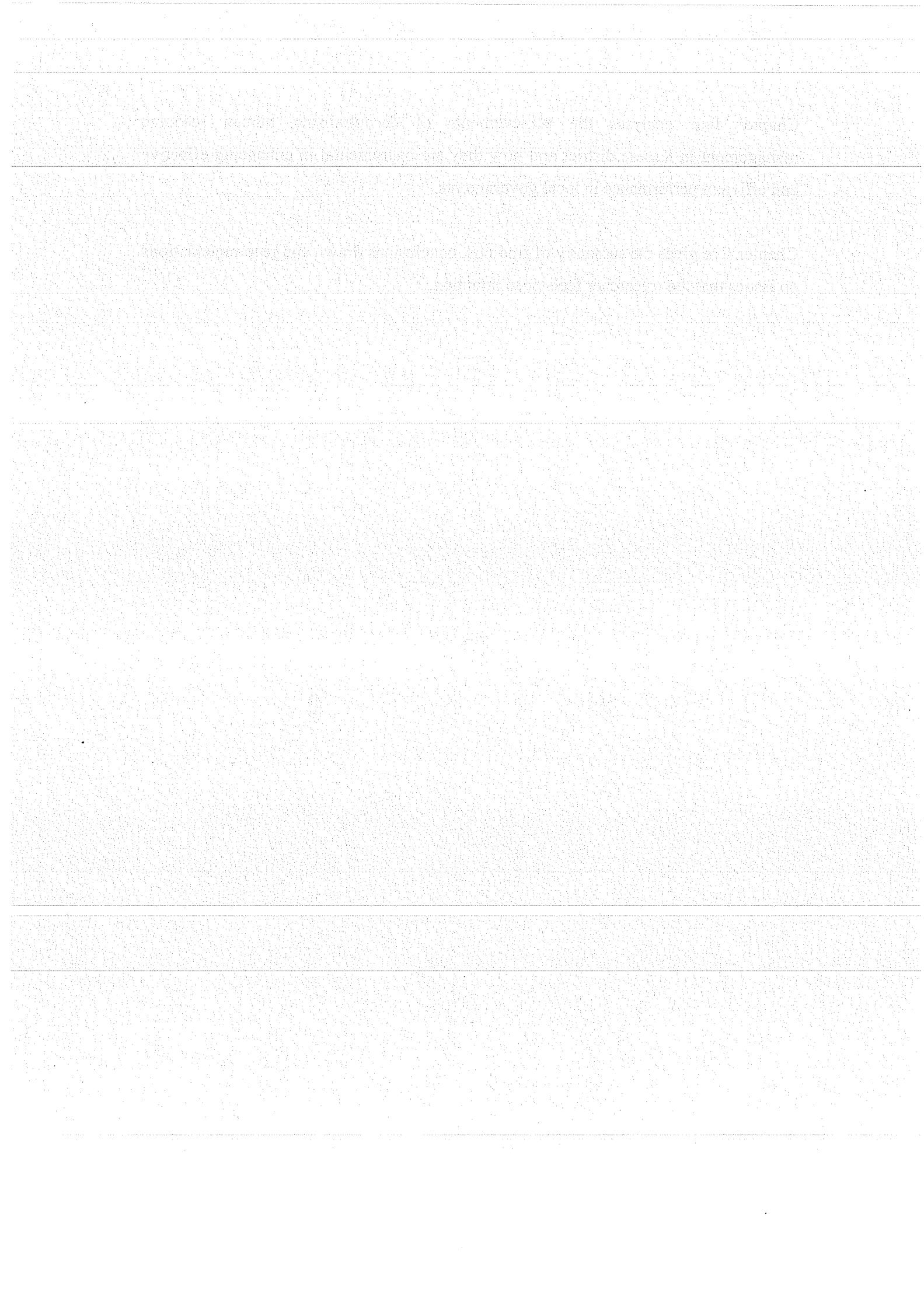
This paper is divided into five (5) chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter. It gives a brief background to the decentralisation of human resources management in Uganda, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, empirical justification of the study, its scope, methodology used and sources of data, and organisation of the entire paper.

Chapter two discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework used in the paper. The theory behind decentralisation as a mechanism for effective and efficient delivery of services in local governments, theory of autonomy and control, local government personnel systems, the concepts of responsiveness and accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, have been expounded and their relevancy to decentralised Human Resources Management and Development (HRM&D) underscored.

Chapter three gives the overview of the development of local governance in Uganda. A four phase period has been adopted for presentation though the boundaries may not be as specific. These are the pre-independence period, the immediate post-independence period, re-centralisation of local governance period, and the period of democratic decentralisation. Kasese district case has been given particular prominence. The chapter aims at giving the reader the context under which decentralisation policy has been introduced and the forces that have shaped it.

Chapter four analyses the achievements of decentralising human resource management in Kasese district and how they are instrumental in enhancing effective and efficient performance in local governments.

Chapter five gives the summary of findings, conclusions drawn and recommendations on issues that the researcher feels need attention.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter intends to define key concepts used in the paper. These include: Decentralisation, Human Resources Management and Development, Responsiveness and Accountability, Effectiveness and Efficiency. The theory underlying decentralisation, autonomy and control in the context of local-centre relations and systems of local government personnel management will be expounded. The above theories and concepts have taken on different dimensions and unless one clarifies in specific terms how they are being used in a particular context, misinterpretation is very likely.

#### 2.1 Theory of Decentralisation

The term decentralisation embraces a variety of concepts and connotes various dimensions. Depending on context and purpose, various scholars have used different words to define decentralisation. Rondinelli *et al* (1983:13) define decentralisation from an administrative perspective as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management and the raising and allocation of resources from central government and its agencies to field units of government agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organisations. The Commonwealth Secretariat is quoted by Paradaza (1999:2) defining decentralisation as the transfer of power and/or authority to plan, make decisions and/or manage public functions from a higher level of government to a lower one.

The transfer of authority occurs between central and local government and within local authorities (from a district to a sub-county committee for instance). This definition can be said to restrict decentralisation to government departments without due regard or reference to any type of decentralisation outside government departments or agencies. In its recent World Development report, World Bank (1999:108) describes decentralisation as entailing the transfer of political, fiscal, and administrative powers to sub-national units of government. It further states that “a government has not decentralised unless the country contains autonomous elected

sub-national governments capable of taking binding decisions in at least some policy areas”.

In this paper, the meaning given to decentralisation is as defined above by the different authorities but shall specifically address the transfer of legal, political, administrative and financial authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from central government and its agencies to lower levels of administration or organisation (Decentralisation Secretariat, 1994:19). This contrasts with other terms at times used to describe decentralisation, say deconcentration, where the power and authority are transferred to field offices of central government, or delegation where central government transfers responsibility for decision making and administration of public functions to semi-independent organisations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it. Another form can be of privatisation where the delivery of certain services is left to the private market. These could be business groups, co-operatives, voluntary associations, non-governmental organisations and the like. In the Ugandan context, local governments have been given full powers to manage local affairs and are answerable to the population and not central government in the discharge of the devolved functions.

Conyers (1989) observes that since the early 1970's, decentralisation has been increasingly advocated by both governments and students of development administration as a means of improving the planning and implementation of development programs and projects. She summarises the potential benefits from decentralisation under three main headings: Participation, speed and flexibility and co-ordination. Decentralisation is taken to facilitate popular participation in both the planning and implementation of development activities thereby not only creating a more democratic society but also making projects and programs more relevant to local needs and demands and engendering local commitment. Decentralisation is also believed to speed decision making, since decisions can be made locally without reference to a higher level, and so enable administration to be more efficient, flexible and responsive to the local needs. Lastly, decentralisation is believed to encourage co-ordination between sectoral agencies at the regional or local level, creating a more integrated approach to planning, since decisions are made at these levels rather than the national headquarters of each of the agencies concerned (Conyers, 1989:15).

Conyer's thinking is shared by Paraza (1999:2) who views decentralisation as desirable because it is believed to improve democracy by involving local communities in decision-making, improving accountability by placing action closer to the people, and it is believed that decentralisation will improve efficiency by using local know-how and resources. World Bank (1999:107) describes decentralisation in itself as neither good or bad. "It is a means to an end, often imposed by political reality". It further argues that the issue is whether it is successful or not. Furthermore, it asserts that successful decentralisation improves the efficiency and responsiveness of the public sector while accommodating politically explosive forces. On the other hand unsuccessful decentralisation threatens economic and political stability and disrupts the delivery of public services. The United Nations (UN) technical team way back in 1962 had already observed that rational decentralisation can facilitate co-ordination of technical services at the local level and thereby increasing their effectiveness (UN, 1962:7). Rondinelli *et al* (1983:9) observes that the extra-ordinary scope of decentralisation is revealed by the many objectives that it supposedly serves. It is expected to reduce overload and congestion in the channels of administration and communication; improve government responsiveness to the public and increase the quantity and quality of the services it provides; a way of managing national economic development more effectively and efficiently; and in some cases seen as a way of mobilising support for national development. In view of the foregoing, decentralisation can be seen to have political, fiscal and administrative connotations.

After critically analysing the failures of decentralisation programs in Africa adopted from the late 1960s, Olowu (1995:90-95) has proposed an alternative model to what has been in application. The case for the failure has been argued on the perspective of the nature and assumptions underlying the whole process and therefore cannot pass as a judgement to pronounce failure for decentralisation. The model seem to be in agreement with the observation made by the World Bank (*ibid.*) which argues that the success of decentralisation depends on its design. The devolution of powers affects political stability, public service performance, equity and macro-economic stability. All these must be put into account when designing a decentralisation policy. This model looks more relevant to the Uganda case since it has been conceived after assessing the African reality.

The model places decentralisation, like other issues of political organisations, as clearly a fundamental economic and political rather than administrative problem. Economic because it deals with enabling people to join with one another to solve common problems related to the production of goods and services and political because it involves sharing power between the citizen and the official in such a way as to ensure order and facilitate collective action while simultaneously protecting the citizens from predation by the rulers (ibid.).

The model identifies four essential characteristics of a local self-governing institution:

- a. Appropriate size. As much as possible, local institutions to encompass the basic local community, since it is the most natural community in which working understanding about human relationships may already be expected. The argument that bigger sized local institutions are needed to reap economies of scale has not been backed by any empirical evidence. Larger institutions have tended to be neither local nor governments in the African context.
- b. Self-governing units to have wide latitudes of autonomy to undertake a significant amount and variety of economic and social service which affect their people. The role of central government to be limited to only those services it can best deliver in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. Appropriate matters for local autonomy to include power to raise tax resources to finance their activities.
- c. Self-governance to be approached as a political activity involving the fundamental allocation of governmental powers in society. In this regard, the model proposes that, it should, as a result, be given legal expression, which is not subject to unilateral revision, by central government. Any changes to be made in consultation with the people and local governments, which consultation should play a significant role.
- d. Accountability. That local governments should be primarily accountable to the local people and not central government, either directly or indirectly. The system should ensure that the few local elite does not capture local institutions. It rejects the principle of indirect rule by central government officials through local dignitaries. It encourages the promotion of self-learning process by doing. The strength of the principle lies in the access of the local people to cheap and

effective adjudicatory systems, which can serve as non-bureaucratic mechanisms capable of forcing universal rules of access, fair play, due process and public responsibility.

The effective contribution of local self-government to the development process as earlier premised on the political and administrative justification within the framework of liberal democracy was summarised by Olowu (1988:17) as shown in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1: Summary table of Three Major “Values” of local self-government**

Participation etc. (Democratic life)	Effective Services	Liberty (autonomy)
Training in corporate responsibility and democratic leadership at local and higher levels of government	Decongests general government business	Check on arbitrary demands of the central government
Enhances popular involvement and necessary popular support for leadership	Detailed knowledge required for certain services	Ensure that the egalitarian demands of democracy does not destroy individual and community differences
Opens formal means of communication between ruler and ruled	Proximity to decision-making bodies improves services, responsiveness, and efficiency	Financial autonomy correlates positively with political autonomy thereby increasing individual liberty.

Source: Dele Olowu (1988:17)

Uganda's decentralisation policy was adopted on the basis that it will:

1. Transfer real power to districts and thus reduce the load of work on the remote and under-resourced central officials.

2. Bring political and administrative control over services to the point where they are actually delivered, thereby improving accountability and effectiveness, and promoting people's feelings of ownership of programs and projects extended in their districts.
3. Free local managers from central constraints and as a long-term goal, to allow them develop organisational structures tailored to local circumstances.
4. Improve financial accountability and responsibility by establishing clear links between the payment of taxes and provision of services they finance.
5. Improve the capacity of local councils to plan, finance the delivery of services to their constituents.

As earlier observed, decentralisation is not an end in itself. It is a mere instrument that can be used to reach a certain goal. The modalities of how it is applied will greatly reflect on the outcome/results. UN (1962:8) asserts that premature or excessive decentralisation can also be harmful and wasteful, although its effects are difficult to distinguish from those of poor administration generally. For instance, improper performance or non-performance of a function locally could be due to decentralisation of more responsibility than local personnel can carry out or possibly to the failure of the system. Devolution of functions to local authorities, which lack technical personnel and funds to perform, can be counter - productive.

Although the arguments in support of decentralisation are strong, Conyers (1989:15) points out that the relationship between decentralisation and development is, unfortunately, not as simple as the arguments suggest. She considers that attempts to decentralise administrative systems are seldom initiated solely for the reasons explicitly described. That decentralisation being a fundamentally political process involving changes in the distribution of power or influence, not everything can be overtly seen from start. She advocates for not only examining the developmental aspects of decentralisation, but also its political role as well. It would for instance be important to recognise the difference between top-down decentralisation where major initiatives come from the level of government which is transferring some of its power or authority and bottom-up decentralisation where a major initiative comes from regional or local pressure groups that are seeking greater power. Because no government is likely to give

away power willingly without good reason, one finds that top-down decentralisation programs inevitably have some sort of ulterior political motives of a centralising nature, in the sense that they are intended to strengthen rather than weaken the role of central (or higher level) government in one way or the other. This view is shared among others by Rondinelli *et al* (1983:32) who assert that decentralisation often serve as an instrument for achieving political objectives. The rationale for decentralisation being that it will increase political stability.

Much as decentralisation may have a positive impact in terms of achieving greater flexibility and increased accountability and efficiency, it may in certain circumstances hinder attempts to achieve other national objectives such as ensuring uniform standards throughout the entire civil service and maintaining the meritocracy principle. So to speak, there are sometimes conflicts between different national objectives and the implementation of decentralisation.

## **2.2 Human Resource Management and Development**

Human resource management as a concept has also received different meanings. The traditional tendency has been to refer to human resources management as the management of people/personnel in an organisation. In that sense, human resource management refers to the process of recruitment, selection, placement, promotions, discipline, and salary administration and pension management. In this context, human resource management has been used interchangeably with personnel management.

On the other hand, human resource management has in the contemporary times been used to describe a new style of people management, which strives to integrate the issue of managing the human resource into the strategic and corporate plans of an organisation. Storey (1995:5) defines it as a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable work force using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques. Emphasis is laid on the participation of the workers as individuals as

opposed to collectivism. It aims at involving the individual workers in the management and eventually the ownership of the organisation so as to increase their sense of loyalty and commitment thereby increasing their efficiency and productivity.

The term human resource management is used because it emphasises the concept of people as a resource rather than a cost, as a capital asset rather than recurrent expenditure (Alan, 1995). Although in accounting language it is not formally possible to classify employee costs as capital payments, management attitude towards employment can nevertheless be altered by thinking of people as a primary resource and of expenditure on people as investment to secure the highest possible quality of this resource. The theory behind human resource management is that people are the primary resource in an organisation and the success of an organisation depends mainly on how this vital resource is managed and developed.

Human Resource Development (HRD) has been used to refer to training of personnel to fill the performance gaps to improve productivity and efficiency or to generate a type of skills to meet an organisation's projected skills' needs or to meet the requirements of the technologies (Lubanga in Nsibambi, 1998:72). This however tends to narrow the concept of HRD to training alone. In actual fact, HRD is more than merely training. Tony Eddison et al (1993) defines HRD as the planned, sustained effort by the management of an organisation to improve employee competence and effectiveness through training, education and development. It begins with the understanding that employees are valued assets to an organisation and their value and potential contributions should be augmented through investments in their training and development. Human Resources Development involves enhancing and widening the skills of personnel by enabling people to develop their potentials within the organisation through training or self-improvement. It therefore concerns itself with the identification of training needs, the resultant training, human resource planning, career development and succession plans for line, and staff departments. It is believed that the skills and attitudes of the authority's employees are central to the effective achievement of its objectives.

## 2.3. Theory of Autonomy and Control under Decentralisation

The above theory has to do with centre-local relations under decentralisation. Personnel decentralisation has its origin from the liberal school of political thought. It is a consequence of the principle of the sovereignty of the people.

Tocqueville is quoted in Lubanga, (1997:4) as having made propositions amounting to the fact that “a township (read local government), just like an individual is independent in all that concerns itself alone, and is subordinate to the state in those matters that are shared in common with other townships”. Since staff are only servants of a local government created to meet the local requirements of development and governance, they should be fully answerable and responsive to the constituents through the elected local leadership. Advocates of substantial autonomy for local governments have advanced arguments of increased participation by the beneficiaries in the management of their own affairs leading to increased effectiveness and efficiency. Others claim it can offer as a training ground for local people before they can advance to national and higher levels.

Related to the liberal school of thought is the argument that local government has an ethical element and is linked to the question of human rights and democracy. There is a widely accepted notion that people should have the opportunity to participate in public affairs, especially where they are directly affected by whatever decisions are made and implemented (ibid: 124).

However, even under decentralisation, local governments still remain constituent parts of Government. They are not totally independent and the two institutions reinforce each other in the discharge of their functions and responsibilities to the public. In approaching the centre-local relations' problem, Muttalib and Akba (1982) identify three divergent sets of values that could be considered.

Firstly, the democratic approach that can be taken to be local government-centred. This argues that local authorities are units of local self-governance with statutory status and with the necessary competence to discharge their functions and exercise their responsibilities in their own right. They give effect to

government policy and operate, to a large extent, with government money but ordinarily not as government departments. The approach argues that they should have freedom, as much as possible, of the detailed management of a scheme or service, and that government control should concentrate at the key points where it can most effectively discharge its responsibilities for government policy and financial management.

The second approach that they have preferred to term the administrative or service centred approach take more or less the deconcentrated form of decentralisation. The local authorities take the form of being agencies to central government for providing services. The level of effectiveness and economy measures their adequacy. Government policies towards local authorities are designed and implemented in a manner that results in excessive government control over local authorities without corresponding concern for advancing responsible local governments and enhancing its democratic values. Government may decide to combine financial contribution with greater control over the performance of local authorities.

If the above two approaches are taken to be at the opposite ends on a continuum, Uganda's decentralisation of human resource management can be taken to be inclined towards the first approach. This was aimed at deriving maximum benefit from the two approaches leaving behind the undesired effects of each. The first approach emphasises democratic values without providing an adequate dimension for effective services. Conversely, the general result of the second approach leads to an over-emphasis on services, and the philosophy of local self-governance, by insisting on uniform methods and procedures, thereby, limiting its responsibility and reducing its significance as a democratic structure. Political issues may end up being bureaucratised. The position that is adopted by Uganda's decentralisation policy favours an approach based on the following stipulations (Mutallib and Akbar, 1982:231):

- a). Effective services through adopting and strengthening the local government institutions so that they will have the structure, resources and responsibilities both to meet the needs for local services and to fulfil their democratic function;
- b). The government and local government function primarily as partners in the attainment of common objectives, namely public welfare;
- c). If the local government is charged with programme execution, the government furnishes technical advice, guidance and financial assistance; and if the government is to execute the programme, the local government can serve as a channel of information and feedback; and
- d). They evolve working relation by co-operation and co-ordination- rather than insisting on- two alleged antipodes, government control and local autonomy.

The approach is expected to result in increasing the capability of local authorities to provide services effectively, in extending local autonomy, in restoring local responsibilities and in creating a framework of Government-local government relationship which promotes decentralisation while promoting the government's legitimate interest in the performance of local government, avoiding complete politicisation and bureaucratisation (*ibid.*). In this endeavour, the objectives of decentralisation, efficiency and economy are shared. Local governments achieve a greater measure of responsibility in their jurisdiction hoping for improvement in decision making and decision implementation. On the part of government, there is an implied increased emphasis on research, on advisory and consultative service, on technical assistance and on in-service training programme.

As asserted by Muttalib and Akbar (1982:233), conceptually, local autonomy tends to become a synonym of the freedom of a locality for self-determination or local democracy. No single body but the local people and their representatives enjoy supreme power in regard to the local sphere of action. Government intervention can be justified where the larger interest is involved. Therefore the people and their representatives alone can override the local people and their representatives.

In analysing the autonomy debate, Wallis (1983:133) refers to Mawhood, who, following a strong British tradition of thought, breaks down the classical model of autonomous local governments into five components:

- 1). A local body should exist, constitutionally separate from central government, and responsible for a significant range of local services.
- 2). It should have its own treasury, a separate budget and accounts, and its own taxes to produce a substantial part of its revenue.
- 3) It should have its own qualified staff, with hire-and-fire powers over them, though there could be secondments of government officers to fill some of the top posts at first.
- 4). Decision making on policy and internal procedure should be in the hands of a majority elected council.
- 5). The central government administrators should be external advisors and inspectors, having no role within the local government.

The model acknowledges that there is a role for central government to play but places a lot of emphasis on autonomy. The question would be to what extent should central government be involved. Should there be dialogue between central and local government to regulate the level of involvement or it be made expressly clear in the enabling legislation?

Government control is normally pressed into action to ensure efficiency and economy. Both legally and morally, the government is under an obligation to secure uniformity of standards in all parts of the country. The government's superiority in the spheres of finance and technical know-how accords it strategic place to provide leadership and guidance to the local governments. In short, autonomy reflects the spirit of freedom, control and air of superiority. Wallis (1989:123) observes that the conflicting aims of autonomy and control have made it important to find an appropriate balance between them, and it has been difficult to achieve this goal. Friedman on a more optimistic note argues that it is possible to achieve a successful balancing act in which the dual requirements of 'limited participation' at the local level and 'central control', which he sees as often essential for good implementation, can be reconciled (*ibid.* 133). This argument calls for adequate form of partnership between the centre and the locality to achieve what has been termed 'controlled decentralisation'.

The concept of autonomy in local government must be supplemented or displaced by that of partnership between central and local government if local

government is to have an important role in the development programme (UN: 1962). This school of thought is shared by Rondinelli *et al* (1983:61-62) in their assertion that "if decentralisation is to be effective, the attitudes and behaviour of both central government officials and local leaders must be altered to recognise the value and legitimacy of shared decision-making and more wide spread participation in development planning and management". The theory of decentralisation is not compatible with control-oriented and paternalistic attitudes.

#### **2.4. Local Government Personnel Management Systems**

The way an organisation is staffed is obviously vital. What makes the case of local government a special one is that centre-local relations play a major part (Wallis, 1989:131). Central government is likely to want staff who are satisfactory from its particular point of view, whilst the council members (especially of the elected variety) are likely to want to be involved as well.

Local control of executive staff is like control of the revenues. According to Mawhood (1983:18), it may not be essential, in itself, to the health of local government, but it is an important factor. At the same time, the need for efficiency and professionalism is as great as it is in the national civil service. Experience in Africa has been of personnel who are either locally employed, of low status, and poor efficiency; or nationally employed, accepting responsibility only to their parent ministry and insensitive to local needs. An appropriate system of personnel management in local government needs to be adopted depending on the prevailing conditions of a certain particular country.

Three major systems of local government have been identified (UN, 1966; Mawhood, 1983; Wallis, 1989). These are separate personnel system; unified system; and integrated system. A separate personnel system refers to the system where each local authority has power to appoint and dismiss its own personnel. The personnel are not transferable to any other jurisdiction by a central body. In principle, this system is one, which is characterised by a high level of local government autonomy. A unified personnel management system is where all or certain categories of personnel of local authority form a single career service for the entire country but

distinct from the national civil service. A unified body like Local Governments Service Commission administers appointments, transfers, promotions and dismissals of personnel at the national level. Personnel are thus transferable from one local authority to another. On the other hand, an integrated system is where the personnel of the national and that of local authorities form parts of the same national public service. Staff can be transferred between local authorities and central government departments, by bodies responsible for the civil service as a whole. Each of the three systems has its own merits and demerits as can be seen below.

The unified system can facilitate the creation of a national or state-wide career service founded on merit principles. It can help local authorities especially small ones to employ qualified personnel than would be attracted to a separate system and can prevent or greatly lessen nepotism and favouritism in appointments and other personnel matters. The difficulties, which have so far arisen according to Wallis (1989:132), seem to have been mainly ones of implementation. Some local authorities resent not being directly represented in the recruitment process, whilst it may prove difficult to establish a reasonably impartial recruiting body to satisfy all parties (trade unions, political parties, local authorities, etc.)

The integrated system is merited for permitting transferability of personnel both vertically and horizontally widening their career prospects, uniformity of conditions of service for all civil servants and permitting the most extensive area basis for recruitment and ease of scheduling entrants to the service. The system however presents problems of loyalty. A centrally appointed civil servant is likely to feel unable to commit himself fully to the performance and objectives of the local authority to which he has been posted especially where there is considerable central-local conflict. Thus autonomy can be undermined, and the problems associated with over-centralisation may be incurred (*ibid.*). In addition, central appointments may not meet all local requirements as there is too much generalisation. Emergency requirements may too be equally affected because of too much bureaucracy involved.

The separate personnel system is credited for enhancing autonomy of local governments. It empowers local authorities to secure undivided loyalty of their staff and flexibility in addressing their peculiar personnel requirements. Mawhood

(1993:19) observes that problems arise where local authorities are too poor to pay the staff that they need, or are too small to offer the adequate experience in the professional task, or where nepotism prevails in making appointments and promotions. The system demands considerable maturity in the local units. The separate system presents a challenge of upholding the merit principle and ensuring the uniform application of national standards in the entire national public service. It has also been expressed that left to themselves, local authorities may not be able to fulfil all the requisites of a good personnel system (Minimum standards and attracting competent people) and has a problem of unduly restricting opportunities for promotion especially for higher -level officers (UN, 1966:10)

However, whatever diversity in the systems, there are some issues which are generally acceptable as to constitute a sound local government personnel system (UN, 1966:5). This should be provided by any of the three systems for it to qualify as a good system.

- a. Posts in local government must be comparable in attractiveness to posts in central government or in the private sector if they are to interest qualified personnel.
- b. Recruitment should be open to as many people as is practically necessary to allow a wide range of candidates to apply. This will increase the chances of attracting qualified personnel. Save for junior posts, which may require local knowledge, nation-wide coverage of advertisements would be appropriate.
- c. Meritocracy principle should guide the selection process.
- d. A career service providing reasonable prospects for promotion on merit and seniority as well as protection against arbitrary dismissal or demotion.
- e. The system should provide for the possibility of officers to move from one jurisdiction to another. The ease of transfer may avoid the necessity of termination when an officer is unable, for personal reasons, to work well in a particular location. It may be due to political or social reasons.
- f. The system should provide for opportunities for in-service training to officers to develop their capacity for effective service delivery.
- g. As a matter of public duty, the local government officer should be loyal to the authority he serves. Employer-staff relations should give an officer

freedom to carry out his lawful duties without undue interference from politicians or others.

- h. The local government officer at the same time should be responsible to his council and be induced to give his best service to the local authority and people. Positive incentives should be used to reward good performance and sanctions administered for breach of discipline and gross negligence or non-performance.
- i. The system should be able to provide appropriate measures to ensure sound relations between local authorities and their employees.

Uganda has experienced almost all the above three systems at one time or the other in her history. There have been successes and failures for each until now when an almost all-separate personnel system has been entrenched. I refer to it as near a separate system because it does not wholly fit into the pure personnel system, as it is known in its true meaning. It has tended to integrate elements of all the three systems to which Lubanga, in Nsibambi (1998:69) has referred to as “the hybrid system”. Although he has not gone further to identify the main tenets of the “hybrid system”, its characteristics in practice combine the integrated and separate systems. These include:

- 1. District local governments have autonomy in the recruitment, appointment, confirmation, development and termination of their own staff.
- 2. The local governments can determine their own establishment structures as and when they deem it necessary.
- 3. Central government still exercises some level of control on the “autonomous” local governments. For instance:
  - a) The terms and conditions of local governments staff are set by and similar to those in central government.
  - b) Central government sets national standards and local governments are supposed to follow them.
  - c) The appointment of District Service Commission is subject to approval by Public Service Commission.
  - d) Public Service Commission serves as an appellate body in case a staff is not satisfied with the decision of DSC.
  - e) Ministry of Local Government maintains the co-ordinating and monitoring role of the performance of district local governments.

Worth observing is the fact that the hybrid model has not yet distinguished itself as a distinct separate model from the three discussed above. This could be the reason why the Uganda government is officially referring to it as a separate personnel system even though it does not fit in properly.

This paper will dwell more on the separate, otherwise known as the decentralised system. An attempt will be made to justify as to why this decentralised system has been considered more appropriate in enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in Uganda's situation. Personnel decentralisation enhances good governance from a management cum accountability point of view in that it overcomes some of the omissions and commissions engendered by the centralised systems. In Uganda, absence of democratic accountability has been the leading cause for poor performance in local governments. Service providers have been putting their needs and those of their superiors consistently before those of consumers and made it impossible for the consumers to voice their dissatisfaction. Accountability has been focused on inputs rather than outcomes. The decentralisation of human resource management and development appears to be addressing the omissions or commissions engendered by the remotely controlled centralised regimes. Centralised structures are inherently incapable of being responsive to local needs because rarely do incentives exist for central government ministries to perceive citizens as their clientele. Since there is not much room for exit by the consumers (clients) of local government services, decentralised system at least provides the option where they voice their concerns to the providers. Service providers, since the authority that controls them is now near, are more vulnerable to client groups in case they do not perform as expected.

Under the decentralised system, local councils have the power needed to ensure the loyalty and effective performance of their staff. They control the power to administer sanctions and give rewards. In that way, good performance standards can be enforced.

As opposed to the unified system where national civil service is running alongside the local authority civil service, there is uniformity of standards under the separate personnel system. This had been a big problem in Uganda. In one district, some staff would belong to central government and others to local government

enjoying different privileges. This had caused dissatisfaction among the local staff since they occupied more or less an inferior status compared to their central government counterparts.

Another expected advantage of a separate personnel system is that the local authorities can make a strong appeal to local residents to enter the service. Young persons who may have got worried of working far from their homes, experiencing frequent transfers across the country may find it convincing to join local government. It is also envisaged that local residents are likely to know the local conditions better and develop more interest in community affairs than would employees recruited elsewhere. This may however be counterproductive when locally recruited people get entangled in local politics and the ethics of a career civil service get compromised.

Personnel decentralisation is often accompanied by a reduction in number of officers employed by the central government and increase in local employees. In this regard, personnel decentralisation supports good governance in so far as it leads to local capacity building; to the growth of personnel and institutional competencies, and to local accountability.

Good as it may sound, personnel decentralisation if not carefully handled can lead to disastrous consequences in the performance of local authorities. Lubanga (ibid.) observes that for personnel decentralisation to be efficacious there must be safeguards in:

- Appointments (initial and promotional) by spoils system and instances of subjective decisions in human resources management such as discrimination, victimisation and favouritism are prevented and discouraged.
- Disciplinary matters to ensure a fair disciplinary process and action. Rules of conduct and discipline should be uniform and should be conducted objectively. A career service that protects officials against victimisation resulting from political, social and ethnic pressures in the performance of their duties fosters satisfaction and loyalty in the service and frees councillors from embarrassment of dispensing favours and

imposing penalties in personnel matters. Another observation made is that the absence of restrictions on the power exercised by local authorities over appointments, promotions and other personnel matters may often lead to nepotism, corruption or incompetence where local government has not properly developed (UN, 1966:5). Much as local governments have been accorded autonomy to manage their own affairs, their actions have a direct impact on national affairs. The state must therefore take interest in how the local governments are managing those affairs, especially a crucial affair like human resource management.

- Compensation or remuneration systems that adequately reward employees.

The extent to which a spoils system can be prevented will depend on the internal management (executive) structures of local governments. The integrity of the members, the rules and regulations governing recruitment and the autonomous status of the recruitment agency condition the levels of impartiality of the recruitment and the disciplinary process. This paper will try to analyse the Uganda case with the view of finding out what measures and/or systems have been put in place to mitigate the likely undesirable consequences of a separate personnel system which may negatively affect the performance of local governments.

## **2.5. Concepts of Responsiveness, Accountability, Efficiency, and Effectiveness**

### **2.5.1 Responsiveness.**

Responsiveness refers to the degree to which policy design takes into consideration possible impact on various groups affected by policy change. Smith (1985:27) defines responsiveness simply as the ability to provide what people want. He terms it an efficient way of managing local affairs and providing local services. Local knowledge is seen as a prerequisite of responsiveness and flexibility in the determination of local priorities. Although most management literature emphasises the criteria of effectiveness, increasingly the literature on public administration/management and analysis of actual practice is emphasising the criteria of responsiveness (Moharir, 1999:1.36). He further argues that it is not enough for public organisations to achieve the objectives at lower costs but the way they achieve these objectives is also

important. The question is whether an organisation is achieving the objectives in such a way that it is responsive to the needs and convenience of society at large and the particular groups affected favourably or adversely by the organisation. Society needs its public service organisation to perform- to create policies and services that are effective in meeting local needs (Steve, 1999:1). Public servants have to be responsive to political executives and legislators, the general public, as well as the various groups and individuals affected by their decisions and recommendations. This study however will concentrate on the responsiveness vis-à-vis clientele (beneficiaries) of the organisation and especially its services. With decentralisation, the level of responsiveness of the local civil service is believed to be enhanced. Responsiveness can take the form of participation by the beneficiaries, access of the service and equity concerns. Since the centre of power is at the local level, the civil service is obliged to respond to the local needs of the population. Under the banner of popular participation, the populations have increased voice in the way their public services are being managed. Local governments are able to adapt the national policies and programmes to the local environment. In this way, efficient and effective management of programs is achieved.

Steve (1999:13) further observes that the managerial implications of the aspect of adaptability and responsiveness are that a local authority should have the competence to undertake marketing and obtain feedback from the customers and citizens, that it should also be accountable to, and sensitive of, the changing requirements and expectations of the local political process, and that it should work in partnership with other organisations. Decentralisation makes local authorities more creative and flexible in the way they acquire and use resources on behalf of their communities, a requirement, which in some cases leads to more direct involvement of the community in designing and delivering services.

In the case of decentralised human resource management and development, this increased responsiveness has gone a long way to free local governments of the encumbrances earlier imposed by the highly centralised governance. Each district local government has power to determine its staff structures and establishments. They can create and abolish offices in the local public service as the local situation demands. The previous arrangement was that structures were centrally determined and uniform for all districts despite the peculiarities pertaining on the ground. The

power to establish and abolish offices in the public service was vested in only the president. This left local authorities with inadequate or inappropriate organisational structures, which were a constraint to effective service delivery.

The decentralisation of the personnel function is explained as being a reform measure based on the "benefit jurisdiction model". If under decentralisation decision-making over services is assigned to sub-national governments that constitute "benefit jurisdictions", it would follow that personnel delivering those services should be fully accountable to the leadership of that benefit jurisdiction (Lubanga in Nsibambi 1998:71). That would provide for efficiency and responsiveness, which ensure effectiveness in service delivery.

### **2.5.2. Accountability**

Accountability as defined by Olowu (1994:329) is the requirement that those who hold public trust should account for the use of that trust to citizens or their representatives. It entails holding individuals and organisations responsible for performance, measured as objectively as possible. All the major components of accountability, that is; responsibility, reporting and rewards are believed to be enhanced by decentralisation policy. According to Smith (1985:26), decentralisation facilitates accountability and thereby liberty. Local democracy can be a defence against arbitrary power. Government power is kept close to its origin and government officials within reach of their masters. Accountability is a requisite of good governance by ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. Theoretically and practically, accountability has been known to be a problem at local level of government. Decentralising human resource management and development is believed to be one of the systems that will ensure improvement in accountability at this local level. The principle behind is that since power has been devolved to the local people, they, through their representatives will take keen interest in ensuring that quality service is delivered. They become stakeholders in the management of public affairs and will have all the motivation to jealously guard the way public resources are being utilised.

With decentralisation, the local bureaucrats are at close scrutiny by the various structures put in place to enforce accountability. The population itself, local

councillors, local government public accounts committees, internal audits, all leave little room for manoeuvrability. Since local governments have powers over the decision on how to utilise resources, they can even open up service provision to other providers outside the public sector to make comparisons as to the efficiency and effectiveness of their own staff. Another worry is the competition among local governments themselves. If staff in one local government is not delivering, they can easily be cross-checked against the staff of a neighbouring local government and reason for non-performance established and necessary corrective action taken. Decentralised human resource management breaks the divided loyalty problem where staff pays allegiance to multiple centres of power. The centre of loyalty now becomes single and staff has little room for evading responsibility.

Financial, program, political and administrative accountability are expected to be strengthened with decentralisation. The processes involved in local government make accountability more meaningful because of the elective element linking bureaucrat and citizen (*ibid.*). The political activities inherent in local government elections, rule making, political pressure, publicity and public debate close the gap between citizen and administration and provide opportunities for grievances to be aired and wrongs remedied. Personnel decentralisation in Uganda was designed to upgrade the status of human resource management through the creation of more opportunities for councils to hold their appointed officials accountable.

The major challenge confronting the above assumption is whether local institutions in place have enough capacity to enforce the level of accountability that merit an effective and efficient public service. The competence of local councillors in checking the bureaucrats is very crucial if this mechanism is to work effectively. Issues of inferiority complex, inadequate competence, may impair the job of elected officials. The traditional rivalry between elected and appointed officials in politics-administration dichotomy may come up to bog down service delivery due to power struggles. It is expected that through learning and as each party begins to appreciate each other's roles, relations would be harmonised and both elected and appointed officials form a united team to pursue the interests of the population not their own.

### **2.5.3. Efficiency**

Efficiency in the management sense means maximising output for a given set of inputs or with producing a given level of outputs at least cost. It is thus the ratio of output to input. When an organisation is able to increase its outputs, keeping the inputs the same, it is said to be more efficient. However even if both variables increase, so long as the increase in output is more than the increase in input, again the organisation is more efficient. Conversely, an organisation is said to have become inefficient when its outputs remain the same or decrease and its input increase. Efficiency can be measured in terms of cost per unit of service output and time taken in providing the service or time taken to solve the problem of the citizen. If citizens have to wait for long for a service, it is a sign of inefficiency. Any improvement in efficiency leads to better responsiveness towards clients.

### **2.5.4. Effectiveness**

Effectiveness refers to the degree to which an organisation achieves its stated goals and objectives. This entails an agreement on the organisational objectives which should be stated in a plausible and realistic way and having indicators in place for measuring them. The output of an organisation is believed, to lead towards the realisation of the organisation's objectives. Citizens at large, and political leaders are happy when organisations achieve their objectives. In essence, effectiveness has to do with end results of outputs or activities.

Provision of effective local level service delivery is an intricate matter and no single theoretical framework or model can claim to give an answer of universal application. What is important is finding an appropriate mix that can fit the situation at hand. A global forum on innovative policies and practices in local governance held in Sweden in 1996 identified some key issues crucial for effective service delivery under decentralisation, which the researcher finds relevant for this study (UNDP, 1996:40-41):

1. Establishment of a clear division of functions between central and local governments.

2. Insuring financial capacity through adequate tax bases or sufficient transfers; higher utilisation of existing tax capacity or fees; less central control in fixing tax rates, prices and borrowing.
3. Establishing local administrative and financial autonomy by:
  - Assignment of revenue to meet all obligations;
  - Predictability and certainty in transfers/grants;
  - Full local control of revenue mobilisation;
  - Administrative flexibility.
4. Insuring public accountability in terms of:
  - Transparency and high ethical standards
  - Ultimate accountability to user/public.
5. Effective targeting of relevant programmes to the poor.
6. Developing institutional capacity needed through:
  - Increased administrative efficiency;
  - Developing adequate skills and expertise;
  - Maximising staff motivation;
  - Waging effective war against corruption;
  - Employing modern management techniques.
7. minimising managerial interference by central government in terms of:
  - less complicated rules and procedures;
  - Less control of day to day administration.
8. Integrating users' participation in planning, costing and delivery mechanisms.
9. Establishment of fair and effective service standards.
10. Increasing competitiveness in service provision by regulation, competitive bidding, efficient contract management, etc.
11. Developed municipal procedures in budgeting, accounting, auditing, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation; also to access modern information technology and tools for personnel procedures in terms of recruitment and promotion.
12. Establishing dialogue between central/local/user groups/NGOs/CBOs with the full involvement of local governments in planning projects utilising international assistance.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN UGANDA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the transition of local government in Uganda from pre-independence period to the present. The description aims at giving the reader a perspective of the stages local government has passed through and the dimensions taken over a period of time. Four main phases have been identified: The pre-independence era; the immediate post-independence period; recentralisation of local government period; and the era of democratic decentralisation. In all these stages, the issue of human resources management and development in local governments has taken different dimensions and so has local governments' performance. Lastly, but by no means the least, Kasese district local government has been particularly focused on so as to provide a detailed illustration of the nature of the challenges and problems occasioned by the current organisational and human resource innovations.

Before the Ugandan context is presented, it would be good to first have a look at what Mawhood (1983:8) has presented as the general trend of local government evolution in Africa. He identifies four main eras where decentralised element has been swinging into favour and out again.

- (1) The terminal colonial period of the 1950s which saw decentralised government as a major policy of the rulers-an inheritance that was accepted and reinforced by the new governments during the first few years after independence. But the more open political competition of the day, and the need to accumulate central power, led to a withdrawal of support from the autonomous local authorities.
- (2) There followed- in the 1960s for most countries- a swing away from local autonomy in favour of central planning and greater central control over public resources. A 'deconcentrated' administration was left in charge, similar to, but weaker than the colonial one.
- (3) Discontent with the results of the above arrangement, and a new belief in the value of participation and rural development in the late 1960s led to experiments

with mixed authorities. This was a cautious swing away from centralisation, but left the ultimate power with locally ‘deconcentrated’ officials.

(4) The late 1970s and 80s witnessed a further swing in the direction of decentralised government in the classical sense. Nigeria in 1976 legislated for it; Tanzania re-established urban councils which she had abolished and subsequently decided to revive all the autonomous district councils in 1982; and Sudan was adopting a new style of local government that bore a strong resemblance to the decentralised structures of the 1950s.

Experience drawn from Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia indicate that decentralisation programs in these countries were failures whether measured by impact on development activities or programs (Olowu & Wunsch, 1995:74). In Kenya, the District Focused Strategy only helped to strengthen field administrative units. Development committees which were dominated by bureaucrats was only used as a mechanism for perpetuating central government hegemony in the field through a system of bureaucratic co-optation (Oyugi in Mawhood, 1983:126). Decentralisation program in Zambia was no better. Under what was termed decentralisation in centralism, the system only facilitated government and the ruling party to penetrate the country-side. Government bureaucrats and party officials dominated the decision making structures with local governments merely serving as agents. In Tanzania, District Councils were abolished in 1972 and replaced with what ironically was termed the decentralised government structure. Government wanted to come closer to the people but without loosing control. What resulted was massive deconcentration. Powers ended up in the hands of the deconcentrated bureaucracies and the system eventually crumbled. Local governments had to be reinstated in 1984. Uganda’s transition of local governments’ development should therefore be seen in the wider context of the developments that were taking place in the entire continent.

### **3.1 The pre-independence era**

The modern state of Uganda was a colonial creation. Before the establishment and consolidation of effective colonial administration, each nationality had its own system of local government ranging from the monarchical centralised system of the kingdom of Buganda which was based on hierarchical chiefs, to the highly decentralised

“republican” organisation in non kingdom areas of north-east and south-west (Lubanga, 1996:47).

Uganda was brought under British colonial administration in 1894. The British formally recognised the kingdoms of Buganda, Ankole, and Toro in 1900-1901. This was to be followed by Bunyoro in 1933. The rest of the country was divided into districts. The kingdoms obtained a more federal division of powers with the protectorate government, while the districts were saddled, in view of their political notables, with a more unitary relationship to the centre (Kasfir, 1977). In what can be described as asymmetrical decentralisation, under the indirect rule policy, the British were to model their administration on the previously existing structures and systems, at least up to some point in time. Kingdoms had different powers and status, with Buganda enjoying greater autonomy. The diverse treatment also applied to districts. Not all enjoyed same relationship with the protectorate administration. Historical factors played a big role in shaping the nature of local governments to be adopted. As asserted by Sathyamurthy (1982), “the wide divergence between traditional politics of Uganda at the time of colonial penetration makes it difficult for the scholar to speak in general terms about district administration on a Uganda-wide scale”. However, once the colonial system was successfully established throughout Uganda, similar political and administrative systems at the local level, mechanisms of law and order, economic and social goals and patterns of expectation were imposed on all districts (with the sole exception of the district of Kalamoja), Sathyamurthy (1982:17).

In Uganda, first attempts to set up local administration was in 1919 when the African (Native) Authority Ordinance was passed providing for the powers and duties of African chiefs and for the enforcement of African authority. Native Councils were established at district level comprising of chiefs and some selected elders under the chairmanship of the District Commissioner (D.C). One point to note is that these councils were neither representative nor democratic but simply provided a forum for chiefs to exercise their power and the D.C to pass down instructions to the chiefs for mere compliance. Further to note is the fact that with the exception of Buganda where chiefs derived their power from the Kabaka (king), and owed allegiance to him, in non- kingdom areas, the chiefs owed their creation, appointment and allegiance to the D.C who, in turn was responsible to the centre (Lubanga, 1996).

Later, the reforms under the African local government ordinance of 1949 provided for the setting up of body-corporate councils in all districts and a system of standing (functional) committees. This was a turning point in the development of local governments since district councils were elevated from merely advisory roles to having full legal status. This was followed by more reforms in 1955 under the District Councils Ordinance. These aimed at making the district councils more democratic and representative. Majority of the members to councils was to be directly elected and more functions were legally given to district councils. The devolution of services varied according to the state of political development of the people concerned in a style of phased decentralisation. Buganda retained the lead in autonomy with even an appointments committee to appoint chiefs. In other parts of Uganda, independent appointment boards were set up under The District Councils (Amendment) Ordinance 1959 under the public service regulations of the government of Uganda protectorate. Staff were more responsive to the local authorities at the time since that is where they derived their power.

Worth noting is the fact that the position of the DC in this period that had been very powerful since colonial period was eroded. His role in relation to the district government was reduced to an advisory one. The bulk of inspection of local government records and accounts was to be carried out by inspectors from the Ministry of Regional Administration instead of the DC. Local authorities were faced with tough challenges of new responsibilities transferred to them amidst scarce financial and skilled manpower resources.

Decentralisation as a concept can be taken to have come to the local governance scene with the adoption and publication of the Wallis report in 1953. Wallis urged that the development of local government should be predicated upon the assumption that Uganda would be developed as a unitary state with a single parliamentary government for the whole country and that the principles of local government should be essentially British adapted to the Uganda conditions. He recommended the transfer of various services from the centre to the local governments. Local governments were to receive grants from central government on top of being allowed to raise their own revenue. On the human resources aspect, he recommended that qualified staff should be made available to districts and if

necessary on loan from central government (Sathyamurthy, 1982:19). In a bid to give local governments more autonomy, the Wallis report was sceptical about the role of the D.C in his relationship with local governments. It noted as a worry that the powerful overseeing presence of the D.C would act as an inhibitory factor in the development of robust independent local government bodies unless the role was transferred into one of advisor to the local government with power to inspect their records. Local government chiefs (administrators) were recommended to become civil servants selected on merit and to perform clearly defined powers. Central government's role was reduced to that of giving a measure of real freedom to the local authority while retaining substantial control over its functioning and reserving the right to take stern action against those local authorities that failed to meet their obligations.

Towards the end of the colonial period, which is the later part of the 1950's, the question of what form the future state should be was to be resolved. A special commission, The Uganda Relations commission was appointed to look into the above question. It distinguished Buganda, which was to be granted federal status, from other parts of Uganda. Of these, Toro, Ankole, Bunyoro (and subsequently Busoga) were given semi-federal status with their rulers and governments being integral parts of Uganda local government system. The rest of Uganda was to be divided into districts, each of which would be under a district administration.

As pointed out by Lubanga (1996), the local government system under the colonial regime was characterised by the following:

- Local governments collected limited "own" revenue, employed some staff and carried out a small range of functions. Central government exercised much control over them through the D.C
- The D.C headed a parallel central government field administration. The DC supervised and co-ordinated district offices responsible for the delivery of services but answerable to their ministry headquarters. The above arrangement generated functional departmentalism. There was no effective horizontal communication and harmonisation at district level but rather strong vertical communication and

budget links with national or provincial/regional headquarters.

- Local government councils were assigned functions mainly in the area of service provision and public order but not development. This later explains why institutions and systems for carrying out development activities remained undeveloped in local government. Development was taken as a preserve of central government and no effort was undertaken to develop this capacity in local governments.

The system of human resources management during the colonial period was later to have a direct influence on what civil service was to be adopted after the colonial period. The colonial government encouraged a highly centralised system where the D.C had all the powers and local authorities were to merely take instructions. The only exception in the name of indirect rule was targeted at attaining legitimacy of the traditional leaders rather than developing an effective and efficient local government. This was the opportunity was missed opportunity to set a clear system that would have been handed to the independent government. Attempts to just prescribe it when they were leaving clearly shows how colonialists had no interest in developing powerful local governments.

### **3.2 The immediate post-independence period 1962-1967.**

At independence, Uganda consisted of the Kingdoms of Buganda, Ankole, Bunyoro, and Toro; the territory of Busoga; and the districts of Acholi, Bugisu, Bukedi, Karamoja, Kigezi, Lango, Madi, Sebei, Teso and West Nile (Mutiba, 1992:24). A lot of powers were given to local governments with kingdoms having more autonomy than districts. Democratisation process was ushered into local governments and many members to kingdom assemblies and district councils were majorly directly elected. Kingdom and district councils enjoyed enormous authority in their areas of jurisdiction and had considerable opportunities to set priorities and implement their decisions. However the honeymoon for local governments was not to go on for long. Central government was not happy with the powers given to local governments as they were threatening to be more powerful. By 1966, the UPC government in power, under the leadership of Obote was able to muster the necessary force to liquidate kingdoms and impose uniformity of administration throughout the country. All kingdoms were abolished and the whole country became a unitary state.

The central government claimed to be following a policy of bringing local governments under its control as part of the fight against tribalism and separatism. Under the same policy, central government ensured that DCs sent to districts were different from ethnic groups from those they administered. Conflicts in rights in the appointment of top district administration officials was later to unfold. Central government although had given districts power to have a democratically elected council, it later retracted it by grabbing the power to appoint top officials of the district council i.e. The Secretary General, his assistant and the Finance Secretary. This was done under the guise that the system had failed and had intensified sectional conflicts. Eventually even top officers of the district administration like the district council chairman, his deputy and the administrative secretary (the executive officer of the council) were to be selected by central government from names nominated by the district council. Attempts were also under way to bring civil servants under the control of people outside the bureaucracy, in effect influential members of the ruling party.

The above situation presents challenges to local government development in a setting of diversity. Regions of Uganda were at different levels of political and socio-economic development and bringing them together as one nation was not an easy challenge. The pseudo-federal constitution adopted at independence was aimed at attaining unity in diversity. It was however later realised that a strong central government was needed at the time if national unity was to be achieved. Dispersion of power at the time in form of strong regional governments was considered dangerous for national development. This was to prove right in 1965 when the Kingdom of Buganda resolved to chase central government from "its soil". The capital city, Kampala happens to be located in Buganda. The researcher is convinced that establishment of uniform administration throughout the country was necessary at this material time but stripping local authorities virtually of all their powers was high handedness that shows greed for power of central actors. A rational formula of power sharing between the centre and local authorities would have been worked out where both organs would reinforce each other in the delivery of services to the population.

### 3.3 Re-centralisation of local government (1967-1986)

With the coming into force of the 1967 constitution, the autonomy hitherto enjoyed by local authorities was to come to an end. The 1967 national constitution and the Local administrations act, 1967 operationalised the above scenario. All powers were centralised into central government, which stifled much decision making in local authorities. The above period constituted dark days for local authorities in Uganda. Local authorities were stripped much of the powers vested in them by the independence constitution and only remained as shells of their former selves. In the Uganda politics, generally, the above period can be described as the most unstable. In a short spell of only 8 years, there were as many as 8 regimes. Dictatorship reached its heights in 1970's when a semi-illiterate military general, Idi Amin captured state power and declared himself head of state.

The 1967 constitution led to the abolition of the appointment boards of districts and the public service commissions of kingdoms. Their duties were taken over by sub-committees of the national Public Service Commission. The position of DC and his powers were once again strengthened significantly. The DC exercised much control over local governments on behalf of central government in the name of supervision and inspection. He could at times exercise executive powers when required. Central government enjoyed increased power in the determination of policies affecting district level administration. Local government appointments in effect became party appointments since the ruling party had an upper hand. The administrative secretary, the chief officer in-charge of the executive functions of the district council and the head of the local civil service, was to be appointed by the president through Public Service Commission and its offshoots, the district service committees (Sathyamurthy, 1982). The local government civil service became highly politicised as only party faithfuls could access top local administration jobs. The situation became so confused that at one time before the fall of first Obote regime, it was difficult to distinguish between the executive functions of the ruling party (UPC) on the one hand, and on the other hand, those of the central or local government organs at any given level. The situation was more confused at the local level where the roles became more or less fused.

Much as the 1967 constitution did not change the role of chiefs, their method of work and the systems of control of their work changed. It was the aim of government to create career chiefs who would be transferable from area to area. Their salaries were equalised across the country and could receive training on a national scale. However, the above objective could not be realised as their recruitment became highly politicised. Non-party loyals could not be appointed and those already appointed were arbitrarily dismissed.

Under the constitution, there were to be no legally established councils above the district council with its fixed membership, which was to be completely controlled by the ruling party. There was no defined criterion on what each district would get from central government. It could depend on the capacity of each district to exert its influence on central government in order to obtain what it regarded as a fair share of financial allocation from the centre. This could be established by setting its own informal systems of communication with the national decision making structures in order to press for its claims. Within the district itself, as observed by Sathyamurthy (1982), the new lines of cleavage developed which had origins in such factors as ethnic, clan based and religious rivalries which was later to impact on the political competition for planning and development resources, the allocation of which was controlled almost entirely by central government.

The overthrow of Obote by Amin in a military coup in 1971 was to mark the intensification of darker days for local governments. Although among the reasons advanced to justify the coup was streamlining management in local governments, the opposite was to prevail in the ensuing years. Local administrations were blamed for unrealistic policies of previous governments. District councils like the National assembly was abolished. Promises for democratic elections were made at the time but the future was yet to unfold. In 1973, Amin re-organised local administration into ten provinces headed by governors appointed by himself largely from the army. The district was put under the DC who became the head of central government administration in the field. He became supreme over local governments and enjoyed even more powers than during the colonial period. His word was law unto itself. Districts were further sub-divided to cater for the interests of small ethnic groups who had earlier cried foul under bigger geographical units. Kasese district was a child of such arrangement. The counties, sub-counties, parishes and sub-parishes (villages)

were headed by paramilitary chiefs who had undergone specific military training. The Amin regime almost saw the disappearance of the central and local administration behind the military. Directives flowed from the military government to all levels of local governance (Tukahebwa in Nsibambi, 1998:14). The regime accentuated centralisation and militarised local administration up to the lowest level. There was virtually no participation in the management of local affairs. The military took full control and people only received directives.

In April 1979, a force of Ugandans who had been in exile assisted by Tanzanian forces overthrew Amin. The local administration system that was instituted in the short-lived governments of Yusuf Lule, Godfrey Binaisa and Paul Muwanga did not democratise local governments in Uganda (ibid.). A local administrative system of *Mayumba Kumi*, (a Swahili literal translation of “ten house cells”) was established at the village level. It had an execute committee of elected chairman, secretary and treasurer. The committee was supposed to mobilise communities to participate in self-help activities and maintenance of security. It however ended up doing the distribution of scarce essential commodities like salt and sugar. People at the village level used to gather not as council to make decisions but as a rally to listen to central government directives.

After the December 1980 elections, Obote won the elections and the period that has been captioned Obote 2 was ushered in. Although district councils were reinstated, the situation did not change much as expected. Factionalism reached at its height and the local civil service was once again highly politicised. The ruling party membership card replaced professional credentials for one to get a job in the local administration. Central government remained powerful and local authorities remained only as arms of the centre pre-occupied with popularising the party in power. The above scenario prevailed until 1985 when Tito Okello Lutwa in a military coup overthrew Obote 2 regime. His regime was short-lived only to be overthrown by the NRM government on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1986.

The period 1967/86 saw local authorities degenerate tremendously in terms of their internal management and service delivery to the population. The civil service became inefficient, ineffective and unaccountable. Corruption took root in the civil

service as appointments and promotions became meddled with politics. Local authorities became instruments for central government to reward its political cronies and civil servants' job security was in quagmire. People could be appointed and dismissed at will by politicians and military officials who wielded much power. Local authorities ceased to be accountable to the population but to central government. The staff in local authorities were not responsive to the demands of the population but instead were left to giving directives to the people on what should be done. It was after the new regime came to power that Uganda's local governments started experiencing fundamental change.

### **3.4 Era of Democratic Decentralisation 1986 to 1999**

When NRM government came to power in 1986, it vowed to introduce fundamental changes among which democratisation and decentralisation were on top of the agenda. Not that decentralisation will automatically mean democratisation but at least the two have a relationship. Local councils, known as resistance councils, were introduced from village up to district level in that order of hierarchy. The key centralising provisions of the 1967 constitution and local administration act were suspended. In August 1986, a commission of inquiry into the local government systems was set up with mandate to make recommendations to strengthen the system. In 1987, the National assembly passed the Resistance Councils and Committees statute. The statute aimed at securing and ensuring participation of the grassroots in decision making; mobilising the masses for local economic development; raising the political consciousness of the masses as a means of their empowerment; and eliminating dual administrations (centre and local) at the local level. Later alone, it was realised that the above intentions could not be realised, as the statute seems to have intended. The statute itself contained internal inconsistencies and contradictions. Much as it aimed at attaining devolution, elements of deconcentration were embedded in it as well. As Lubanga (1986) correctly observe, the statute attempted to have the best of both words: Devolution and deconcentration in perfect balance. By 1990, it had been realised that much as the statute had succeeded in raising political consciousness of the people and had developed potential for their empowerment, translation of the new political thinking into action was thwarted by structural and organisational flaws.

Failure of the emergence of democratic control and governance at the local level were attributed to the personnel system, the inter-governmental financial transfers and the role of the district administration. Local governments had no control over much of the staff who belonged majorly to the central government. Money transfers was through line ministries and to the departments directly without control by the local government. The District Administrator (D.A) who was the political representative of the president in the district was the political head. This was strengthening the centralising tendency and undemocratic since the elected chairmen of the districts were in essence subordinate to them.

By 1990, new initiatives had been made to review the local government system to make it more democratic and effective. The new initiatives were to reform the personnel system, financial management and structures of local governments. The above initiative required change of legislation. Government enacted The Local Governments (resistance Councils) statute in 1993 to pave way for the introduction of the new changes by removing any obstacles along the way.

The local governments' plight in Uganda further brightened when the country adopted a new constitution in 1995. The national constitution of 1995 made it explicitly clear on how the centre and local governments are to share powers, responsibilities and authority. Districts were made autonomous bodies with power to recruit and fire their own staff. They were given power to raise their own revenue and a provision made for central government to give them grants.

Following the promulgation of the new constitution, it was found necessary to amend, consolidate and streamline the local governments (resistance councils) statute, 1993 in line with the new constitution. It was prudent to give effect to decentralisation, and to provide for decentralisation at all levels of local governance to ensure good governance and democratic participation and control of decision making by the people. The national assembly accordingly passed the Local Governments Act, 1997, which up to the present is still in use.

### 3.5. A case of Kasese District Local government.

Kasese district is located in Western Uganda. Its neighbours are: The Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Bushenyi district in the south, Rukungiri in the Southwest, Kabarole district in the east and northeast, and Bundibugyo district in the north. The district with a population of now 400,000 people is essentially an agricultural district. Majority of the people are peasant farmers growing cotton, cassava, maize, passion fruits and other tropical crops. It lies astride the equator and is blessed with two national parks. It is also home for copper mining in Uganda, cobalt and limestone. Some people engage in cattle keeping but on a small scale. It is highly mountainous and many people live on the mountain slopes. Kasese district occupies a total area of 3,205 sq. km of which 2724 is land, the rest being water bodies.

The district was carved out of the former Toro district, which initially was Toro kingdom. The people of the present Kasese and Bundibugyo districts started struggling for self-governance as early as 1919. This was against the domination under Toro kingdom supported by the British colonialists. Although the resistance was crushed, the spirit of self-governance did not die out. The struggle was to be revitalised in early 1960's. Beginning as a demand for equality of Bamba and Bakonzo "tribesmen" within the former Toro kingdom, it quickly became a demand for a separate district. When no new district emerged a section of a movement declared Rwenzururu an independent state and unsuccessfully petitioned the United Nations and OAU for membership (Kasfir 1977:328). An armed rebellion was staged which continued even after the kingdoms were abolished in 1966. It was because of stiff resistance that central government decided to give the people a district in 1974. It is therefore important to note that Kasese district, unlike many other districts in Uganda, did not merely come out of administrative organisation, but rather armed struggle with people demanding for self-governance as the bigger Toro district and central government were seen as remote to serve the interests of the population.

The Bakonzo, the dominant tribe in Kasese district, were before colonial period organised around the village as a basic political unit. There was a system of elders in charge of villages who would allocate land. A supreme elder held authority over a much larger area, sometimes approaching the size of a sub-county. Above this

level, there appears to have been no central traditional Bakonzo political authority. Under Toro kingdom, chiefs dominated politics and administration. The main area of concern was that Batoro whom the Bakonzo strongly resisted as aliens dominated the entire public service. Even after independence the situation did not become any better. Much of the clamour for the district was for the indigenous people to have a chance to gain access to jobs in the public service. Kasfir (1977:340) observed that discrimination in the award of government posts was the most serious grievance (aside from general prejudice). Bakonzo and Bamba felt it sufficiently important that they made equality of distribution of jobs among the 3 tribes one of the two major demands to be embodied in Toro's constitution. Popular concern over chiefs was particularly pronounced, because Toro remained governed by civil service chiefs rather than elected politicians during the 1950's while other district governments were becoming more democratic. This fuelled further resistance in Kasese because the hope for self-governance through democratic elections was thwarted.

From the above perspective, it can be seen that centralisation of power and authority was not part of the traditional culture of the people of Kasese. It was imposed by the Toro kingdom thus the resistance and demand for local self-governance. Secondary, participation in the management of human resources of the local authority by the people of Kasese was at the centre of the struggle for self-governance. The unrest continued and in 1963, central government declared a state of emergence in the district. A commission was set up to look into the problems. The area under conflict was placed under the DC to take charge of general administration. The DC appointed local people (agents) to replace Toro government chiefs. This reduced tension as local people now saw themselves as being involved in the management of their local affairs. This arrangement continued until the kingdoms were abolished by the 1967 national constitution. With the new constitution, the political grievances underlying the Rwenzururu movement were largely removed. By 1969, the movement was no longer a threat to central government. In practical terms, the promulgation of the 1967 constitution was quickly followed by equitable distribution of district and county offices among the three major ethnic population of Toro (Sathyamurthy, 1982:49).

In the area of service provision, the entire Rwenzururu movement period

disrupted the delivery of much of the social service in affected areas. Education suffered immensely as most schools in the mountains were closed. This was later to hit the new district badly, as there were not enough educated people to fill up the jobs in the district public service. The resultant effect was ill qualified staff were allowed to fill the positions on political grounds and effectiveness and efficiency was greatly compromised. In view of the historical background already given, the issue of jobs in the district public service was very politically sensitive that applying objective rationality would politically backfire. The district had no adequate educated people and insisting on qualifications would be taken as succumbing to continued stay of Batoro who were relatively better educated, a situation which would not be tolerated at any cost.

The population received the granting of the district in 1974 with enthusiasm. Little did they know that getting a district, which had no powers to make its own decisions, was not a big deal. Those who thought they could do whatever they wished in their district were to be confronted by the powerful central government. This was abit frustrating since the district had been secured after hard sweat involving bloodshed. The district was not yet responsive to the demands of the population because of the centralising policies still in place.

Come the NRM government in 1986 promising democratic local governance, the people of Kasese felt that what they were fighting for had eventually been realised. The 1995 national constitution and the 1997 local governments act which has institutionalised democratic decentralisation came to allay their fears that central government was not playing games this time. From the above analysis, it can be noted that relationship between central government and people of Kasese has not been palatable until the 1990's. The people used to see central government as being supportive and giving patronage to the autocratic and unpopular kingdom of Toro, which oppressed them for a long time. Central government was viewed with suspicion and scepticism and therefore could not be relied upon for any assurances or promises made.

In this chapter, I have tried to give a historical analysis of the development of local governants in Uganda. The background is crucial for one to understand the

foundation under which decentralisation policy was implemented. The case of Kasese district is very important because the issue of public service jobs has been at the centre stage even before independence. The management of human resources in the district has to take this historical background into account for it has done much to shape the current values and practices in the district public service. Decentralisation re-ignited the historical sentiments of where people were ever fighting for power to manage their own local affairs. Under development in the area had been blamed on centralisation, especially of human resource management, where the district had little say in the management of personnel employed to deliver services in their areas. To some people, decentralisation meant localisation/indigenisation of the local public service. Some of the expectations could not be met by decentralisation of human resource management as their roots were far fetched. There is need to bridge the gap between the popular values of sharing public service jobs equitably and the need to maintain the principles of good public administration in human resource management, especially the meritocracy principle. If not checked, popular demands can work contrary to the necessity for accountable, effective and efficient local government. In the chapter that follows, I will try to analyse how the district has performed using the decentralised human resource management to boost effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### KASESE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE WITH DECENTRALISED HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the performance of Kasese district local government (KDLG) under decentralised HRM&D. Effort is made to establish causal-effect linkages between decentralising HRM&D and improvement in local government performance. Hard figures of before and after are where possible, utilised to back up the arguments advanced. It is however prudent to appreciate that the evidence supporting these arguments is scanty – not because there is evidence to the contrary, but rather because causal relationships are difficult to prove (World Bank, 1999:109). The district performs a variety of functions under vastly different circumstances, which complicates comparisons of performance before and after decentralisation.

Analysis has gone along the lines of personnel management practices like recruitment and selection, staff performance appraisal, manpower planning and development, staff remuneration and incentives, structural and institutional development and lastly the issue of accountability and responsiveness.

In the chapter, it is argued that human resources are very crucial in the performance of any organisation, local governments inclusive. Effective management of personnel greatly determines the performance of an organisation. Decentralisation has led to improvement in human resources management, which is instrumental in the performance of local governments.

#### 4.1 Structural organisation of KDLG

Politically, a district chairperson democratically elected by universal adult suffrage heads KDLG. The chairperson at the present moment heads a district council of 39 councillors all directly elected save for the two councillors representing the youth and people with disabilities who are elected

by their respective electoral colleges. For day today management, the council has an executive committee of 5 members, appointed by the chairperson from among the members of the council.

Below the district council are 2 county councils, 2 urban councils, 19 sub-county councils, 102 parish councils, and 584 village councils in that order of descending hierarchy. However, the two urban councils enjoy a lot of constitutional and statutory autonomy from the district council in terms of their planning, administrative and financial management functions. They are represented in the district council and other statutory committees with district-wide mandate.

Administratively, the district public service is headed by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), who is the chief executive officer and accounting officer. The district administration is divided into 7 departments which all report to the district council through the CAO. Below the district level is the field administration of the sub-county headed by the sub-county chief, assisted by a team of field extension staff. The lowest administrative level is a parish (LC2) headed by the parish chief with no any other kind of established staff. Other levels only serve the political purpose of co-ordination and supervision and have no technical staff. An assistant CAO is charged with co-ordination of administration at county the level. The whole district employs a total of 791 people in the civil service and, 2481 teachers.

## **4.2 Personnel management functions**

Personnel is one of the most important factors of production and in order to deliver services expected of councils, this resource must be managed with diligence in accordance with established rules and regulations. The greatest challenge local governments have under decentralisation is to attract, motivate and retain competent staff to fulfil the enormous functions passed to them from central government. Since under democratic decentralisation each district local government has been given powers to manage its human resources, councils, which take the function seriously, are expected to boost their

effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. In this paper, the personnel management functions under study have been given meaning and later analysed in terms of before and after decentralisation. Effort is made to link any changes with the decentralisation of human resources management and development.

#### **4.2.1 Recruitment and Selection**

Staff selection merit as much care as the choice of capital equipment according to Alan Fowler (1995:45). The effective delivery of local government services will depend on the ability and attitudes of local authorities staff. The worth of any administrative system is determined primarily by the quality of its personnel. How they are selected is therefore of prime importance. Recruitment is primarily concerned with attracting the right people with the appropriate skills, qualifications and experience who want to work for the local government. It entails knowing the job one is seeking to recruit to, the source of supply of suitable applicants, how to contact them and finally how to convince them to want to apply to work for the local government (Tonny, 1993:14). Selection on the other hand is the process of choosing from the applicants the one best for a particular job. The most commonly used method is interview. Others may include curriculum vita analysis, reference enquiries, written tasks, group tasks and tests of many kinds.

Recruitment and selection prior to decentralisation were done by central government through its arm, the Public Service Commission. This single body with nation-wide mandate could not live up to the challenge as the task was enormous. The capacity was simply not there. Their delegated arms, District Service Committees, had no enough powers and what resulted was constipation in the recruitment and selection process. Advertisements made in national media, which only circulate in big towns left majority of the rural based people without adequate access to information. Interviewing panels would in most times sit only in the capital city edging out those from up country stations because of the travel costs involved. Local governments

responded to the vacuum by acting on the spur of the moment to cope with critical personnel management needs. This led to irregular practices, which further weakened local governments' performance and preparedness to attract, recruit and retain competent staff (Lubanga in Nsibambi, 1998:73). Kasese district local government was one of the most hit local governments because of its remoteness from the capital, and low level of education amongst the population. Coupled with the political background reviewed in the previous chapter, the politics of jobs in the local public service became very critical.

Decentralisation of HRM&D provided an answer to this problem. With the establishment of District Service Commissions under the 1993 Local governments (Resistance councils) statute, a recruitment and selection drive was launched to fill the vacant posts and weed the service of irregularly recruited staff. The expeditious recruitment and promotion of staff reduced the vacancy rates in the council and helped to end the employment of staff on temporary terms. In addition, DSC satisfactorily reviewed staffing levels in the departments and through the interview mechanism identified excess officers for retrenchment. The accomplishment so far is depicted in Table 4.1.

**TABLE 4.1. Recruitment, Confirmation, Promotion and Disciplinary actions by DSC from 1991 to 1998**

YEAR	Number Recruited.	Number Confirmed.	Number Promoted	Disciplinary cases concluded.
1991/92	12	8	2	0
1992/93	31	0	0	0
1993/94	5	9	0	1
1994/95	55	0	6	0
1995/96	116	12	8	2
1996/97	62	49	11	3
1997/98	31	93	7	6

Source: DSC, KDLG.

In quantitative terms, it can be said that decentralisation of HRM&D has helped to alleviate the problem of staffing in the district local government. Since inception in 1993, DSC has recruited a total of 300 people into the district public service. This includes many others who had been working on temporary appointments but could not be regularised in time due to PSC bureaucracy. However the issue of staffing is not merely a question of numbers. The quality of staff is as equally, if not more, important. Although DSCs have autonomy in the discharge of their duties, they are guided by the principle of meritocracy in the conduct of their business. The guidelines on human resource management in local governments clearly spell that out:

- (a). All appointments shall be based on transparent criteria of open competitive interviews devoid of political interference, favouritism and tribalism.
- (b). The merit principle shall be the basis for appointment by the DSC.
- (c). The DSC shall operate independently of anybody without fear or favour.
- (d). The DSC to advertise all vacant posts only on the request of CAO or Town clerk and anybody in Uganda with the qualifications is free to apply and compete.

- (e). Every job advertised to have a comprehensive job description and clear reporting relationship.
- (f). The district or urban council to create or abolish posts in the public service of the district or urban council.
- (g). Appointment to the district or urban council to be done only against a vacant established/approved post and when it is necessary to fill such a post (Human Resources Management Manual for Local Governments in Uganda, 1999:14-15).

Decentralised HRM however faces a lot of challenges which if not properly handled could lead to a reversal of the quantitative achievements earlier displayed. The system is not completely free of political interference and thus not impermeable to abuse. Cases of political interference in appointments especially to top positions and sectarianism though not documented, are some of the issues that spoil the otherwise good system. The problem is compounded by the fact that DSC is appointed, financed and facilitated by the district council. The funding is in most cases grossly inadequate for the commission to function properly. For the financial year 1998/99, the total budget for the DSC was only 36,357,484 shillings (Exchange rate is currently 1 US\$= 1500 Uganda shillings). For instance, all the five commissioners and the secretariat have no means of transport and share one office room. It therefore goes without saying that the commission cannot be totally independent in practice. In one way or the other, some allegiance has to be paid to the source of power. Revoking the appointment is not as easy but when it comes to the renewal of the term of office, the threat becomes real. Members of DSC being local residents, and aware of the strong socio-cultural ties in African traditions, local sentiments cannot easily be subdued in the selection process. Fear of lack of objectivity has run through the entire local government in the country that even when recruitment is done nationally, only local residents and “sons and daughters of the soil” respond. Other prospective candidates fear that they will not be treated justly at interviews and victimisation may follow in case they succeed to pass the interview. A recent case in the district was when the post of the chief executive officer for the district (CAO) was advertised after four years since it

fell vacant and only four people, all sons of the soil, responded despite its wide publicity in the national media. Whether the fears are real or imaginary could not be proved by this study with empirical evidence but those sentiments were registered. Senior positions like the District Engineer, District Director of Health Services have failed to attract competent candidates to fill them because professionals fear local politics involved in district jobs under a separate personnel system. The former District Medical Officer, Dr Basaza, voluntarily left the district to join Ministry headquarters on the same premises.

Although poor incentives and inadequate infrastructure could be contributing to the low response of skilled and qualified personnel from far places, fear of sectarianism, tribalism and victimisation contribute greatly. The post of district internal auditor and secretary District Service Commission, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, have remained vacant and unadvertised because politicians have not reconciled themselves on personalities to fill the jobs. This may lead to political patronage in the local civil service adversely affecting the performance of staff. It would be proper and fitting if the district public service was depoliticised and detribalised and the meritocracy principle left to in the recruitment and selection process. A strong and independent DSC would guarantee that.

#### **4.2.2. Staff performance appraisal**

Staff performance appraisal is the systematic evaluation of an official from several points of view over a definite period of time and in accordance with a fixed and uniform scale. It involves the measurement of the quality and quantity of work of an individual's output over a specified period of time. The overall objective of staff appraisal is simply to evaluate and give feedback to employees that will enable them, and as a result, the local authority, to improve effectiveness. Staff appraisal is one of the ways of motivating staff. If properly done, it can guide other personnel management activities such as confirmation in appointment, promotion, staff training, discipline and remuneration. The appraisal should therefore be done objectively, accurately and timely so that it can guide the above mentioned activities properly. A poorly executed staff appraisal misleads decision-makers. Evidence world-wide strongly suggests that people want to be told how well or how badly they are doing in

their jobs and given advice on how to build on their strengths (Tony, 1993). Appraisal should be a two way process in which the employee and his supervisor share information about the performance of the former with the view to improving it.

Staff appraisal exercise before decentralisation was characterised by lack of objectivity, negligence in the completion of the forms and their improper use. Employees were rarely told about their performance. Appraising supervisors were far from the supervisees and the chain of bureaucracy very long. Supervisors used what could be described as remote control to determine the performance of their staff. Filling staff appraisal forms had become routinised and in most times neglected. It was reduced to a mere ritual which staff resorted to only when scheming for promotion or going for further training. The instruments for appraisal, confidential report forms, were in most times in scarce supply. Staff could take many years in service without filling the forms and their supervisors did not think it was their role to remind them. They took it as the role of personnel department which itself was greatly wanting. In the end, the system of staff performance appraisal totally broke down.

Decentralising human resource management has registered tremendous improvement in the staff appraisal system although more is yet to be done. It is generally accepted in principle that the immediate supervisor of an official is the best qualified to evaluate him, provided of course that he is reasonably objective and is familiar with the facts on which the rating will be based (Fougere, 1967:237). However, it could also be noted that to entrust one man with this task is to run the risk of arbitrariness due to personal likes or dislikes or quite simply, to the imponderables of human nature. These challenges are all confronting the decentralised human resource management.

With decentralisation, the bureaucratic chain in the appraisal process has been reduced. The process now starts and ends within the district. Feedback to the appraisee can be communicated in time and necessary correction taken. Since staff are aware that the supervisor is now within close reach, they have taken work very seriously for if not, the consequences are more real than imaginary. Remotely controlled appraisal which some staff had taken advantage of to evade the wrath of non performance has long gone.

Besides, there are now many centres of power, which appraise the staff both formally and informally. On top of the head of department, there are other people now interested in the performance of staff. Members of the general public, local councillors, and members of DSC who are themselves based in the district provide avenues for appraising staff performance. Since the authority to take action is now local, they have no problem with making their views on the performance of staff known. Fictitious or arbitrary comments by the formal evaluation can always be cross checked. This has made line managers, who are the heads of departments, to take their responsibility more seriously for they now no longer have monopoly over appraising their staff. They are in turn also being evaluated on how they are managing personnel in their departments. The system is therefore self-reinforcing.

Decentralisation has accorded the district opportunity to procure its own Annual Confidential Report forms (ACR) without necessarily restricting her to buy from the Government Printer. This has solved the problem of lack of ACR forms, which had become chronic in the district. Staff have responded by filling the forms and appraisal is being done in time as indicated in table 4.2.

**TABLE 4.2 Staff Response to Filling ACR Forms**

<u>Year</u>	<u>% of staff with up to date ACR folders.</u>
1990/91	41
1991/92	42.5
1992/93	46
1993/94	54.7
1994/95	60
1995/96	62.8
1996/97	72
1997/98	75

Source. Human Resources Department, KDLG.

Since 1990, the response of staff in filling ACR forms has increased from 41% to 75%. This can be attributed to the increased involvement of heads of departments in the management of staff under them. Staff have also gained confidence in the system since its value has been reflected in confirmations, promotions and going for further training. The link between appraisal and rewards is clearer than before. The bulk of the defaulters are in sub-county administration where the level of education of staff is still very low and among the aged nearing retirement because they do not have much future career prospects.

Decentralisation of HRM has attracted attention of donor agencies who have pledged to assist the district modernise her personnel records by computerising them. With the powers to determine her own structure, Kasese district established the post of Records officer in personnel section who is charged with the management of personnel records on a full-time basis. The registry has been expanded and equipped with record storage facilities. The computerisation of staff records is expected to lead to the effective management of establishment control systems.

For performance appraisal to be taken seriously, it must be seen to be utilised for its intended purpose. Staff doing well must be recognised in the form of confirmations in appointments, promotion and those doing badly or falling below the required standard assisted to improve. Those who totally fail to catch up may have some sanctions administered on them. With the appointing authority now near, confirmations are done on time and timely promotions used to reward good performers and disciplinary action taken on those who fail to live to the expectations of the district council. Table 4.2 above shows how the situation has improved since the inception of decentralised HRM&D. The back log of staff overdue for confirmations have been cleared and some promotions effected. The number for promotions is small because of the limited opportunities available in the district structure. With massive recruitment, many of the positions have now been filled and prospects for promotion will take time to be created.

There are plans to introduce Results Oriented Management (ROM) in the local government, and the appraisal system is being revisited to match the development. The district local government is expected to define her performance standards and

targets, and to organise how council departments will achieve the objectives. The new system is based on actual performance of well-defined, resource specific and clearly targeted tasks agreed between the staff and his/her supervisor. It aims at objectively and accurately:

- (a) Clarifying the job, its responsibilities and how it contributes to the objectives of the department;
- (b) Reviewing past performance against agreed work plans and setting new objectives/plans for the following period;
- (c) Identifying organisational barriers to good performance;
- (d) Identifying development needs and assisting with the career development of individuals;
- (e) Improving communication between the officers and their managers.

An open system with the individual being able to comment on appraisal rating is being introduced. The system will be interactive to allow for the full involvement of the person being appraised. Performance objectives against which the individual to be assessed are to be jointly agreed, and wherever possible measurable. The system also includes an assessment of the work qualities and skills required to meet the performance objectives. All this would not have been possible under the centralised human resources management system since the supervisor was at a distance from the supervisee. Decentralisation has increased a sense of responsiveness in heads of departments since it is clear to them that their performance will depend on a team of committed staff below them.

#### **4.2.3. Staff Development**

Staff development or human resource development as it is sometimes called, encompasses staff training, deployment, coaching and career development. The object of staff development is to ensure that an organisation has the effective managers, which it requires to meet its present and future needs. The quality of the employees will influence the development activities in the district. The objective of KDLG is to apply staff development in its public service as one of the major needs of bringing about rapid, balanced, and sustained economic and social development in the district.

Before the decentralisation of HRM, there were many weaknesses in the area of staff development in the district administration, which were adversely affecting the performance of staff. These included: Lack of a training policy, no manpower development plan, inadequate funds for training, lack of coordination of training, abscondment/desertion of trained public servants and the over-emphasis on formal training as a means of staff development at the expense of other cheaper but equally effective methods of staff development. The district lacked commitment to staff development since staff could be transferred across the country. Central government, which had the mandate for staff development, could not effectively handle the enormous task at its disposal. What resulted were haphazard training programs and no sense of career development. People would join service and be left on their own to improve their skills by experience. This resulted into the killing of people's talents, enthusiasm and commitment.

With the decentralisation of HRM, KDLG undertook the task of staff development seriously and has registered considerable success. A district manpower development plan has been developed after training needs assessment had been carried out. This has become a useful tool in securing more funding for the training component. Training has been earmarked as an essential ingredient of manpower development. As a human resource development factor, training is so crucial that its absence would spell stagnation and even regression of development. Training is a dynamic process of human resource development in which knowledge, skills, and attitudes are conditioned to effectively achieve net administrative and development goals. The training programme of KDLG is now aimed at:

- Ensuring continuous availability of skilled manpower in the district;
- Helping people to progress within service as they take on higher responsibilities, while others in lower ranks are tailored to fill positions left by those promoted;
- Encouraging the development and retention of good and talented employees;

- Helping the employees to realise their potential and achieve self-actualisation and self-reliance in order to execute efficiently and with initiative tasks assigned to them.

The training budget has been increasing from time to time after decentralisation indicating increased responsiveness of the district local government to staff development.

**TABLE 4.3 STAFF TRAINING BUDGET OVER TIME**

YEAR	Amount of money budgeted for staff training (In Uganda shillings)
1991/92	750,000
1992/93	800,000
1993/94	1,325,016
1994/95	5,143,450
1995/96	5,600,000
1996/97	9,320,400
1997/98	10,216,000
1998/99	17,717,855

Source: Finance Department, KDLG.

From the above figures, it can be realised that more money is being committed to the training budget than before even if annual inflation which has been on average less than 10% is taken into account. It is however important to observe that in absolute terms, the amount is still very meagre compared to the amount of staff the district employs. This can be illustrated by the fact that the whole annual budget for staff training cannot be enough to sponsor one staff for an M.A programme here at the ISS which is in the range of 25 million Uganda shillings. A study carried out by MISR (1997:8) in some selected districts observed that most district officials are rarely promoted and professional training is still a privilege of the central government, which tends to shade away any responsibility to do with districts. "There is a tendency

to assume that there is sufficient capacity at the district and sub-county levels and as such they have been given a lot of activities without matching manpower development”.

Kasese district was in the second phase of decentralisation and it took the opportunity to use the method of attachment by sending some of its key staff to districts, which were in the first phase for on-job training. The district has since decentralisation managed to organise short courses for staff within the district where national facilitators are invited to polish them on the job. This has proved very cost effective and efficient as more people receive the training within their working environment at less cost. Tremendous progress in this area has been registered in financial management, planning, records management, computer operations and general supervision. In addition to on the job training, the district has managed to co-sponsor staff on long courses for diplomas, degrees and post-graduate programs. This was after realising that central government is too over stretched, reluctant or negligent to reach majority of the people in district local government

In an effort to create a pool of educated people within the district, the district local government established a scholarship fund in 1994 to support students from the district going for studies in institutions of higher learning. To guarantee its funding, every taxpayer pays 1000 Uganda Shillings every year embedded in the graduated personal tax. A total of 423 students have since been assisted for various courses. Much as this does not target local government staff per se, it helps to create a pool of qualified people within the district whom the district local government can rely upon when recruiting for vacant posts. To-date, a total of 14 beneficiaries of this scheme have been employed in the local government public service. There is however need to make the scholarship scheme more effective by targeting it to meet the skills much needed in the district service. Priority could be given to students offering professional courses like accounting, engineering, human medicine, agriculture, education and computing. The current arrangement of targeting everybody is less effective and does not respond to the specific needs of the district. The district is now using the structure put in place by decentralisation to mobilise funding from donors, NGOs and central government ministries to boost the training component.

Kasese district local government is however facing major difficulties, which if not addressed, may derail the whole staff development process. These include, but not limited to inadequate funds for the training and the retention of the trained skilled personnel. Training is a very expensive activity and needs a lot of capital input. Much as the district has done its best in increasing funding to staff development, it is still very low in absolute terms. This is compounded by the fact that central government is still in full control of the development budget where long-term training funds are supposed to be embedded. Much as central government is supposed to access training opportunities to local governments, the reality in practice is different. Long term training opportunities, especially those available abroad are monopolised by central ministry staff. Decentralising the development budget or ministries becoming more transparent with training opportunities available at national level could solve this. Staff in local governments should gain equal access like their central ministry counterparts. Staff development has got to compete for the meagre local resources with other priority programs like feeder roads, primary education, primary health care and agriculture extension. The practical reality is that politicians prefer to prioritise more of the latter at the expense of staff development since they give more physical results valued for their political accountability. With the rapid changes in technology and management techniques, the district requires much more resources to keep its staff up to date with modern demands.

Retention of trained manpower as mentioned before is another problem facing the district. The separate personnel system does not provide a clear career path for senior level professionals. The staff structure is limited by the resources available. There is a problem of high rate of staff turnover for greener pastures in central government, NGOs and the private sector. Since decentralisation was introduced, the district has lost a total of 5 staff at senior level positions who have left for greener pastures. Money spent on staff development therefore threatens not to bring out the intended returns. Staff benefits in the district local government are still far short of what is offered in the private sector. Salaries are very low and other fringe benefits like transport, housing, medical care are lacking or grossly inadequate. The district has instituted a mechanism of bonding staff going for long term training to serve the district for at least 3 years upon completion or refund the full cost of the training. This has served as a deterrent though not a sufficient measure. People still find it easier to

refund the money than remain when compared with the better paying private sector. The best solution would be to create a conducive atmosphere for the highly trained staff to remain in the district local government, an issue that is still a puzzle to all district local governments all over the country.

In summary, it can be inferred that the quality of the human resource can be improved by positive managerial action to develop skills and abilities. Effective staff development needs to be based on the definition and assessment of performance. These conditions have been accorded by decentralisation to a great extent and KDLG has taken advantage of them to improve its staff. The district is also encouraging its staff to take responsibility of continuous self-development. This has taken the form of granting them study leave with full pay, guaranteeing them to return to their jobs after the training, and paying them out of pocket allowance while studying. All these incentives have encouraged the formerly reluctant staff to take up the challenges of improving their skills well aware that future promotions are pegged on added skills and qualifications.

#### **4.2.4 Staff Remuneration and Incentive**

Under staff remuneration and incentives, included are things like salaries, duty-facilitation allowance, leave, payment of pensions and the working environment. It has always been the policy of government to pay its employees competitive, timely and equitable salaries, which attract, retain, and motivate staff. Even with the decentralisation of human resource management, the responsibility for determining policy and salary levels in the entire public service rests with central government. This implies that district councils have no role in determining the salary levels of their staff beyond advising central government. The adequacy of staff salaries put aside, the administration of what little there is can make a difference concerning motivation of staff.

Prior to decentralisation, KDLG had gross weaknesses in her salary administration because of lack of a sense of responsibility since it was seen as the central government affair. Salary administration was characterised by low and inequitable pay, irregular payments and improper maintenance of the pay rolls leading

to non payment of salary increments and ghosting (A terminology used to refer to a situation where non existent staff were on the payroll and their money could be embezzled by some people in the administration). People being paid in wrong grades was also rampant.

Decentralisation has put the districts, KDLG inclusive at the centre of managing their own payrolls. Central government is still giving back-up support with the preparation of the computerised payroll but the responsibility of the contents lies with the district. Eventually, the district will be producing its own payroll after acquiring the necessary equipment. The concerned staff have been trained and in a short time to come, the district will be self-sufficient. This means that the delays in effecting changes on the payroll which were caused by too much work at Uganda Computer Services and the long chain of processing the pay change reports will be no more. At the present moment, computerisation of staff payroll has been completed and so many ghost workers eliminated. Since decentralisation, a total of 37 ghost workers have been cleaned out of the payroll. The incentive to the district to clean up the pay roll has been reinforced by the fact that central government no longer releases salaries for the staff based on the payroll but rather using another criteria based on the size and population of the district but guided by a certain minimum amount as a base level. This implies that if the district cleans up the pay roll and rids it of ghosts, it will save money for other development activities. The district has also embarked on vigorously auditing the payroll to ensure that each staff is paid the right salary as per his or her grade. This exercise alone discovered a total of 17 people who were being paid more money than was due to them. A total saving of shillings 1,736,182 has been made per month in the above exercise.

The irregularity in the payment of salaries has since been greatly reduced and will eventually be eliminated. Staff used to go for months before receiving their salaries because of central bureaucracy. This had eroded the morale of staff, as they had to look for alternative means of survival by absenting themselves from the job.

With the decentralisation of human resources management, the situation has since improved as shown in table 4.5. The district now well knows that the responsibility of paying staff salaries on time squarely rests with it. The Local Government Act, 1997 personally holds the chairperson of the district council and CAO responsible if staff are not paid on time.

**Table 4.4 Regularity of salary Payment in KDLG from 1990 to 1998**

YEAR	Average number of days by which Monthly salary payment is late.
1990/91	60 to 90
1991/92	60 to 90
1992/93	60
1993/94	20
1994/95	18
1995/96	15
1996/97	10
1997/98	5

Source: Finance Department, KDLG.

Payment of all staff should be done by the 28<sup>th</sup> of every month according to government policy. Due to financial and managerial problems, the above policy has not been realised yet. It can however be appreciated that since decentralisation, the situation has been steadily improving. From 3 months delay to the present 5 days on average is no mean achievement.

Besides improvement in salary payment, staff have been motivated by the payment of their reimbursable allowances like bicycle allowance, safari day allowance, night allowances and travel allowance. The researchers personal experience has it that the period before decentralisation had left field officers heavily marginalised by ministry headquarters when it came to making reimbursable claims. Claims would take long to be processed, if at all they could, leaving the staff very demoralised. Now that all staff are making their claims to the district treasury, the bureaucracy in processing the claims has been shortened and responsiveness improved. Other minimal staff welfare issues like tea break and burial assistance are now possible.

Decentralisation of HRM has led to improvement in the management of pension. One of the ingredients of employee morale is to have confidence in the

future, both when she/he is still in active employment, and especially when he/she retires. Pension was before decentralisation been centrally administered by Ministry of Public Service. This was not cost-effective, as pensioners had to travel long distances to the capital city to receive their pension cheques. The present system provides that pensioners will be receiving their payment at the district headquarters. What is not yet clear with pensions under the separate personnel management system is what will happen when somebody transfers from one local authority to another since there is no one integrated pension scheme. A unified pension scheme where all local authorities could be contributing would ease the burden of staff transferring between local authorities.

It should however be recognised that the adequacy of remuneration is still a problem throughout the entire public service in Uganda. Since the rate of salaries and allowances is still centrally determined, it is a problem for the district to pay a reasonable salary that would attract high quality professionals into the local government service. Equally affected is the quality of elected officials. The law restricts the district to spend not more than 15% of previous year's collected local revenue on the remuneration of councillors and committees. This limits the rate to be paid to the elected officials. In addition, civil servants employed by the district council are forbidden from becoming councillors less they resign their civil service jobs. Since the pay in the council is not attractive, many prefer not to join the council. The end result is that low educated councillors are the ones who dominate the council affecting the deliberative competency of the council. The study revealed that more than 50% of the district councillors did not go beyond senior four (Ordinary level). A case of one councillor who cannot read and write English exists and yet deliberations of the district council are supposed to be conducted in English.

**TABLE 4.6 Sources of Revenue to the District council for 1998/99 financial year**

REVENUE SOURCE	BUDGET AMOUNT	% of total revenue
Local revenue	839,331,181	13.3
Unconditional grant from central government	943,390,000	14.9
Conditional grants from Central government	3,735,396,932	59.0
Donor and NGO funds	808,863,634	12.7
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>6,326,981,747</b>	

Source: Finance Department KDLG.

**Summary statistics on revenue.**

• % of local revenue to total revenue	13.3
• % of total government contribution to total revenue	74
• % of donor contribution to total revenue	12.8
• % of central government contribution excluding donor money	84.8
• % of revenue where the district has complete authority to appropriate	28.2
• conditioned grants as a % of total government contribution	79.8

From the above, it can be clearly seen that the district is constrained by inadequate resources, and more still, much of the revenue is conditioned and the

district cannot appropriate it in accordance with its priorities. Designing an attractive incentive scheme for staff is therefore a dream the district cannot easily realise. A formula for determining unconditional grants to districts was put in the constitution to safeguard local government from arbitrary cuts by central government (Uganda Constitution, 1995:195-196). The formula is hereby reproduced below:

$$Y_1 = Y_0 + bY_0 + x_1$$

$$= (1+b) Y_0 + x_1$$

Where  $Y_1$  is the minimum unconditional grant for the current fiscal year;

$Y_0$  is the minimum unconditional grant in the preceding fiscal year;

$b$  is the percentage change if any, in the general price levels in the preceding financial year; and

$x_1$  is the net cost of running added and subtracted services in the current year.

For the purpose of the formula, the current fiscal year was taken to commence with 1995/96.

The formula however has some generic loopholes to the disadvantage of local governments. Since 1995/96 was taken as a starting year, the unconditional grant of 1994/95 was equally important as the previous year. In this year however, the wage component of decentralised staff was under conditional grants and yet it was to be in unconditional grant commencing 1995/96. Accordingly, the formula left it out.

Second, even if it was taken into account, by then central government was releasing wages and salaries for only people in post. There were many vacancies filled by districts after the 1995 restructuring. Many of these were in decentralised departments but no consideration was given on how their salaries were to be sent to the districts. This left the districts in a dilemma of using much of their local revenue and unconditional grants for paying staff salaries. Kasese district spends more than 50% of the above money per month in the form of staff salaries. This leaves little revenue for provision of other services by the district council.

#### 4.2.5 Disciplinary action

The need for discipline ensures the proper functioning of public service and maintains the integrity of the civil service. Cases of discipline come up very often in the district public service and they should be handled in accordance with the provisions of the law. Public officers are expected to perform their duties with dedication, diligence, integrity and justice. They must carry out their work in accordance with the rules and regulations governing council operations. Discipline is required if public officers act contrary to established rules, regulations or guidelines leading to government or council to suffer financial loss or reputation in the eyes of the public. Case of misconduct on the part of the public officer may result from refusal or failure to perform lawful duty; disobedience; falsehood; incompetence; drunkenness on duty; misconduct or misbehaviour.

Before decentralisation, the power to exercise disciplinary action on officers was entrusted with the PSC. There was also executive powers entrusted within the bureaucracy following the hierarchical chain of command. However the final power lay with the PSC. As already noted, the formal structure of disciplinary action was not devoid of political interference. Changes in political regimes would leave many civil servants dismissed. In 1980, 14 District Commissioners were summarily dismissed before national elections by the Chairman of the Military Commission on the pretext of incompetence. The fact of the matter was that the regime in power was not sure of their political position since they were to be returning officers. Dismissed in a similar manner also was the Chief Justice prior to the announcing of election results (Mutibwa, 1992:140). Civil servants who had entered the system using political patronage became untouchables. Because of the highly bureaucratic and centralised system, many disciplinary cases could go on for years without being concluded. This was wasteful as people on interdiction could take long and continue getting paid at least half their salaries. This runs contrary to the common principle that justice delayed is justice denied. Visscher is quoted in Fougere (1967:327) advocating for a quick disciplinary process if it is to be effective. “Discipline should be speedy if it is desired that disciplinary penalties should have some moral effect on the service at large. Nothing is more unhealthy than dragging on disciplinary proceedings for several years”.

Decentralised human resources management has reduced the bureaucratic chain of disciplinary action by giving all the powers to the DSC. Actions are now handled in a quicker way since the disciplining body is nearer to the civil servants than before. The legal framework in place is meant to ensure that the process is both fair and just. Article 173 of the National constitution spells out that a public officer shall not be discriminated against for having performed his or her duties faithfully in accordance with the constitution; or dismissed or removed from office or reduced in rank or otherwise punished without just cause. This is re-echoed in section 60 of the Local Governments Act, 1997. Any person aggrieved by the decision of the DSC has got a right to appeal to PSC provided that the ruling of the DSC shall remain valid until PSC has ruled on the matter. The ruling of the PSC shall be final. In the event that the District Council decides to dismiss the person against the ruling of PSC, the law provides for compensation of the staff concerned and the formula for working out the package is given in the law. There are other opportunities for the aggrieved staff to appeal to the courts of law, Inspector General of Government, or the Human Rights Commission if he feels that he is not being treated justly. All structures are in place to ensure the principles of natural justice are adhered to. The remaining puzzle is why structures alone have failed to guarantee fair play. Cases of political interference, victimisation of public officers on tribal and ethnic grounds, delayed action all, which threaten the otherwise highly prized system, are still being reported. One illustration at the national level at the time of this study is the issue of CAO's who are the chief executive officers of the district councils. In a spell of less than two years since the last local governments elections, 11 out of the 45 district chief executives have since been interdicted. Reasons range from lack of respect for councillors, misappropriation of funds, inefficiency, and indiscipline to mention just a few. Much as it may be correct that some of these cases could be genuine, as to why they proliferated after the local council elections leaves a lot of guesses to be made. It should be recognised that the CAOs worked as returning officers in the last elections and could have stepped on the toes of some people who ended up taking the top political jobs in the districts. A close scrutiny of those interdicted will reveal that they do not originate from those districts where they are working. Putting it the other way, they are not "sons or daughters of the soil". One loophole being exploited in the law is that the councils can recommend for interdiction of the officer on suspicion of him having committed an offence. The suspicion need not be proved before the

interdiction is effected. Knowing well that the other investigative arms of government will take considerable time investigating, interdiction has been used as a tool to get rid of officers, at least for some time. It can be appreciated that once out of office, the officer will not find it easy to stage a defence, as he has no access to information and lack resources. Some of these cases have dragged in courts for long and the officer is expected to meet his legal costs whereas the other party is using public funds. There have been instances where the judiciary has made its verdict and councils adamantly refuse to adhere. A case in point is the removal of CAO Kabale from office by the district council. A tribunal of three judges appointed by the Chief Justice to establish a *prima facie* case for the removal of the CAO in accordance with section 15 of the Local Governments Act returned a verdict of a no case to answer. In the above case, the tribunal made one final finding which is that “on the basis of the evidence adduced before us, in respect of all the allegations contained in the instrument constituting this tribunal, no *prima facie* case exists, within the meaning of the provisions of sections 69(2) and 15 of the LGA, 1997, for the removal of Mrs Gladys Aserua-Orochi from office as CAO, Kabale District”(Kibuka, 1999:52). Moved by the political interests involved in the case, the District council of Kabale set aside the ruling of the tribunal and have gone ahead and replaced the CAO. At the present moment, the removed CAO has petitioned court for redress and what will follow is yet to unfold. A similar case involving the CAO of Luwero district was only saved by local council elections which saw the old district chairperson and his executive replaced and the new executive decided to withdraw the case from court. The Town clerk Kasese town council, Augustine Bujara has been on interdiction for more than two years on similar circumstances. The most recent case involves the deputy CAO Mbarara, Bukeni Fred who has been arbitrarily interdicted by the district council. He has petitioned High court which has ordered for his reinstatement and awarded him costs of 200 million Uganda shillings. The district council has refused his reinstatement and his counsel has since applied for a warrant of arrest of the District Council Chairman and the CAO for contempt of court (New vision Newspaper of 8<sup>th</sup> November 1999). Cases of this nature are rampant throughout the country and are contributing to make local governments unattractive to qualified personnel. Kasese District local government has not yet experienced the type of situation but drawing from other district experience, there is no reason to doubt that it is very possible.

The institutional arrangement in place for handling disciplinary cases if well utilised can be adequate. We have however noted that the arrangement leaves room for the system being abused or poorly utilised. The system could be strengthened further by for instance not allowing interdictions before a *prima facie* case is established against an officer. Time limit should also be set over which investigations should be carried out. Unnecessary prolonging of investigations to buy time should be checked. If an officer is not found guilty over a specified period of time, he should be able to resume office with all benefits reinstated. This will undercut those people who after failing to prove their case resort to interdiction as a way of punishing officers under the guise of investigations. Introduction of modern management techniques like management by objectives (MBO), and management by results (MBR) will help in assessing real staff performance. The current system does not capture the output of staff and lack of performance can only be subjectively determined. This can mean anything in the absence of clear organisational goals and objectives, with no definite targets and performance indicators.

#### **4.3 Structural and institutional development**

A solid foundation of effective organisations and enabling institutions is a necessary precondition to development (World Bank, 1999:3). In this context, “institutions” are sets of rules governing the actions of individuals and organisations, and the interaction of all relevant parties and the negotiations among the participants. Rule-based processes increase the transparency of policies designed to create desired outcomes and of organisations used to implement them (ibid.).

Institutional building is taken to include any activities or interventions within an organisation or within a system of organisations that are designed to make it better at doing what it is meant to do (UNDP, 1996:63). This involves changing the structure of the organisation, its culture, the way it is managed and in some cases its strategic orientation. Institution building frequently entails enhancing the skills and knowledge of personnel in order to improve their performance on the job (ibid.). It has been used by KDLG to clearly understand the purposes it is supposed to fulfil and the means for their attainment; how to structure itself to facilitate goal-centred activity; how to manage human resources in the interest of performance as well as employee well-being; and how to build commitment to quality. Decentralisation has been used to

restructure the organisational arrangement of the district administration with the aim of making it more affordable, effective and efficient. Departments were merged and useless posts abolished. Excess staff was retrenched.

Chart 1 shows the old organisational structure and chart 2 the new structure after re-organisation.

**Chart 1 KASESE DISTRICT ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE BEFORE RESTRUCTURING.**

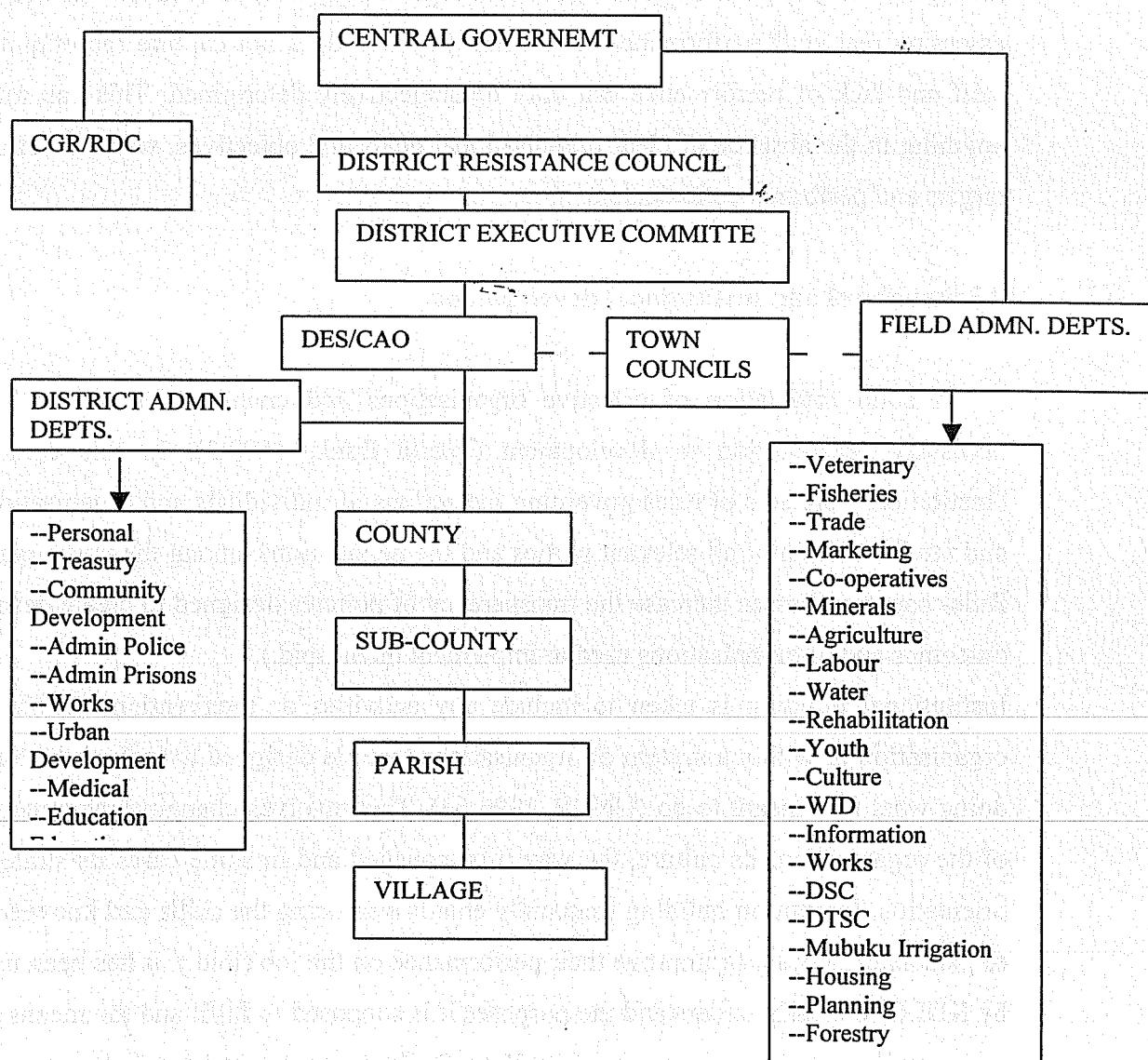
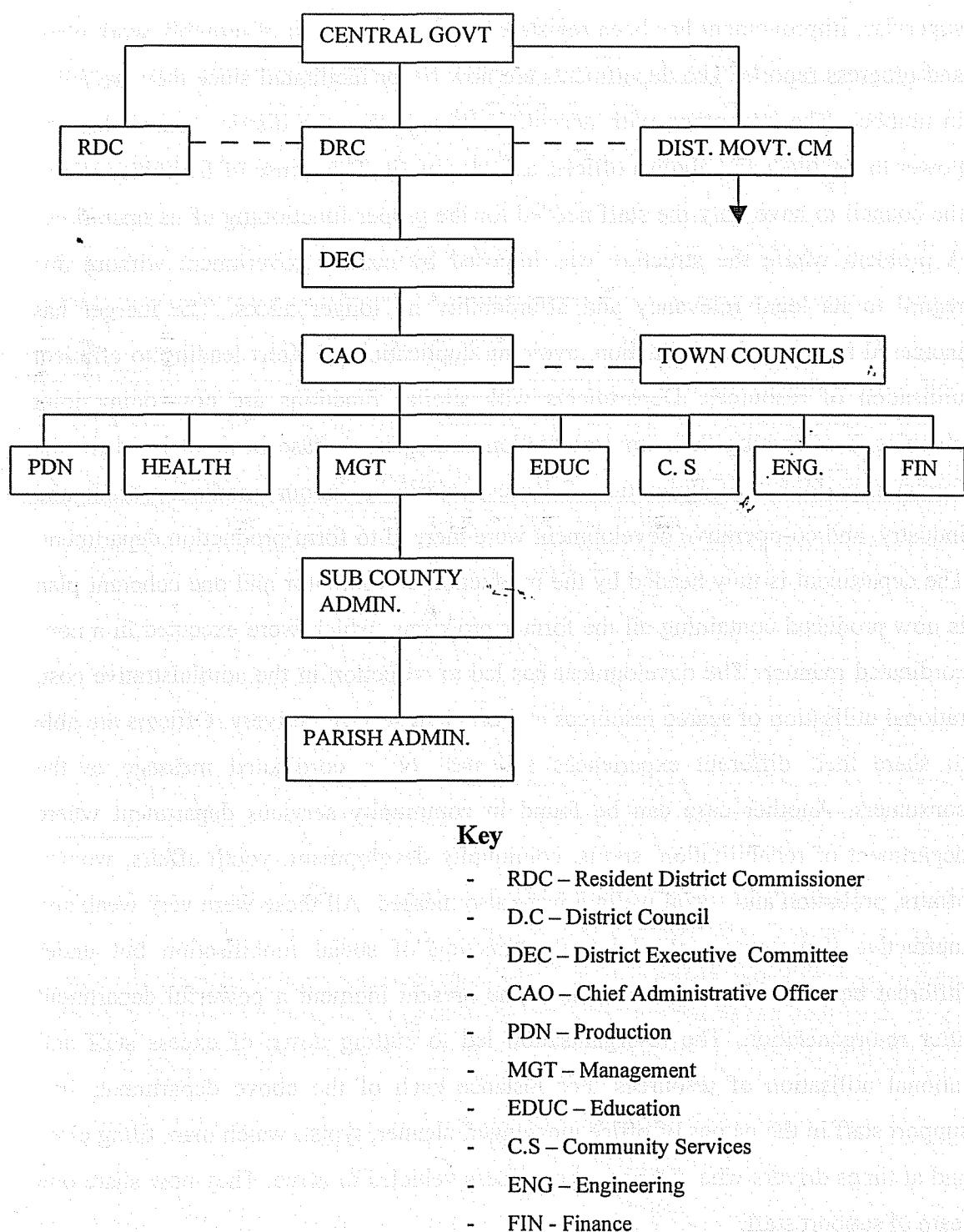


Chart 2 KASESE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEW  
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



The restructuring which saw departments reduced from 30 to 7 has improved co-ordination since the CAO now has few but more powerful departments to supervise. Improvement has been registered in the production of monthly work plans and progress reports. The departments are now better facilitated since they are fewer in number. The advantage with decentralisation is that the district council has the power to establish and abolish offices, as it deems fit. This sense of flexibility allows the council to have only the staff needed for the proper functioning of its operations. A problem where the structure was imposed by central government without due regard to its local relevancy and affordability no longer arises. The merger has increased a sense of coordination, avoiding duplication of effort leading to efficient utilisation of resources. Departments with similar functions are now doing joint planning harmonising their implementation strategies. A case in point is where the former departments of agriculture, fisheries, veterinary, labour, marketing, trade and industry, and co-operative development were merged to form production department. The department is now headed by the production co-ordinator and one coherent plan is now produced containing all the former programs, which were executed in a non-coordinated manner. The development has led to reduction in the administrative cost, rational utilisation of scarce resources and efficient service delivery. Officers are able to share their different experiences and pass on a coordinated message to the consumers. Another case can be found in community services department where department of rehabilitation, sports, community development, youth affairs, women affairs, probation and social welfare were also merged. All these were very weak and ineffective departments all doing the function of social mobilisation but under different banners. The department is at the present moment a powerful department after re-organisation. The re-organisation led to cutting down of excess staff and rational utilisation of resources. For instance each of the above departments had support staff in the names of office messenger, cleaner, typist, watch man, filing clerk and at times drivers who did not even possess vehicles to drive. They now share one team of support staff.

It is however prudent to observe that this lee-way for the councils to determine their own establishments can in some instances be abused to benefit

political interests. Cases where offices are created in the structure with the intention of creating jobs to fit political interests have been registered. Since restructuring was done by local politicians, there was a tendency of personal interests to interfere with the objective criteria of which jobs to retain and which to abolish. The matter was tricky since it involved retrenching relatives and political supporters of the people supposed to restructure. Under such a dilemma, some jobs which would have been abolished were retained to balance the political interests. For instance, it had been logically acknowledged that since the running of district markets had been privatised, there was no longer need for a markets officer. With the decentralisation of district trade development office, it could carry out the supervision and monitoring required. The post was abolished but another junior post of Assistant Urban Officer in charge markets was created to cater for a former county chief whose office had been abolished and yet he was politically powerful in the district. Another case was of a district information officer who was not in the good books of politicians. The council decided that his post was not necessary in the district simply because they wanted to get rid of him. The post was accordingly phased out in the structure. Upon the death of the incumbent who was yet to be retrenched, the council turned around and re-established the post to cater for other political interests. The post has since been filled with the “son of the soil” as had been politically strategised.

It is very good and befitting for the district local government to be given power over its own establishment. This allows it opportunity to strategically plan well knowing that they will not be bogged down by the inappropriate staffing structure. However, in democracies, which are still developing, the system is not free from abuse as local political interests can override the objective criteria of establishing and abolishing offices. Establishment of basic standards to guide local governments and ensuring their due compliance is still considered necessary.

Decentralisation of human resources management has enhanced the development of institutions and organisations which have all helped to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the district local government. These include the DSC, sectoral committees of the district council, district technical planning committee, Local government public accounts committee, Internal audit, and professional associations. The establishment of these institutions has been followed by training to boost their competence in decision-making in their respective areas. Institutional development has gone further to improve the performance of the district local

government since it now has a wider team of local “experts” to direct its activities. The capacity built is however still inadequate. The institutional and organisational development has enhanced increased participation of the people in the management of district affairs. This has been achieved through their representation on committees, commissions, boards and participation in various consultations associated with the democratic planning now in place. The researcher has appreciated the structural and institutional development that has accompanied decentralisation process. However, there is still a strong need to build the capacities of the institutions created for them to effectively carry out their roles. Civil society is still undeveloped and these lay men and women who have been given a lot of responsibilities without the necessary skills to carry out the job may only end up as decorative organs or will always clash with technocrats who are relatively better equipped. Attempts to give them basic knowledge through induction seminars and workshops are still grossly inadequate if they are to do a useful job. Central government through its established institutions like PSC, Auditor General, Public Accounts Committee, Central Tender Board, and Decentralisation Secretariat need to keep giving back-up support through training and supervision. The institutions are still babies, which need nourishment before they can be declared adults that can be completely independent and self-sufficient.

#### **4.4 Accountability and responsiveness**

The classic argument in favour of decentralisation is that it increases the efficiency and responsiveness of government (World Bank, 1999:108). Locally elected leaders know their constituents better than authorities at the national level and so should be well positioned to provide the public services local residents want and need.

Accountability means holding individuals and organisations responsible for the performance measured as objectively as possible. On the other hand, public accountability refers to the spectrum of approaches, mechanisms, and practices used by the government to ensure that their actions and outputs meet the intended goals and standards. It is intended to ensure close correlation between stated interventions, or goals, and actions and services rendered to the public as well as the efficient and effective use of public resources (UNDP, 1995). World Bank is quoted by Olowu (1988:20) having acknowledged the fact that even if the contribution of local government to the development of leadership potential is controversial, its

contribution to a system of accountable government is not. Local government, if it is truly local, is close to the people, and thus provides special opportunities for people to complain about the quality of services it renders but also about the conduct of its officials.

The present system demands that heads of departments submit their work plans to sectoral committees of the council for discussion and final approval. Disbursement of funds is based upon the approved work plans by the district council committees. Since civil servants know that without approved work plans they cannot access operational funds, they are compelled to do it. In subsequent meetings, the heads of departments are required to submit progress reports on how they utilised the previous funds before the next work plan can be approved. This has enhanced the capacity of civil servants in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of district programs. The reduced gap between civil servants and politicians accords opportunity to the peoples' representatives to demand and be given account of how bureaucrats are performing. Table 4.7 shows how the system of operating approved work plans became institutionalised in the district.

**TABLE 4.6 Adoption of Approved Work plans in Kasese District**

YEAR	Number of departments With approved work plans.	%
1991/92	0	0
1992/93	0	0
1993/94	1	3.3
1994/95	2	6.7
1995/96	6	85.7
1996/97	7	100
1997/98	7	100

Source, District Planning unit, KDLG.

\* Departments were effectively reduced from 30 to 7 in 1995/96 financial year.

Before decentralisation, there was no department operating under an approved work plan. Planning was a neglected function and activities were carried out on an adhoc basis. The district planner/economist who had been posted to the district in 1991 deserted shortly after his deployment. Nobody attached importance to planning and there were no resources for that. Central government departments used to send what one could, for lack of a better word, call their wish lists to ministry headquarters but there was nothing like approval. District local administration departments were equally, if not worse off. Politicians were only interested in approving budgets and did not bother to follow what happened thereafter. In such confusion, no meaningful monitoring could take place since there were no performance indicators or clear targets to achieve. The only exception was with donor funded projects where the rules were strict. Workplans in this case were made not because they were deemed necessary but because it was a donor requirement.

The financial year 1993/94 was a starting point with only the medical department succeeding to follow an approved workplan. This was because the department was heavily donor funded and a lot of capacity had been built there. The next year saw the environment department following suit. This department had been newly established and had donor support from USAID. The support to environment department was later extended to the whole district in the next year 1995/96 and a comprehensive five-year district development plan was formulated and approved by the district council. Interestingly due to lack of competent personnel in Engineering department, an annual work plan could not be extracted out. From 1996/97 financial year, the culture of approved work plans had spread to all departments and has now been institutionalised. The system could not have been possible in the previous system of personnel management since departments did not see themselves as one team. Efforts were fragmented in individual departments leading to a lot of inefficiencies.

Progress reports are now prepared and submitted in time since it is clear that no funds can be availed before such reports are filed. This is the most used mechanism through which monitoring of the utilisation of district council resources is effected. Progress reports are used by the councillors and internal auditors to make physical checks on what is claimed to have been achieved where possible. The reports also guide the next

work plans. This free flow of information between the appointed and elected officials has created opportunities for councillors to monitor, censure and sanction council employees. Such a mechanism was lacking prior to decentralisation.

The participation mechanism is further expounded by the fact that heads of departments are required to involve other actors in the planning process, for instance non-governmental organisations. Comprehensive annual - work plans are adopted after extensive consultations with the members of the community and other stakeholders. There is usually a budget conference bringing together all stakeholders in the district for them to put in their input before the district council discusses and approves the annual work plan and budget. This joint consultative process allows people outside the district administration to give in their views concerning the agenda for the district in the ensuing year. Such a consultative process would not have been possible without decentralised personnel management since officers would be answering to different ministry headquarters.

Decentralised HRM has strengthened the inspectorate function with the restructuring of the internal audit department. The district, using her devolved powers has managed to recruit a team of people to man the department, which had hitherto been neglected and ignored. The head of department at senior level is yet to be recruited. The department is now more powerful since it reports directly to the chairman of the district council. Their relative independence from the main stream administrative bureaucracy has increased their objectivity making their work more credible. Before decentralisation, internal audit was based in finance department and its objectivity was at risk of being eroded since they were dependent on the chief finance officer. The study found out that decentralisation, improvement has been recorded in the production of quarterly audit reports, which are used by the district council to monitor performance of departmental staff. In the same spirit of decentralisation, the Auditor General, who works as the external auditor for local governments has de-concentrated his staff up to the district level. In the last three financial years, the district has managed to produce audited accounts certified by the Auditor General, the first of its kind since the district was created in 1974. The Ombudsman (IGG) has de-concentrated his staff up to regional level. These institutions have helped to foster good financial management practices, as any defiance cannot easily go unnoticed.

Decentralisation has led to increased competition in the delivery of services. There has been increased involvement of the private sector in the management of some of the activities. A case in point was contracting out of the management of markets, feeder roads maintenance, cleaning of compounds and other civil works. The system has proved more effective and efficient. Illustrative cases are registered in the contracting out of revenue collection in markets. Before decentralisation, the district used to receive less than 10 million Uganda shillings per year as gross revenue. With contracting out, the district is now earning net revenue on average of 70 million per annum. (Source: Finance department KDLG). A similar case has been found in Health department where many NGOs have been involved in health service delivery. They have proved to be more efficient than the DMO's office on primary health care provision. This has made staff in DMO's office to pull up their socks because comparison has immediately unearthed their loopholes. In that regard, the post of health orderlies had to be phased out since the work could be done by Community-Based Health Workers and NGOs more effectively and efficiently. More than 50% of public health care work is now done by NGOs in partnership with the health department. This enabled the health department to concentrate on strategic planning, supervision, monitoring and evaluation and the enforcement of standards. Another case is in Works department where the district has registered tremendous improvement in the maintenance of feeder roads due to contracting out. The district has since then laid off road porters and overseers. This competition that has been introduced between district departments and other service providers has worked as a check on civil servants who had enjoyed monopoly of service provision and without any comparative performance. More effort is now put in by staff to justify their continued existence on the district structure or the service becomes wholly privatised and they get laid off. On top of the external competition, there is also inter-departmental competition. Departments compete among themselves to show results. Since they all report to council, those lagging behind have to pull up for they will be judged against their counterparts. This was not possible before decentralisation as departments were reporting to different power centres without any opportunity of being compared with others.

Improved service delivery as a result of decentralisation can best be illustrated with changes registered in the education department. Prior to decentralisation, the department was poorly staffed, ill equipped, and the standard of performance very

low. The separate personnel system has allowed the district to restructure the department and appoint competent staff to manage it. A graduate district education officer and inspector of schools were appointed. The structure was enlarged to create four posts of zonal inspectors based in their zones. Incompetent headteachers were replaced. The department was facilitated with transport in form of a vehicle and motorcycles for area zonal inspectors. Using performance at primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) as one of the indicators of performance in the department, the department can be seen to have registered considerable success with decentralisation. Other than improved human resources management under decentralisation, no other plausible explanation could be adduced for the improved performance since other factors like funding and infrastructure were more or less constant. It is however prudent to point out that a strong political commitment, where the district council prioritised education as number one in 1993 on its agenda provided a conducive atmosphere. Whatever the case may be, the political will itself was flourishing under decentralisation. Table 4.8 shows the trend of performance since 1990.

**TABLE 4.7 KASESE DISTRICT CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE IN PLE FROM 1990 TO 1998.**

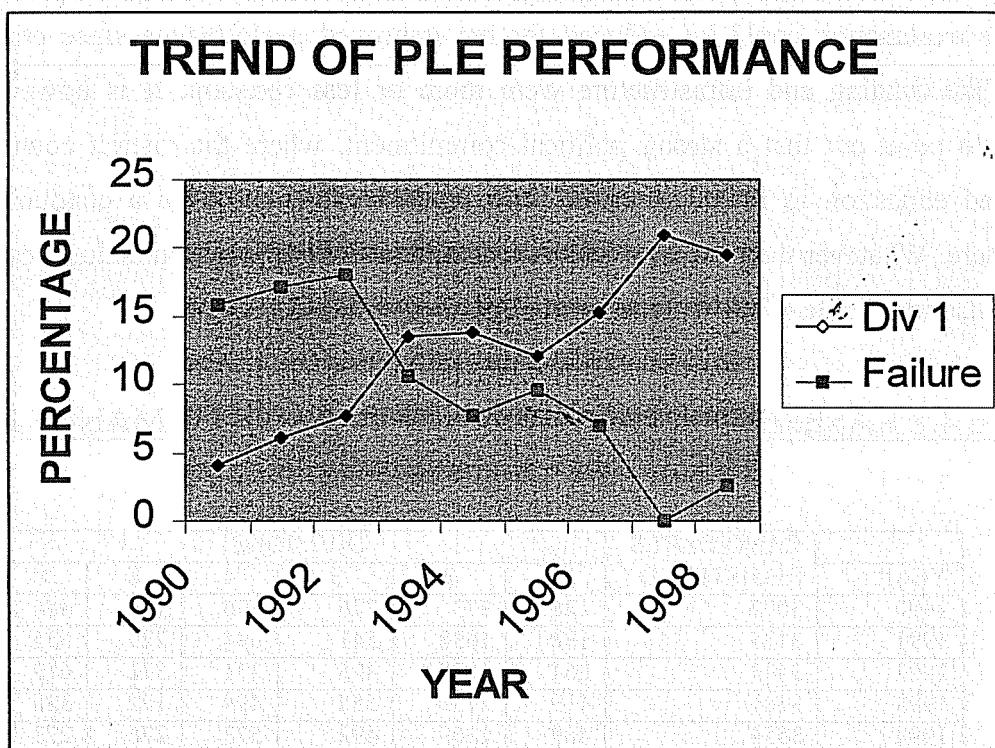
YEAR	CANDIDATES REGISTERED	DIVISIONS					
		1	2	3	4	X	U
1990	3072	126	773	776	736	117	484
1991	3125	192	1038	541	694	229	535
1992	3443	264	1028	435	371	371	619
1993	3101	419	1139	558	494	172	328
1994	3554	489	1369	492	573	276	273
1995	3661	443	1361	653	853	122	352
1996	4172	634	2043	513	554	300	290
1997	4709	988	2747	441	350	74	0
1998	5879	1149	3130	618	537	0	151

Source: Education Department KDLG.

\* Division X stands for incomplete results and division U for failures.

In 1990, pupils who passed in division one were totalling to 4.1% of the total that sat. Failures were a cool 15.8%. The restructuring of the department and internal reorganisation has managed to reverse the trend, and the year 1997 saw division one reaching a record level of 21% with no failures. The decline in performance in the year 1998 can be attributed to the insurgency that broke out in the district at the end of

1997 and many people were displaced from their homes. A total of 40 primary schools out of the 235 in the district had temporarily relocated to other areas due to insurgency. A second explanation can be the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the previous year, which saw the total enrolment double overnight without any changes in the infrastructure. Schools became overcrowded and the pressure on teaching staff was immense. A similar trend can be observed whereby the failure rate declined from 15.8% in 1990 to 0% in 1997. The trend in improvement is more clearly seen when presented on a line graph as in graph 1.



In the Uganda context, the above performance for a rural district is exemplary and has placed Kasese in the best six districts on Primary Leaving Examination performance. Before 1990's, the district was among the worst performers.

In the furtherance of the voice mechanism, decentralisation has come up with the institution of Local Governments Public Accounts Committee (LGPAC) which has the mandate of scrutinising the accounts of the district local government and has power to cause any officer or councillor to explain any anomaly revealed by the internal audit reports or Auditor General. The LGPAC can recommend action against any officer who fails to tender in satisfactory explanation. It is composed of the

members of the general public appointed by the district council and the public can voice their grievances to them. This has helped to create responsible actions by public officials who fear possible corrective action. This has given opportunity to the consumers of district council services to exert pressure on public officials.

However, the research study also discovered that all the avenues opened for improved accountability in the form of institutions and procedures are themselves not enough to guarantee accountability. Voice option is greatly affected by low levels of education on the side of the general public and elected officials. Appointed officials still command advantage over their bosses, the councillors, since they are generally of little formal education and lack experience in the management of public affairs. Civil servants dominate the sectoral committee meetings because councillors lack enough information and capacity to interpret the little available. In such instances, they just endorse whatever is presented by technocrats without adding or subtracting much value. The exit option is still being adversely affected by lack of a vibrant civil society and private sector, which could carry out the activities. The private sector is still dominated by small informal enterprises with limited capital and inadequate managerial skills.

In conclusion, decentralisation of human resources management has made the district local government more responsive to the needs of the population. If responsiveness can be seen in the context of increased access to services, equitable distribution of services and the participation in decision making, there is considerable evidence to show that it has been achieved to a great extent. One of the big political problems the district had been confronted with was increasing participation of the local people in the management of the district public service. The researcher's experience indicates that before decentralisation, very few indigenous people were occupying positions at the rank of head of department and sections. Of the 30 departments in the district before decentralisation, only three (10%) were headed by indigenous people. This had created a lot of political discontent that the population was less cooperative in implementing district programmes, for they saw them as being dominated by "foreigners". The situation has now changed. Of the seven departments, four (57.1%) are currently headed by the indigenous people. If we are to analyse the former 30 departments, some of which have now been reduced to section status, a

total of 13 (43.3%) are occupied by indigenous people. By indigenous people, the researcher means people who were born in the district and belong to one of the three original tribes in the district, which are Bakonzo, Basongora, and Banyabindi. This issue may sound rather trivial but the researcher's experience in the district for 8 years confirms it as a point of grand importance. The population now feels satisfied since their own sons and daughters are now involved in the management of their affairs. This is a very big social and political capital for the success of district programmes. Access of the population to the professional services of technical officers has been increased. Knowing that they are now employees of the local government, the staff are now more ready to reach out to the population. More officers have been recruited and posted to sub-counties to assist in extension work. This has reduced the transaction costs of the local people looking for a service. Decentralising human resources management and development has strengthened both the internal and external mechanisms of enforcing accountability. What the researcher finds still lacking is equipping the institutions in place with the necessary competence to do the job. Councillors need more skills in monitoring and evaluation of district activities and the population still need more civic awareness to enable them demand for what is due to them from the district local government.

## CHAPTER FIVE.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

#### 5.0 Introduction

In this paper, I have examined the role of decentralised human resources management and development in enhancing effective and efficient performance in Kasese district local government. The research has established a *prima facie* case for decentralised human resource management and development as a mechanism to improving performance in KDLG. Also established is the fact that this role played by decentralising human resource management cannot be taken for granted. Institutional arrangements alone cannot guarantee sustainability of the improved performance. There is much more that needs to be done beyond the current institutional arrangements to ensure sustainability of the improved performance realised so far. In this chapter, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made for the system of decentralising human resource management to be perfected and its gains sustained.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Decentralisation is a wide concept and much of what it becomes in practice will depend on the dimension being addressed and the context. Human Resources Management and Development on the other hand is at the centre of success for any organisation for it is the one that turns inputs into outputs. Centralisation of governance has registered failures in almost all parts of the globe and decentralisation is expected to provide a way out. The researcher agrees with the World Bank (1999:9) assertion that “arguing about whether decentralisation should happen is largely irrelevant; the way it is implemented will determine how successful it is”.

Uganda’s social, economic and political background has done a great deal in shaping the performance of local governments. Right from the colonial period to the 1990s’, Uganda’s history has been characterised by ups and downs in her politics. Political independence was attained before the country was consolidated as one

nation. There were still a lot of differences in social, political, economic and cultural developments by different societies that were later to constitute Uganda. Powerful local governments were therefore seen as posing a danger to the much-cherished national unity at that time. This contributed as to why centralisation was promoted at the expense of local self-governance. This trend was to later prove ineffective and inefficient in terms of local governments' management and service delivery to the population. Government became far from the governed and the citizens started seeing it as unhelpful and only a burden to them. The decentralisation process has brought back the confidence of the population because they are involved in the management of their own affairs. Human Resources management and Development which is one of the components under decentralisation policy, has together with fiscal decentralisation, been one of the pillars of the decentralisation process in Uganda. It is at the local level where the common man interacts with the state and giving power to local governments to manage their own staff has made a big difference.

From the study, it can be deduced that personnel management practices have greatly improved with decentralisation. The dispersion of power from a single national body to several district bodies has decongested the centre allowing speed in the process of human resource management. Many vacant posts have been filled providing the district with adequate staff for service delivery. Although numbers per se cannot guarantee improved performance, many vacant positions in the district local government were adversely affecting its capacity to deliver services. There is need for a judicious mix between the responsibilities and the number of people to effectively perform the tasks required. The problem of understaffing has majorly been solved by the decentralisation of human resources management.

In addition to recruiting adequate staff, decentralising human resource management has improved staff motivation. The payment of staff salaries has become relatively more regular, confirmations in appointments done on time, an increase in the budget for staff development, and an improvement in staff appraisal process. All this has had a positive impact on the performance of KDLG.

Decentralised human resource management makes the local governments more responsive in the management of their own staff. Local councillors are involved

in supervision and monitoring of staff performance. People participate in checking non-performers by appealing to their representatives who can easily intervene. The institutional mechanisms accompanying decentralisation are all avenues for improved performance. The DSC itself, district council sectoral committees, internal audit and local government public accounts committee are all useful for laudatory staff performance. The most important achievement in this area is the flexibility of the district to determine its organisational structure and staffing levels. This flexibility has allowed the district to come up with the structure, which it feels can effectively and efficiently address the demands of its population. This has registered progress in service delivery as found out in finance department, education, health and engineering. The competition spirit brought in by the involvement of many actors is considered healthy for the smooth running of district services.

In developing democracies like the one of Uganda, decentralisation of human resource management cannot by itself guarantee effective and efficient local government performance in a sustainable manner without enough checks and balances put in place. There is increased fear for local governments over-exercising their powers, eroding the whole spirit of good public management. A strong central government is still needed to set and enforce national standards, checking likely abuse of power by local governments and ensuring co-ordination of government programmes. Kasese district local government is no exception in view of the local capacity and competence of both elected and appointed officials which still need more strengthening. The autonomy granted to local governments should not be confused with independence since one national government is still in force. To ensure national unity, the centre needs to be strong.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

To ensure sustainability and consolidation of gains achieved under decentralisation of human resource management, some issues need to be worked upon or else the whole trend gets reversed. The recommendations are focused to Kasese district local government and central government as well.

1. There is need to strengthen the DSC and make it more independent. The study found out that of the five members to the DSC, only the chairman is on full-time basis. Others work on part-time. The commission is serviced by a secretariat of one person at the level of senior personnel assistant with a basic qualification of senior four relying only on experience. Such a commission cannot live up to the challenges of decentralised human resource management. With the inclusion of primary school and secondary school teachers and hospital staff, the workload has tremendously increased. The capacity of the commission, both quantitatively and qualitatively needs strengthening.

There is need to reduce the influence of local politicians on DSC. One common adage says, “he who pays the piper dictates the tune”. The DSC is appointed and paid by the district council. To be made more independent, the DSC should be appointed by the PSC on the recommendation of the district council. The present arrangement is prone to abuse by the local politicians for their political interests at the expense of good public administration. The Minister of state for local government, Hon. Akech is reported by the Government owned newspaper, the New vision of 20<sup>th</sup> November 1999 at the closure of a decentralisation conference in Kampala saying that “District Service Commissions are not independent in most of the districts because of political involvement”. The sister newspaper not owned by government, The Monitor reported next day that “although Local Governments have the power to appoint, deploy and control personnel, there is threat of tribal sentiments where the appointing authorities compromise the quality of personnel on those grounds”. Further still, the remuneration of the DSC members should be charged on the national consolidated fund. This will shield them from local politicians who may manipulate them using payment as a weapon. Cases of some councils refusing to facilitate DSCs after refusing to go by their whims have been reported in other districts and there is no guarantee that Kasese district is immune. To gain more credibility and confidence, members of DSC should be of high level of education, say university level with considerable experience in managing public affairs. No academic qualification is at the present time attached to be a member of DSC other than being of high moral character and proven integrity. They should be trained in interviewing and selection skills. The secretariat needs strengthening by appointing a senior officer at least at the level of principal personnel officer to head it. The secretary should then be

assisted by not less than two personnel officers. It is further recommended that due to the increased workload, DSC should be on full-time basis. It is currently managing a service of at least 4000 personnel.

2. The problem of a narrow career path should be solved by allowing the transferability of senior officers from the district local government to other districts and to central government. This can be achieved by placing senior officers from at least principal level (U2 salary scale) in an integrated civil service system. A separate personnel system can be retained for junior officers to run alongside the integrated system of senior officers. This would broaden the career prospects of senior officers and raise their morale to serve local governments. The integrated scheme should be managed by PSC but the senior officers would be answerable to their respective councils of deployment. Transfers should be carried out in consultation with the respective local governments. Alternatively, the district could engage senior officers on contract terms, say for a period of three years eligible for renewal. This would however call for attractive pay since the current salary levels cannot attract professionals on contracts. The other option available to the district would be to get into partnership with neighbouring districts like Bushenyi and Kabarole and engage one professional where they can share the cost of maintaining him/her. This can apply to high level professionals like surgeons and engineers who may not necessarily be needed full time in the district. The shared professional would be supported by a team of lower level professionals based in the respective districts. His/her role could be technical backstopping, supervision, planning and the development of the district teams. This option however needs a lot of political and administrative harmonisation between the co-operating district local governments in building consensus on how best to utilise the professional.
3. Central government needs to play a more active part in its role of setting national standards and enforcing them through supervision. Personnel audits should be regularly made by PSC to ensure that standards set are complied with. PSC should have powers to revoke decisions by DSC if found outside the stipulated regulations and standards. The present arrangement is that it acts as an appellate

body. What if nobody has appealed but PSC in the course of its supervision finds gross anomalies in the performance of the DSC? It should be empowered with original powers to initiate action. DSC should also make regular reports; preferably on a quarterly basis to facilitate PSC do its monitoring role efficiently.

More guidance is still required by the district local government from central government to strengthen the institutions put in place. The Human Resources Management Manual for Local Government in Uganda recently issued by the head of civil service should be given more legal meaning. It could be issued as a Statutory Instrument or Circular Standing Instruction rather than remaining a mere manual whose effect is not binding. The present crisis of massive interdictions of Chief Executive Officers shows how institutions in place need more strengthening by cushioning them against undue political manipulations.

4. The relationship between civil servants and politicians require more clarification. Decentralised personnel management system has brought civil servants and politicians in closer touch. This relationship is healthy for the development of the district but can be counter-productive if not well regulated. The district executive committee members have become full time staff of the administration and their roles in relation to those of their counterparts in the civil service are not well streamlined. During the study, it was found out that the roles overlap causing clashing of responsibilities. Whereas secretaries are expected to be providing policy guidance and overall supervision, they in most cases like to engage in minor details of implementation and in the process clash with appointed officials. The same observation was shared in The Monitor newspaper (21<sup>st</sup> November 1999) at the end of a national decentralisation conference. It was noted that “so many political wrangles have cropped up in many districts. There seems to be lack of a clear line of authority in local governments”. The paper went further to give a number of examples in many districts before it finally concluded, “the list of wrangles in districts is endless.” There is need to clearly spell out the roles and duties of each to avoid unnecessary squabbles. Capacity building for civil servants and politicians is needed to make them appreciate each other’s roles and work in harmony. There is need for them to work as a team rather than in competition or antagonism.

5. The bureaucracy decentralised to the district local government cannot be sustained without a sound and reliable revenue base. There is need to attract and retain qualified and competent staff in the local government by offering competitive benefits to staff. Incentive schemes like good housing, availability of transport facilities, good office accommodation, staff training, medical care, need a sound finance base if the district is to compete with private sector and central government for quality staff. There are two possible ways in which this can be achieved.

a. Central government needs to relinquish some of the buoyant revenue sources to the district local government to enable it collect adequate revenue. Kasese district is endowed with a lot of potentials and given the opportunity; the district can generate enough revenue to run its services. The district has two national parks, a cement-manufacturing factory, cobalt processing plant, copper mining industry and an international border. All these generate a lot of revenue to central government and nothing is left for the district local government. Revenue sources like tourist fees, Value Added Tax (VAT), rates, custom duties, should at least be shared between the district and central government. Needless to re-emphasise is the need for the decentralisation of the development budget. Central government is still clinging on the development budget, which contain the bulk of funds meant for staff development. There is no objective criterion on how districts are benefiting from these funds at the present moment. For instance since decentralisation started, the researcher could not find any single civil servant in the district that has been sponsored by government on a long course of even six months.

b. The formula for sharing revenue between the district and lower local governments is unfair to the district and needs to be revisited. The Local Government Act, 1997, allows lower local governments to retain 65% of the local revenue collected in their areas of jurisdiction. It is however not expressly clear on the responsibilities to be shouldered by the lower local governments. The burden of paying all staff salaries is left to the district local government including those deployed in lower local governments. This leaves the district with very meagre resources left to run other services. Lower local governments should be made to

pay salaries of staff deployed in their areas or the percentage of sharing the revenue is changed to at least 50.

The study has in summary revealed that the decentralisation of human resources management and development has had positive impact on the performance of Local governments. The devolution of personnel management functions to local governments makes them more responsive to their human resource management issues making them more effective and efficient. The staff become more accountable as there is undivided loyalty, increased co-ordination and more effective supervision, monitoring and control. It has however been acknowledged that local governments need to have their capacities strengthened if they are to carry on the added load effectively. A strong central government is still needed to guide the local governments in the execution of their devolved functions. Close interaction between central and local governments is still essential if uniform are to be employed in the whole national service.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES FOR WHICH GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE**

1. Arms. Ammunitions and explosives.
2. Defence, security, maintenance of law and order.
3. Banks, banking, promissory notes, currency and exchange control.
4. Subject to the constitution, taxation and taxation policy.
5. Citizenship, immigration, emigration, refugees, deportation, extradition, passports and national identity cards.
6. Copyrights, patents and trademarks and all forms of intellectual property, incorporation and regulation of business organisations.
7. Land, mines, mineral and water resources and the environment.
8. National parks, as may be prescribed by parliament.
9. Public holidays
10. National monuments, antiquities, archives and public records, as parliament may determine.
11. Foreign relations and external trade.
12. The regulation of trade and commerce.
13. Making national plans for the provision of services and co-ordinating plans made by local governments.
14. National elections.
15. Energy policy.
16. Transport and communications policy.
17. National census and statistics.
18. Public services of Uganda.
19. The judiciary.
20. National standards.
21. Education policy.
22. National surveys and mapping.
23. Industrial policy.
24. Forest and game reserve policy.
25. National research policy.
26. Control and management of epidemics and disasters.

27. Health policy.
28. Agriculture policy.
29. Any matter incidental to or connected with the above functions and services.

## APPENDIX 2

### FUNCTIONS AND SERVICES FOR WHICH DISTRICT COUNCILS ARE RESPONSIBLE (*subject to Article 176(2) of the constitution and sections 97 and 98 of the Local Governments Act, 1997, include but not limited to:*)

1. Education services, which cover nursery, primary, secondary, trade, special education and technical education.
2. Medical and health services including:
  - (a) Hospitals, other than hospitals providing referral and medical training;
  - (b) Health centres, dispensaries, sub-dispensaries and first-aid posts;
  - (c) Maternity and child welfare services;
  - (d) The control of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis;
  - (e) Control of the spread of disease in the district;
  - (f) Rural ambulance services;
  - (g) Primary health care services;
  - (h) Vector control;
  - (i) Environment sanitation
3. water services:  
The provision and maintenance of water supplies in liaison with the ministry responsible for Natural Resources, where applicable.
4. Road services:  
The construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads not under the responsibility of Government.
5. All decentralised services and activities which include but are not limited to:
  - (a) Crop, animal and fisheries husbandry extension services;
  - (b) Entomological services and vermin control;
  - (c) Human resources management and development;
  - (d) Recurrent and development budget;
  - (e) District statistical services;
  - (f) District project identification;
  - (g) District planning;
  - (h) Local government development planning;
  - (i) Land administration;
  - (j) Land surveying;
  - (k) Physical planning;
  - (l) Forests and wetlands;
  - (m) Licensing of produce buying;
  - (n) Trade licences;
  - (o) Trade development services;
  - (p) Commercial inspectorate;
  - (q) Co-operative development;
  - (r) Industrial relations;
  - (s) Social rehabilitation;
  - (t) Labour matters;
  - (u) Probation and welfare;
  - (v) Street children and orphans;
  - (w) Women in development;

- (x) Community development;
- (y) Youth affairs;
- (z) Cultural affairs;
- (aa) District information services.

6. Regulate, control, manage, administer, promote and licence any of the things or services which the council is empowered or required to do, and establish, maintain, carry on, control, manage or administer and prescribe the forms in connection therewith to fix fees or charges to be levied in that respect.
7. Aid and support the establishment and maintenance of schools, hospitals, libraries, art galleries, museums, tourist centres, homes for the aged, destitute or infirm or for the orphans, and to provide bursaries to assist in the education of children of persons residing in the district, to make donations to charitable and philanthropic, welfare, youth, persons with disabilities, women and sports organisations.
8. Preserve public decency, and to prevent offences against public order in public places and to prevent damage to property of the Central Government and the Council.
9. Undertake private works and services and to charge, recover the costs and contract out public services to the private sector.
10. Sell all by-products resulting from carrying on by, or on behalf of the council, of any works or services.
11. Promote publicity for the council and the district as a whole.
12. Promote schemes of health, education and road safety sensitisation.
13. Provide and manage;
  - (a) Sporting and recreation facilities and programmes of informal education for both adults and young people including the running or provision of community centres;
  - (b) The development of social work among adults;
  - (c) Remedial social welfare programmes aimed at the alleviation of social distress;
  - (d) The welfare of children and the elderly; and
  - (e) Public vehicular parking.
14. The registration of marriages, births and deaths for transmission to the Registrar General.
15. Assist Government to preserve the environment through protection of forests, wetlands, lakeshores, streams and prevention of environmental degradation.
16. Any other service or function which exclusively reserved for central government.
17. Upon delegation by Government, identification and preservation of sites and objects or buildings of historical and architectural value.