

ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN DEVOLUTION OF COUNTIES IN KENYA

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Abstract

This paper talks about the role that human Resource Management needs to play in the devolution of counties in Kenya by taking a closer look at Mombasa County that has experienced under-development over the years since independence. The centre of Kenyan constitution carries the Devolution chapter that has been Key to the Kenyan people since they have experienced the manipulation and discrimination of the Central Government in the development of regions. The objective is to look at how the County Governments has engaged the Human Resource functions to ensure smooth devolution and how the Human Resource Department can be so useful to them. The paper looks critically at 5 key functions of Human Resource Management namely Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Change Management, Human Resource Policies and Procedures, Performance Management. The researcher has also looked at the Kenyan constitution 2010 that has set the devolution Agenda dividing Kenya into 47 Counties, Kenya's first Development Plan 1965, Mombasa District Strategic Plan 2005-2010, vision 2030 among other Scholar work including an interview with Key Mombasa County staff. The results show a county that has achieved very little in terms of Development and a complete neglect of the Human Resource Department in terms of major decisions in the County and lack of systems in place to further the devolution Agenda, lack of training and development of county officers. The researcher therefore recommends allocation of more funds towards the growth and development of the county officers, Empowerment of Human Resource Department, Hiring of the right personnel and a performance management approach in employ assessment. It is therefore clear that there is no devolution without the Key Human Resource functions in place in the counties and the need to empower the Department across all the Counties to manage the said functions. If A county has the right skilled personnel, Proper Recruitment in Place, Training and Development of the County officers, Right allocation of funds towards capacity building proper Human resource Policies and procedures then the Country is in the right path towards Devolution.

Key words: Devolution, human resource management, change management, performance management, recruitment and selection human resource policies

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

GOK-Government of Kenya.
T&D-Training and Development.
UNDP-United Nations Development Program.
KNHR-Kenya National Human rights.
CDF-Constituency Development Fund.
KNBS-Kenya National bureau of Statistics.
COB-Controller of Budget.
CRA -Commission on Revenue Allocation
DDP- District Development Plan
DRC- District Roads Committee
FDKP- Fiscal Decentralization Knowledge Program
KIHBS- Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey
KNBS -Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KRB -Kenya Roads Board
LA- Local Authority
LATF- Local Authority Transfer Fund
TFDG- Task Force on Devolved Government
HDI-Human Development Index.
KIPPRA-Kenya Institute of Public policy Research & Analysis.
GDP-Gross Domestic Products.
SHRM-Society for Human Resource Management.
KPI-Key Performance Indicators.

1.0 Introduction

According to Sifuna (1990), Kenya was colonized by the British government for 70 years. It became a British protectorate after the Anglo-German agreement of 1890. At this time the British main interest was not to control local people, but to construct a railway that would connect Uganda, Zanzibar, and the Indian Ocean. The railway was important for strategic and economic reasons; it was to be the main link that would connect Lake Victoria (the source of the river Nile) and Uganda, which was also under British control. The construction of the railway led to a large immigration of people from India who were imported to work on the railway. Other immigrants from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada followed in 1903 as economic interests grew. European settlers from South Africa also moved to the new British territory.

In order to prosper, the colonial government had to force the Africans who lived in its protectorates to work. In 1901 the British imposed tax payments in every area that they controlled. In order to maintain control over Africans, the British limited their education to mere practical skills, suitable for working on the farms. The missionaries and Islamic groups on the Indian Ocean coast had already established schools. The discriminatory attitudes and the imposition of taxes, forced labour, and land confiscation caused friction between Africans and the colonial government. The friction triggered a political consciousness among Africans, which led to the eventual resistance by Africans against British rule. The strongest rebellion against the British was the Mau Mau, first in 1890 and the last in 1952. This period marked the beginning of African nationalism. He further points out that the Second World War brought not only an economic boom, but also a significant psychological change that led to the subsequent spread of nationalism in Africa. Previously, Europeans had dominated Africans by demonstrating advanced military and economic power and an attitude of superiority and invincibility. Many Africans, after fighting alongside the European soldiers, realized that the Europeans were equally vulnerable human beings. Thus, the white superiority myth was destroyed.

The Mau Mau resistance paved the way for constitutional reforms and development in subsequent years. In 1955, various political parties were formed all over the country after the colonial government yielded to their formation. Elections were held in March 1957, after which racial barriers in the government began to be lifted. In 1960, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), which advocated a unitary government, was formed. In 1961 the Kenya African Democratic Union, which advocated a quasi-federal government (Majimbo), was also formed. The first full franchise general elections were held in May 1963, and KANU emerged the winner. In June 1963, Kenya attained internal self-government. On December 12 of the same year, independence was achieved with a complex (Majimbo) constitution, which conceded much autonomy to the regions.

On the first anniversary of independence in 1964, Kenya became a republic, with Mzee Jomo Kenyatta as president. Following his death on 22 August 1978, the Honorable Daniel Arap Moi assumed the presidency in accordance with the Kenyan Constitution. After independence, Kenya faced an enormous challenge of reforming the educational system to reflect its citizen's needs. Such a challenge continues to haunt the country today. One difficulty lies in developing an education system to replace the one inherited from the colonial government.

Mombasa County currently has a debt of 3 billion carried forward from the former Municipal council. The current development priority areas as identified by the county government of Mombasa is road expansion, construction of bypasses and flyovers to reduce traffic congestion and supply of water, improving the quality of education and provision of fully equipped health centres. The county of Mombasa has presented its 2013/2014 budget estimates of 33.9 billion with a deficit of 21.4 billion. Kenya has 42 ethnic tribes each group has a diverse history based on migration, evolution of the group, interaction with other groups, culture, political social and economic set up drawn from pre-colonial, Colonial and post-colonial/independent periods. According to (2009) Kenya's Population and Housing Census results the Population of Kenya stands at 38,610,097 and Coast province where Mombasa falls had a population of 3,325,307 and gives details of a county that requires several issues addressed ranging from Education, Water to sanitation.

2.0 Variables

2.1 Training and Development

Myrna (2009), says effective training is not an isolated event in an organisation. Training must be strategic in that it is designed to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities and abilities of employees to help them achieve the organisation's strategic plan. Effective training is therefore can't be designed until there is full understanding of the organisation.

He further reiterates that it can only be achieved through SWOT Analysis and a proper understanding of the organisation's vision and hence creating a competitive advantage. Training Needs Analysis is also very important to know the training gaps between the employee's current performance and desired performance level.

Manu (2004), Says that a needs assessment is the systematic process of determining goals, identifying discrepancies between actual and desired conditions and establishing priorities for action. He further says that Ghanaian firm's to establish a successful training and Development program, the following steps ranging from determining what training is relevant to the employees job, What Training will improve performance, If the Training will make a difference, Differentiating training needs from Organisational problem to improving job performance with organisational goal and bottom line needs to be considered.

2.2 Change Management

According to Bridges (1991), People react to change in different ways, in what has as transitioning. Bridges explains this as follows: "Change is not the same as transition. Change is situational: the new site, the new structure, the new team, the new role, the new procedure. Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. Remember that change is external and transition is internal."

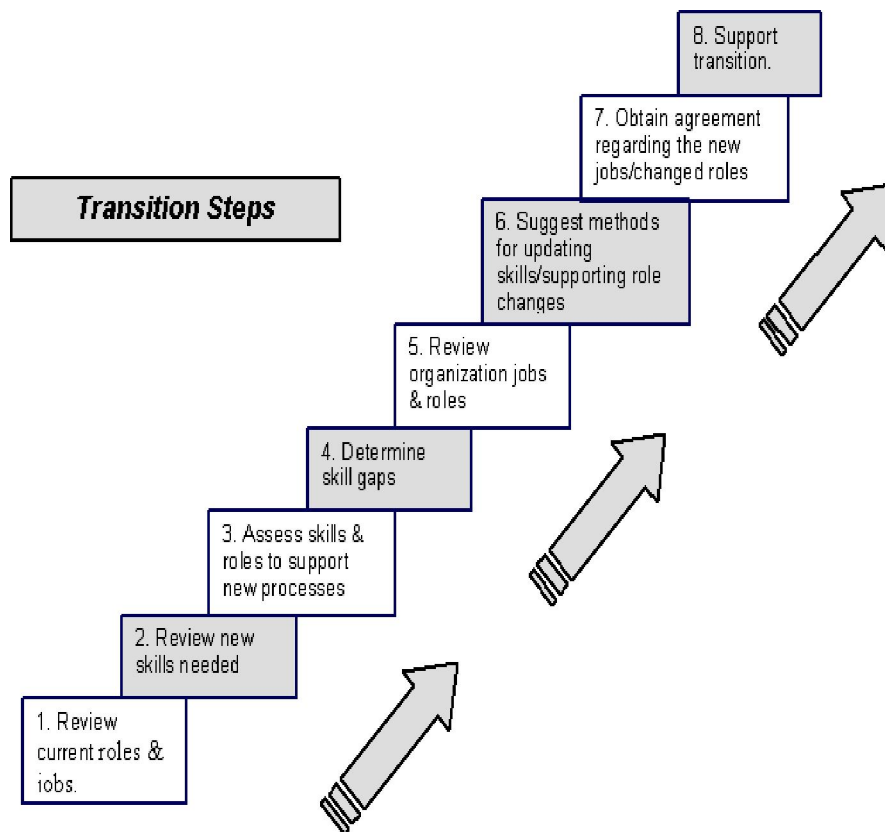
He further says that the three stages include the ending, the neutral Zone and the new beginning. According to Carbon (2007), Managing change is a very important factor in the success of every business, since it helps managers think creatively about how they manage change, whilst avoiding many of the pitfalls that other companies have encountered. He further prescribes four key factors for success when implementing change in an organisation ranging from the pressure for change demonstrated by senior management and the commitment is very essential, A clear and shared vision and ensuring that you take everyone along, Capacity for change and the need to provide the resources, that's time and finance to action and performance plan and ensuring that communications channel remain open.

He further highlights the dangers when an organisation fail to have a good change management process being lack of consistent leadership, demotivated staff kept in the dark, lack of capacity in terms of budget cuts, no spend to save policy, short term approach to investment, stressed out staff working hard just to stand still and lack of initiative to do something different. These they argue leads to a treadmill effect setting up a vicious circle since they will be no time for reflection, planning and learning, no improvement in design and implementing, increasing need to do something and increasing the need to do something.

Claire (2010) says that the success of change depends on people's willingness to let go their current reality, have an ending got through a confused period in between(hell and the hallway), then anew beginning and illustrates what makes people react to the same environment in different ways and that no matter how good an idea is we will always have early adopters, average adopters and laggards and ultimately the people who work in our organisations want appositive human experience when they are at work.

She further demonstrates that a change management methodology enables the implementation and leadership teams to provide appositive experience doing the period of significant change and that by utilising a solid change management methodology, the organisation promotes team communication, safer environment trust and freedom hence a stronger workforce.

According to Hala (2011) says it's very important to adopt the right management strategies. These strategies are integrated, process-oriented conceptual framework consisting of three phases namely knowledge formulation, strategy implementation and status evaluation to overcome resistance. From their findings 93.5 of the employees believed their jobs were threatened by the introduction of MADAR ERP system and this displays the level of resistance employees can have to a change process and the need to prepare employees thoroughly.



Source: Author (2013)

Figure 1: Shows the change management transitional steps

2.3 Recruitment and Selection

To get officers to work in the various counties requires a rigorous process of recruiting and selecting appropriate candidates to deliver on the county goals and strategic plans. According to Gusdorf (2008) recruitment is the process of attracting Individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications to apply for jobs within an organisation and that selection is the process of choosing from a group of applicants the individual best suited for a particular position and for the organisation.

He further lays emphasis on the recruitment for diversity since it encourages creativity and expanded customer base and illustrates that Employers who wish to develop a diverse workforce should ensure that it generates applications from a variety of individuals. He gives an advice also on the hiring of relatives as this may compromise on the work since if relatives have to work in one department with one supervising the other issues of favouritism will inevitably emerge.

Failte (2013) says that there are 8 key steps necessary in a recruitment and selection process that must be considered ranging from job Vacancy, Job Analysis, attracting candidates, Screening applications, Interviewing candidates, Selecting and Appointing, Induction and Training and Finally to employee evaluation. Each of the

above elements are very important to make sure the most suitable candidate is found for any given post and you should view recruitment and retention as entailing the 8 stages.

Jeff, *et al.*, (2002) illustrates the research pay benefits by Watson Wyatt done in North America in 1999 and repeated in 2000 in Europe showing that excellence in recruitment increased shareholders value. Recruiting excellence was interpreted to mean effectively planned recruitment that supports the business plan by placing the right people with ready to use skills in the right roles. He further clarifies that businesses need people and not just people but talented people to move the organisations forward vision and ideas of the organisation and that successful organisations and businesses thrive by means of their ability to adapt and innovate. Management consultant MCKinsey & Co initially investigated the challenges facing businesses in recruiting top talent in its 1997 survey the war of talent. The research that surveyed 6,900 managers at 56 large and medium sized organisations in the USA found out that 89% thought it more difficult to attract talented people in 2000 than it had been before, 90% thought it more difficult to retain them and only 7% strongly agreed their companies had enough talented managers. This only displays how organisations need to be very careful with the process since its only through this that the organisation will have the right start to the direction in its quest for attaining its goals and aspirations.

2.4 Performance Management



Source: Author (2013)

Figure 2: Performance management pyramid.

Most organisations have gone through the process of ensuring they measure the performance of their staff on pre-set and clearly marked Key performance Indicators (KPIs) and the need to gauge their individual and departmental performance on actual output. According to Armstrong and Baron (1998), Performance Management is both a strategic and an integrated approach to delivering successful results in organizations by improving the performance and developing the capabilities of teams and individuals. The term performance management gained its popularity in early 1980's when total quality management programs received utmost importance for achievement of superior standards and quality performance. Tools such as job design, leadership development, training and reward system received an equal impetus along with the traditional performance appraisal process in the new comprehensive and a much wider framework. Performance management is an on-going communication process which is carried between the supervisors and the employees throughout the year. The process is very much cyclical and continuous in nature.

A performance management process sets the platform for rewarding excellence by aligning individual employee accomplishments with the organization’s mission and objectives and making the employee and the organization understand the importance of a specific job in realizing outcomes. By establishing clear performance expectations which includes results, actions and behaviours, it helps the employees in understanding what exactly is expected out of their jobs and setting of standards help in eliminating those jobs which are of no use any longer. Through regular feedback and coaching, it provides an advantage of diagnosing the problems at an early stage and taking corrective actions.

According to Sean (2010), Performance management involves many roles one needs to be a communicator, a leader, a role model and a collaborator. Each Individual member of the team needs to understand exactly their responsibilities and expectations and the supervisor should work to help them achieve the goals and that motivation increases when roles are clear, employees likely to take ownership of their work and committed to the outcome when expectations are clear hence the effectiveness of team members.

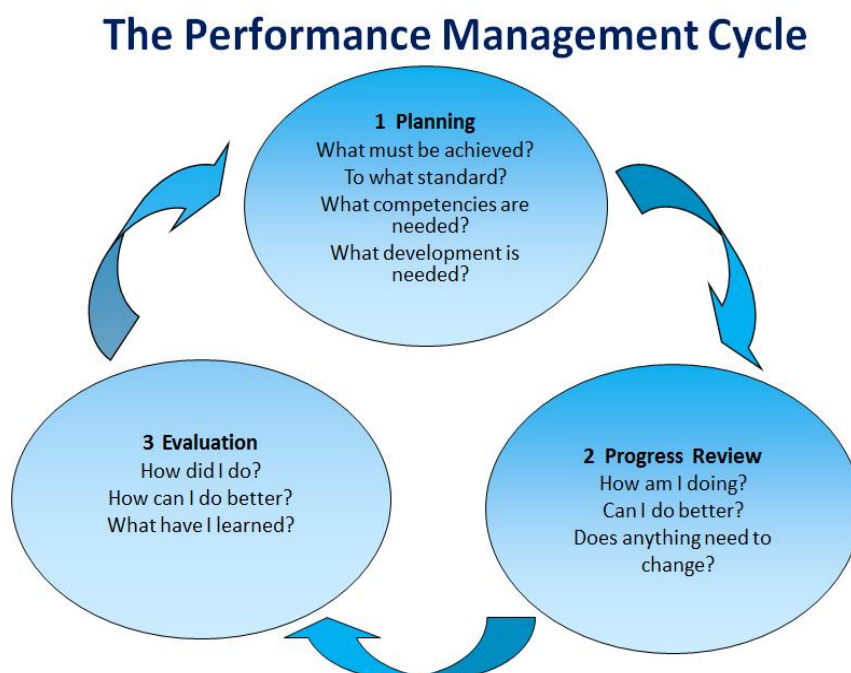


Figure 3: Performance management cycle

2.5 Human Resource Policies

To manage the county staff requires clearly outlined policies on staff management and human resource related issues that affect the operations of the various counties. According to Shuswap (2004) a human resource policy and procedures manual needs to cover several areas namely employment in terms of hiring, probationary terms, salary administration in terms of salary ranges, starting salary, salary increments, transfer, promotion, demotion, hours of work, overtime, statutory holidays, employee benefits, education benefits, workers compensation, leave disciplinary issues, performance, HIV/Aids and employee terms and conditions of service.

2.6 Devolution

Albert (2010), major challenge that the county will face in implementing devolution is how to narrow regional disparities in income, rescue endowments and economic development. Key objective of devolution is ensuring equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout Kenya. He further provides key objectives of devolution as ensuring equitable sharing of national resources throughout Kenya. It helps to reduce poverty that arises from inequalities between regions; it is successful in reducing poverty that arises from inequalities within regions.

There is overwhelming evidence that shows that success of decentralising is dependent on design and implementation of the decentralised framework and that in this process several obstacles are likely to be encountered like the cases of Argentina and Brazil showing how overzealous, imbalanced approach to fiscal decentralisation can produce market distorting effect, where the sub-national governments dominate the Union, and destabilize the public sector and economy as a whole. He further reiterates that during the formative stages of the implementation of devolution, the national government must set aside sufficient funds for capacity building of County governments in terms of development of the necessary infrastructure and Human resource.

Albert also talks of devolution as a system of government that has often been misrepresented in the County to mean expulsion of persons from their own areas of residence to their ancestral lands. This misconception has greatly contributed to paranoia over its re-introduction. The majimbo constitution of 1963 prohibited discrimination and emphasised that Kenyans had a right to live anywhere in the country.

According to Mulwa *et al.* (2010), the previous County councils spent a lot of money of personnel salaries than on actual capital expenditure and the lack of government monitoring and that devolution has been a success in the various countries where it has been practised namely United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, Wales, England, Westminster and Scotland since 1998 and that the impact has been great ranging from falling poverty levels to social housing problems reducing drastically and that this can only be seen after over 10 years.

KNHC (2006) position paper talks of the high prevalence of poverty and underdevelopment in Countries like Kenya as justification of a broadening of focus from one simply of civil and political rights to include economic, social and cultural rights and that constitutional entrenchment and engagement of the legislature, executive and judiciary in legislating, implementing and adjudicating these rights would translate the aspirations in these government policy documents into achievable realities for Kenyans and also act as appoint of reference from which to question the access to basic needs.

According to Population and Housing Census Results (2009) Kenya's population is growing rapidly from 1897 with 2.5 million, 1948 with 5.4 million, 1962 at 8.6 million, 1969 at 10.9 m, 1979 at 15.3 million, 1989 at 21.4 million and 1999 at 28.7 million and then 2009 at 38.6 million. This is a population that needs a corresponding planning and strong county governments to ensure the provision of essential services to the population.

According to CRA (2011) fact sheet after the 2013 general election the provincial and local government created since the 1963 Kenya's independence must constitutionally give way to the county governments and this also means a lot to public sector organisations have to accelerate their planning for the transition and formulation of post devolution policies, The civil society organisations who need to engage knowledgeably with both national and county governments and finally to development partners who need to refocus their strategies and programmes to the new administrative and service delivery environment.

Several development plans have been pursued by Kenya like the millennium development goals 2015 developed in 2000 and signed by 189 countries with very clear focus on 8 areas namely eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, Universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, Environmental sustainability and Global partnership for development.

UN millennium Development Goals Report (2011) portrays Africa where Kenya belong as the leading continent where the Goal 1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger with the target to halve the number but still sub-Saharan Africa leading in the same with 58% of the population living below \$1.25 a day the highest in the world.

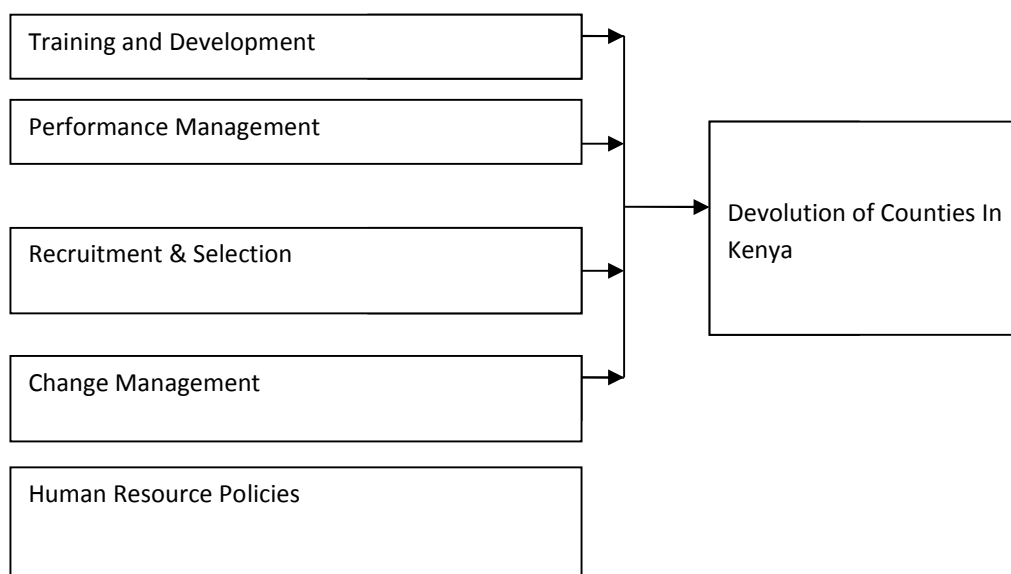
There is hope in Kenya that the devolved system of government of government would deliver the needs of the people and because of the complexities and the logistics involved the success of these counties relies on the full utilisation of HR key functions ranging from the recruitment of staff, change management, Human resource policies and performance management and training and development that have not be given focus as the counties develop. Without the functions of HR being employed the efforts to devolve counties with be futile.

UNDP (2001) annual report on Kenya on addressing Social and economic disparities reveals a decline in economic performance and deepening poverty. The report affirms that human development situation in Kenya is declining and is reflected in the fall in life expectancy, per capita income, school enrolment and the rise in infant mortality and disease incidence.

The report therefore proposes several measures including increasing people’s capacity to assert their rights, addressing the different forms of inequalities existing between regions as well as the different segments of the population and facilitating good governance to ensure economic management and distribution of economic opportunities to all sections of the population. Vision 2030 has three pillars, i.e., economic, social and political, and a lot of flagship projects to be implemented across the country. Whether this becomes a reality lies on how well the county governments have the ability to run the affairs of their counties.

In spite of the many development plans both global and locally domesticated Kenya has never achieved a lot of equal development programs throughout the country and the hope of Kenyan now lie in the devolved system of government to foster this kind of growth and without the input of the key Human resource functions the efforts may be futile and hence the various county government give HRM apriority in the running of the affairs of the counties.

3.0 Conceptual Framework, Theoretical Framework



Source: Author (2013)

Figure 4

3.1 Training and Development

Training and Development has a direct relationship with effectiveness of the devolution of counties in Kenya. When the county executive and assembly are well trained and thoroughly developed they will deliver the agenda of their respective county governments and hence there exists this kind of relationship.

3.2 Performance Management

Every members of the county government requires to be subjected to a performance management process to establish how well they are achieving their pre-set performance standards and it’s through this only that the County governments can hold their employees accountable and question their preparedness in delivering on their key performance Indicators hence there is a relationship between performance management and devolution.

3.3 Recruitment and Selection

For the county governments to have it right and deliver their agenda they need to have in place the right people at the beginning and ensure its staff are employed based on their various competencies and not any other considerations if the devolution train has to reach its destination.

3.4 Change Management

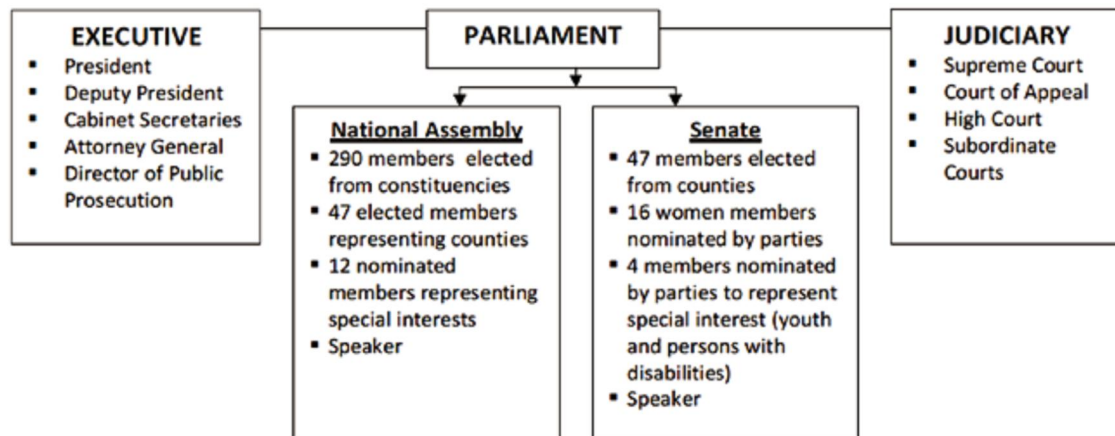
The Country has never had this form of government before and a lot of changes have happened and unless this is facilitated not much will be achieved in the devolution. It is therefore necessary that every stakeholder in the devolution is really brought on board to ensure it succeeds.

3.5 Human Resource Policies

To effectively run the Counties there is need to have very clear human resource policies that are also in line with the various labour legislations, ILO standards and Kenyan Constitution for the success of the devolution.

3.6 Devolution

The heart of Kenyan Constitution is devolution and the desire for locals to set their own economic, Political and social agenda and to move away from the bureaucratic processes of the Central governments. The success of this depends on the various key functions of Human resource management namely Training and development, Performance management, Recruitment and selection, Change management and Human Resource Planning.



Source: Author (2013) Constitution of Kenya provisions

Figure 5: National Government Structure

IEA (2010), says Kenya has experienced failures from time to time which include corruption, Economic stagnation, inequalities and Poverty which are linked to quality of government. It further clarifies that devolution has been advocated as a political response to the ills plaguing fragile and plural societies such as conflicts, inequalities rent seeking, economic stagnation and inefficient use of public resources.

According to the World Bank (2012), Devolution is at the heart of the new Constitution and a key vehicle for addressing spatial inequalities, a more decentralised government makes eminent sense given Kenya's political use of Central power. Kenya's Constitution entrenches devolved government by guaranteeing a minimum unconditional transfer to the Counties under the new dispensation. It is therefore true to say that Kenya's devolution Train has left the station and the challenge is to make sure it arrives at the destination safely and on time.

4.0 Conclusions

Performance management can be regarded as a proactive system of managing employee performance for driving the individuals and the organizations towards desired performance and results. It is the only way that

the performance of individual members of the county governments can measure their effectiveness and accountability.

There exists a lot of skills gap in the county governments and inherited unskilled and illiterate workforce that can never drive the devolution train to its destination. Systems are still lacking since most Counties do not even have proper offices and therefore Human Resource policies are sparingly absent and the making of decisions based on adhoc compromises. There are clear policies on the various aspects of Human resource management in Mombasa County it will be hard in making decisions and there is likely to be several incidences of inconsistencies and unfairness in handling staff issues.

Most of the county officers lack training both technical and experiential since most of them have been brought on board as politically correct individuals hence it becomes hard to apprehend them in the event of failure to perform. If the recruitment process is wrong then there becomes a big problem in managing them daily to make them have any contribution.

5.0 Recommendations

Hiring of County staff should be clear, transparent and meritorious and issues of nepotism, tribalism and other considerations during the recruitment and selection process should be avoided. A fully empowered Human Resource Department is necessary to ensure the people management are done competently and the delinking of the political wing of the management of the Counties from the Human Resource Department.

Have in place Clear and simple human resource policies and procedures to handle the issues of human resources and this will ensure efficiency, fairness and industrial harmony. The policies should govern the recruitment and selection of staff, Training and development, Remuneration, Employee relations among other human resource management issues.

The Human resource Management departments in the various counties should take a lead in managing the change that is Devolution. Many officers have not believed to date that Kenya has a new constitution and in the middle of it sits the devolution chapter that needs to be implemented fully for the benefit of the Kenyan people.

The county budgetary team need to allocate a big chunk of the budget in building the capacity of the people to carry out the affairs of the counties rather than allocating bigger budgets to the purchasing of luxurious limousines for the top County officials. There is also need to have the transitional authority to ensure that there is effective change management to move from the former order of things to the desired future of a devolved system of government. Training and development needs to be administered to every staff and a good allocation to this in the county budget is necessary. Training on the roles of county government, the relations with the national government and the customer service in delivering services to the county residents.

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