

The District Focus for Development Strategy in Kenya:  
A case of Decentralization and the Changing Role of the  
Generalist Field Administration

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by

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SYNOPSIS

In most African countries four out of every five people work in agriculture. Indeed over 85% of Kenya's total population are rural-based. Unfortunately these areas are often characterized by widespread poverty, wide and ever-growing inequality, rapid population growth and rising unemployment/underemployment. It is therefore true that if any meaningful development is to take place and become self-sustaining, Government's attention in terms of effective planning, coordination and implementation must be directed to these areas. This is because, far from alleviating the said problems, the greater part of the country's wealth is and will be produced there.

However, one of the crucial and recurring debates is about the degree of government control over development planning and administration. Decentralization is one of the development approaches which has gained currency since 1970s. As opposed to the earlier approaches, decentralization has been seen as a way of increasing the effectiveness of rural development programmes by making them more responsive to local needs and conditions, allowing greater flexibility in policy implementation and providing a means of coordinating the various agencies at the local level.

This dissertation attempts to elucidate some of the pertinent aspects of the changing approaches to development planning and field administration with a view to assessing its performance as against earlier approaches. Particular emphasis will be placed on the recently-adopted District Focus Strategy which aims to decentralize parts of government's decision processes and plan control to the district level. In the light of the changing rural development approaches this dissertation will also examine the changing role of the generalist field administration (or provincial administration) which has been considered a critical component in the Kenya rural development administration history. Essentially the dissertation is divided into five sections.

Chapter one will give a broad historical background to the problems encountered in rural development administration. Then a theoretical overview of such terms as decentralization and field administration will be given. The concept of rural development and its administrative implications in Kenya especially from the past experience will also be examined.

In chapter two a closer look at the dynamic role of the generalist field administration and a brief examination of the emergence and rationale for adapting decentralization policies in Kenya will be undertaken.

Chapter three will mainly be confined to the discussion of the meaning, aims and operations of the District Focus Strategy, as a case of decentralization, particularly from the official viewpoint.

Chapter four will focus on the performance of the new strategy and some of the critical administrative, political, economic and social problems encountered during its implementation.

Chapter five presents a discussion summary and conclusions with some policy recommendations aimed at making the District Focus Strategy more effective in achieving its objectives in future.

I wish to point out, at this juncture, that owing to the newness of the programme, not enough research and documentation have been done and thus scanty information is a major constraint especially with respect to evaluating its performance. I did, however, manage to obtain most of the basic literature.

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved wife, Angela, and Chepngeno, our daughter, who was born during my absence. Indeed my absence of one year in their midst, during this course, has been a very trying moment for them. Yet Angela's patience, endurance and encouragement remained a major source of inspiration to me throughout. I really owe them a lot.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADDO	Assistant District Development Officer.
AIE	Authority to Incur Expenditure.
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands.
DAC	District Agricultural Committee.
DC	District Commissioner.
DDAC	District Development Advisory Committee.
DDC	District Development Committee.
DDO	District Development Officer.
DDF	District Development Fund.
DDP	District Development Plan.
DEB	District Education Board.
DEC	District Executive Committee.
DIDC	District Information and Documentation Centre.
DO	District Officer.
DPFPC	District Population and Family Planning Committee.
DPU	District Planning Unit.
DSDC	District Social Development Committee.
DvDC	Divisional Development Committee.
GPT	Graduated Personal Tax.
ILO	International Labour Organisation.
KANU	Kenya African National Union.
KIA	Kenya Institute of Administration.
LDC	Locational Development Committee.
MP	Member of Parliament.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization.
PC	Provincial Commissioner.
PMEC	Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.
PPO	Provincial Planning Officer.
SLDC	Sub-Locational Development Committee.
SRDP	Special Rural Development Programme.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In 1983 the Kenya Government adopted the District Focus Strategy as a corrective measure to the previous defective approaches to development which led to disappointing results. The new strategy entails decentralization to the district level of development activities. This paper therefore, attempts to examine the aims, operations, performance and implementation ~~and~~ ~~implementation~~ problems encountered in the new strategy. I also intend to analyse the changing role of the generalist field administration particularly in view of the fact that they have undertaken new tasks in the dynamic social, political and economic setting. However it would be appropriate to, first, have a brief general background of the problem and the conceptual analysis of such terms as decentralization and field administration in order to grasp the gist of the main discussion.

#### 1.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND

During the 1950s and 1960s control over development activities in most third world countries was centralized in national ministries and agencies. This was in line with the earlier economic development theories which advocated maximising gains of economic growth and national governments' intervention in investment and production

processes through centrally conceived plans. Central planning and administration was considered necessary both to provide national and coherent policies aimed at using scarce resources sparingly in promoting rapid growth and to integrate and unify nations that were emerging from long periods of colonial rule. Furthermore such international assistance agencies as the World Bank, who were the major financiers, insisted that borrowers have comprehensive and long-term plans arguably "as a way of promoting 'modernization', accelerating social and political change, generating employment and mobilizing capital for further investment" (Rondinelli 1983:11). The strong contention was that the benefits of industrial investment concentrated in one area or centre would "trickle-down" and spread throughout the nation to alleviate poverty and generate more incomes and therefore more savings for further investments.

The 1970s, however, witnessed a remarkable change in public and private perceptions about the ultimate nature of economic activity. This was due to the realization that neither the central control and management of the economies nor the prescriptions made by economic theorists and the international assistance organisations' demands were not bearing fruit. For instance large amounts of money and manpower were being used to prepare elaborate plan documents but when, at the end of a plan

period, a review of progress was made, it was revealed that few targets or objectives specified in the plan had actually been achieved and, those that had been achieved, had often occurred as a result of coincidence rather than action designed specifically to implement the plan (Conyers 1982:47). This is what Chambers (1973:16) referred to as "planning without implementation and implementation without planning." Indeed it became increasingly clear that apart from being produced "to satisfy the requirements of international lenders or to impress other countries with the image of unity and control over the economic and political destinies" (Rondinelli 1983:12), the plans had little effect on the internal decisions and the actual course of events. Far from being poorly conceived, they were plagued with inherent internal weakness in administrative capacity. Furthermore the high population growth had adverse economic fluctuations in the world economy, occasioned by natural calamities, 'swept' the meagre gains from investments. Meanwhile central governments were faced with enormous magnitude of tasks as too much gravitated towards the centre owing to the increased responsibilities and sheer number of operations causing inflexibility and delays. Thus demands upon government for more and better services and other remedial measures were constant and ever increasing ( UN 1962:5 )

It was in this light that the direction and priorities of development policy shifted drastically. planners, policy-makers and academics recognized that development required a deliberate and careful transformation in the social, administrative, economic and political structures in order to spread the benefits of growth to the increasing number of the poor which could enable them to help themselves augment productivity and incomes. The need for their involvement in decisions which affected them became apparent. Governments of developing nations and international development agencies began giving much more attention to providing the basic needs of the poor to enable them become more productive participants in the development process and to increasing the income and purchasing power of the rural population to build stronger and more reliant economies (Rondinelli 1983:13). This change was a reflection of social and political values that had not been apparent in the previous economic strategies and had fundamental implications for development planning and administration. Administrative reforms were therefore directed towards making these structures more effective in the planning and implementation of development programmes. Decentralization and field administration are some of the common phrases associated to these reforms and clarification on their usage, should be made at this juncture.

### 1.3 THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION

There has never been a universal definition of decentralization agreed upon by different scholars. However, for purposes of this paper it can be defined quite broadly as the "transfer of planning, decision-making or administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatal organizations in local governmental organizations" Rondinelli (1983:18). There are various structures and functions of decentralization but two forms namely; deconcentration and devolution are relevant here.

Deconcentration involves "the transfer of functions within the central government hierarchy through the shifting of workload from central ministries to field officers, the creation of field agencies or the shifting of responsibility to local administrative units that are part of the central government" (Rondinelli 1983:189). Hyden (1983:85) adds that this should be accompanied by "authority that is adequate for the discharge of specified functions by staff." The actual pattern of decision-making is settled internally within the administration and it remains a flexible pattern that the delegated authority can be altered or withdrawn from day to day. As Rondinelli puts it the officials who hold such authority are merely doing their job in the organisation.

Devolution by contrast involves "the transfer of functions or decision-making authority to legally-incorporated local governments to discharge specified or residual functions" (Rondinelli 1983:189). The local representatives are given formal power to decide on a range of public matters. Their political base and, therefore, authority, is limited to a locality but within that area their right to make decisions is entrenched by law and can only be altered by new legislation. They have resources which, subject to the stated limit, are spent and invested at their discretion. Smith (1967) argues that although deconcentration and devolution can be treated separately, the working relationship between them is necessarily very close.

There has been a resurgence of interest in decentralization among the governments of the third world countries since independence. However the prevailing forms have mainly been deconcentration and the parastatal organizations. Popular participation in form of devolution has been given much less attention. In fact for many countries, like Kenya, the forms of local governments that were established before independence have had their powers severely curtailed.

As the paper seeks to focus on the bureaucratic form of administration, it is imperative, at this juncture, to

have a look, briefly, at the concept of field administration.

#### 1.4 FIELD ADMINISTRATION

Development administration, it is often argued, demands the implementation of plans and projects and accordingly the disposition throughout the country of sufficient number of government servants capable and skilled in their capacity tasks and secure from the headquarters. As opposed to merely shifting workload from the central offices in the capital to those in outer locations, field administration implies the transfer of some decision-making discretion to field staff, allowing them some latitude to plan, make routine decisions and adjust the implementation of central directives to local conditions, within the guidelines set by the central ministry (Rondinelli 1983:19). To this end, Smith (1967) identified three types of field administration namely: functional, integrated prefectoral and unintegrated prefectoral systems.

The functional system is a type of local administration characterized by emphasis on specialised function, promoted by a desire to ensure a measure of uniformity in the administration of policies to meet the national standards. The chief agents of the central administration are part of the separate functional

hierarchies responsible for relatively district aspects of government policy such as agriculture, health or education. The detailed administration of such policies is kept separate except at the national level where coordination is effected through national executive. Coordination is thus political rather than administrative (Smith 1967:12). Lines of command and channels of communication run direct between departmental headquarters and their agents in the field and the latter is answerable to the superiors at the centre. There is no place for the strong coordinating areal generalist.

The integrated prefectural system, on the other hand, is mostly identified in the French system of administration and is characterized by the status and role of the prefect, an official who represents the state and is superior to all other field staff within his area of jurisdiction. He is the chief executive appointed by and responsible to the central government. Thus he is the main channel of communication between the capital and field technical officers of all field government services. In contrast to the functional system the political role of the official is emphasized and technical interests subordinated. Smith (1967:47) argues that "the power of the prefect is derived from not only legal and constitutional status but also from the personality of the individual holding the office, from the aura of authority and power which surrounds the



representative of the state". In Kenya, for instance, the provincial commissioner has the power to supervise and coordinate the work of various ministry staff within his province. Although the field staff may be fired, paid, trained, promoted and transferred by the central ministry, field officers act as a technical staff to the provincial commissioner and are accountable to him for the efficient performance of their duties.

The unintegrated prefectural system differs from the above in the limited control exercised by the state representative in his area of jurisdiction. It is an arrangement by which field staff of central ministries and administrative staff operate independently of each other and thus maintain independent links with their respective headquarter offices. Thus the prefect has no overriding authority over the operations of other ministry staff and although there may be regular and even institutionalised contact between them, these do not entail subordination to the prefect.

As most public administration policies in the third world countries are now directed toward the rural areas, it is proper that we examine the concept of rural development and its implication to the Kenyan economy.

## 1.5 RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development is

"a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of development. This group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless.... The initiative starts with outsiders, the aim is to transfer more power and control to the poor." (Chambers 1983:147)

In essence rural development entails improving the standard of living for the poor who are the majority of the population in the rural areas especially in the third world countries. The objectives extend beyond any particular sector to encompass improved productivity, increased employment and thus higher incomes as well as minimum acceptable levels of food, shelter, education and health. To achieve this, so argues the World Bank (1975:3), a national programme of rural development calls for a mix of activities including projects to raise agricultural output, create employment, improve health and education, expand communication and improve housing. Such a programme might be made of a single or multi-sectoral projects with components implemented concurrently or in sequence and will reflect the social political and economic circumstances of the country or region.

As in any other developing country, rural development has been accorded high priority in Kenya in recent years for powerful and widely acceptable arguments. First, out of a total population of 20.4 million (World Development Report 1987:202) nearly 80% live and find livelihood in rural areas; 60% on farms or as pastoralists and 20% through non-agricultural activities mainly oriented towards subsistence (Republic of Kenya 1982:50). Improved nutrition, medical care and better living conditions of family members have drastically reduced the mortality rates and have subsequently led to a high population growth rate. In fact the World Development Report (1982:142) forecasted a rate of 4.1% between 1980 and 2000. This is a clear testimony that the absolute number of people in the rural areas ~~are~~ <sup>is</sup> expected to go on increasing for many years. This trend of events is aggravated by the already high population pressure on land of which only 7% of the total land is arable with another 40% being arable but having "erratic rainfall (ILO 1972:13). In fact the Rural Survey Statistics 1974/75 shows that while about 13.91% of the total households were virtually landless, 17.91% had an average of between 0.5 and 0.9 ha. of arable land available (Statistical Abstract 1981:116). This state of affairs <sup>has</sup> precipitated such poverty effects as hunger, unstable family life, poor nutrition, ill-health and little or no access to formal education. For the fortunate few who own land, however little, the only way

to raise their incomes is by improving yields.

Secondly growth-oriented and urban-based policies have been responsible for, among other considerations, the concentration of industrial enterprises in the already urbanized centres at the expense of rural areas where conditions have stagnated or deteriorated and hence encouraging rural-urban migration. It has been estimated that the urban population growth rate is 7% per annum (Richardson 1980:104). The Nairobi population alone grew at 15.2% in the 1962-69 period (Lele 1975:5). Unfortunately such a tremendous growth is not always matched with the growth of employment opportunities in these areas. This drift to town is a matter of concern as this has adverse effects on the rural areas. The high costs of urban housing and services, the health hazards of slums and the security and political aspects of a large body of the unemployed clearly calls for restraints on such growth. As Lele rightly argues, improving living standards of the subsistence rural sector is important not only as a holding operation until industrialization can advance sufficiently to absorb the rural exodus but also frequently as the only logical way of stimulating overall development.

Thirdly there is need for self-sufficiency in food not only for the rural people but also urban dwellers and at prices not above those at which food can be imported

*Fluctuation of  
world prices*

to save foreign exchange and to keep down urban wages. The need to develop cash crops in order to save and earn foreign exchange, in such a country which lacks minerals or oil for export, need not be overemphasized. The existence of underutilized land and labour which can relatively easily be brought into production; the desirability of increasing rural purchasing power and provide markets for new urban products are some of the economic arguments for the need of rural development. (Chambers 1974:13)

It is imperative to mention at this juncture, that on achieving independence Kenya inherited an economy characterized by enormous regional/sectoral inequality. The new political leaders were enthusiastic and desired to see visions in the country transformed into reality. In 1965 the Government published Sessional Paper No. 10 on "African Socialism and Its Application to Planning in Kenya," as a blueprint to this commitment. The paper outlined the basic objectives for independent Kenya and the ways it was to achieve them. These objectives included individual freedom; freedom from want, disease, ignorance, exploitation; expansion of the economy with equitable sharing of benefits; and integration of the national economy. A central proposition of this document was the building of a mixed economy - a mixture of socialism and capitalism (Republic of Kenya 1965). Since independence accelerated and equitable rural development

has been a major focus for every development plan. Much of the progress, so far, can be traced to the efforts of the government to extend its personnel and services deeply into the rural areas and engage the people and their resources in the numerous tasks of development. The very rapid deployment of Government personnel to rural areas had favourable impact on the development of agricultural, commercial and industrial production. However, whereas there has been a high rate of growth and expanded services, the growth of inequalities, unemployment and poverty both in rural and urban areas have been getting worse every other year. The 1974-78 Development Plan confirms this when it noted that "inspite of the rapid growth of the economy in the first ten years of independence, the problems associated with income disparities have become more apparent than they were in 1963" p p 1.

Some of the main causes can be traced to the structure of the system in the planning and implementation of these policies. For instance in the 1960s development committees were set up at the provincial and district levels to effectively formulate and coordinate the rural development policies. The committees, however, were no more than talking shops, met infrequently, had undefined functions and lacked authority and control over resources. The most disappointing experience has been in the formulation of

development plans based on the centralized planning approach which was seen earlier as the best way to marshal resources more effectively and fit programmes in the total national picture more realistically. The long period of failures in planning and implementation of rural development activities has been reviewed by Chambers, (1973:16)

\* Planning without implementation, includes target-setting, preparing shopping lists and lack of data. Target-setting was a very common phenomenon in the 1960s. This was a situation where the national targets were formulated and disaggregated to the local levels. However failure to involve the staff in the exercise, coupled with the almost-complete absence of professional economic planning competence at the local level, made these targets unrealistic and, attempt, an outright failure. The preparation of what came to be known as long shopping lists of projects justified by the needs for participation in planning, compiled with enthusiasm and in considerable detail by local staff and sent to the ministries headquarters, was regarded with despair by central economists and largely ignored in the formulation of national plans. Even the more detailed data collection with the preparation of practicable action proposals typically carried out by high-powered teams from the centre remained unused. Far from being an expensive venture for the government, this led to the

disillusionment of local staff who became cynical about their future involvement in planning. There was also a feeling of alienation amongst the local people because the policies favoured the better-placed, more enterprising and, often, wealthier individuals especially those in the more fertile highlands engaged in commercial farming. (Migot- Adholla 1979:162)

Owing to this planning vacuum there has frequently been implementation without planning. For instance the 'Harambee' (self-help) movements which involves the channelling of resources into local programmes, that at times conflicted with national objectives became common. All in all harambee movements have made tremendous contributions to national development (see Mbithi 1972). Some of these movements have pre-empted decisions through the collection of funds and construction works, sometimes in disregard for technical criteria. The implementation of Kisii Cattle dip projects, well documented by Holmsquist (1970) is a case in point.

In the late 1960 an experimental Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) was launched with the aim of testing various strategies in rural development. Its basic objectives were to increase incomes, employment and the quality of life in general. The idea was outlined in the 1970/74 and 1974/78 development plans. However what was meant by rural development was unclear just as were



the methods to be used in achieving the objectives. The main problem was with some of the senior administrators in Nairobi who failed to give the programme the support it needed to take off. Thus the field officers operated under conditions of uncertainty. They neither knew what to do nor what was required of the programme as central guidance was a missing link. Although the programme may not have been successful in achieving its objectives as expected, it provided a very useful experience on how people could be brought together into development planning committee as forums of discussing development policies and programmes. It became apparent that coordination plays a vital role in development. Many findings derived from this programme have been integrated into the normal practice in development administration in the rural areas. For instance it was from this experience that a permanent district development committee was established in each district under the chairmanship of the DC, with the DDO as the secretary. It was the beginning of the preparation of the district development plans which, as will be seen later, plays a vital role in development.

The generalist field administration (or provincial administration) have played and still plays a pivotal role in development in Kenya. Thus in order to clearly understand rural development administration the following chapter closely examines the historical perspective of

provincial administration and its changing role owing to the new expectations in the current and often dynamic development policies.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In Kenya, today the present organisation and roles of the generalist field administration are based on an evolution from pre-colonial circumstances which have undergone considerable changes. During the early colonial administration an elite department consisting mainly of "soldier-like administrators whose main duties concerned with the pacification and consolidation of the imperial conquest" (Oyugi 1978:7), was established. For administrative purposes, there was to be a Provincial Commissioner and a District Commissioner at the provincial and district level respectively who, acting through a subordinate hierarchy of appointed chiefs, sub-chiefs and village headmen, administered public affairs on behalf of the colonial masters. However, the Mau-Mau uprising in the 1950s called for emphasis to be placed on the policy of closer administration and administrative officers were brought into closer touch with the village or grassroots level of the population for whom they felt special responsibility in the face of the growing activity of the politicians (Gertzel 1966:203). Hence by mid-1950s Kenya had an average of five administrative officers in each district with much

more attention focused at the divisional levels (Wallis 1982:34).

It was this hierarchy of administrators from the provincial commissioner right down to the sub-chief, characterised by distinct chain of command, which came to be known popularly as the Provincial Administration. The system was essentially that of single-line communication between the people and the government. It was through this powerful machine that the Governor administered through direct rule. These generalists were vested with considerable discretionary powers in the maintenance of law and order. As "eyes and ears" of the colonial administration on the spot, wielding a lot of power and prestige, they acted as an instrument of penetration and control. In playing this role, many officers became authoritarian often resorting to the use of coercive measures. As was evident during the Mau-Mau uprising, force and fear was the only instrument of establishing supremacy and, therefore, the image that these government officers passed down to the public was one of the superiors who were to be feared. For Trapman (1978:2), this "authoritarian character has left its impact on public attitudes and is especially evident in the status granted to officers of the post independence in the country today."

In general administrative officers were responsible for carrying out government policy and guiding development. More specifically their duties involved intelligence work and reports to the headquarters in local matters since law and order was a major priority. Tax-collection was also a vital task. As they were vested with extensive judicial functions, they also presided over a wide range of cases. In fact until recently administrative officers in such remote districts as Mandera and Wajir have been undertaking the duties of the magistrate. Furthermore, in the absence of departmental officials from central government, they acted as provincial or district agents. They were also expected to advise and supervise the local authorities.

However, as the government system was expanded and strengthened, the single-line of communication began to be supplemented by the creation of specialist departments under the professional officers who became a part of separate functional hierarchies responsible for relatively distinct aspects of government policy such as agriculture, health, veterinary medicine to mention but a few. So that the generalists ceased to be 'general practitioners.' Yet inspite of the obvious and growing importance of such officers, the generalists continued to be the focus of administrative and political decision-making in their areas of jurisdiction. They retained the overall responsibility for government and

were expected to give leadership to the growing team of government specialists in the area. They were placed in situations similar to that of their counterparts in the integrated prefectoral systems since they were the main channel of communication between the centre and their areas and as such exercised considerable authority on departmental activities. This was a position asserted by one of the government circulars which stated that the provincial commissioner:

"... is responsible for the progress of all the people within the province, the tranquility and good government of the province and due coordination of public services within the area of jurisdiction .... It is his duty to supervise not only the work of his subordinate staff but also what is done in his province by all departmental officers .... and .... (is) entitled to receive, from all departmental officers, all the information and assistance he may need for the better conduct of public business in his area." (Circular No.12 1961:50)

This was also the same for the DCs and DOs and, to a large extent, this seems to be applicable even to the present day. It should, however, be noted that although this was basically a prefectoral system, there was no integrated organizational framework within which decision-making for development took place either in the field or at the centre. The only forums under which departmental heads got together was the Provincial or District Teams' meetings where only such matters as law and order, personal welfare, and to a limited extent, developmental issues were discussed.

At independence provincial administration was rapidly Africanized so that by 1964 there were only 9 Europeans left. On the whole the establishment was composed of 7 PCs, 41 DCs and 214 DOs as at 1972 (Trapman 1974:15). Initially there were fears that, since it was the provincial administration who were used by the colonialists to fight the new leaders during the struggle for 'Uhuru' (independence), major changes would follow. However it was decided that it should continue to be the major agent of the executive in the countryside. This was due to a number of factors which included the plural nature of the party system, organisational weakness of the ruling party (KANU) and 'Majimboism' (Regionalism) which was threatening national unity. Furthermore, due to inefficient management of local authorities' affairs, the government brought most of their responsibilities under the provincial administration (Nellis 1971:3). Hence they continued to play a pivotal role in both maintenance of law and order and development activities. In fact their role in economic activities particularly in their capacity as the chairman of the provincial and District Teams were given more emphasis in 1965 when the central government placed increased responsibility upon the administration in its capacity as 'agents of development' in the implementation of the programmes and in the creation of popular understanding of and support for the programmes (Gertzel 1966:210). Today the structure is remarkably similar to that which existed in

the colonial period. It provides a well laid administrative system as shown in figure 2:1. It is through this administrative channel that the central government penetrates the rest of the country and actually makes its impact and presence felt by the people. It should be noted, however, that the roles of provincial administration have expanded enormously.

In his book H.E. the President of Kenya outlined the current role of the provincial administrator, who comes directly under him, as

" ... a true representative of the Government; the effective harnesser of personnel; the field researcher, analyst and communicator of field relations; the versatile and adaptable executor of policies"

(Moi 1986:148)

## 2.2 COORDINATION

One of the major functions of the provincial administration is the coordination of the activities of public officers in the field. Coordination essentially entails bringing together all the departmental activities into smooth relations, to establish consistency in decisions, to ensure unity, to adopt an integrated or balanced approach to problems and harmonise policies to achieve desired objectives. Here the provincial administration plays a public relations man's role in working out desirable relationship among specialists with



a view to achieving the greatest possible efficiency with the greatest economy (Fesler 1964:82). They undertake this role within the framework of development committees which were established after independence. For example in the district there were the District Development Committees (DDCs) and the District Development Advisory Committees (DDACs) with the DCs as the chairmen.. While the former was composed of all the district heads of departments, the latter included MPs and members of local councils. DDACs were however abolished in 1972 and its members incorporated in the DDCs. These committees were charged with the responsibility of implementing the planned targets, making recommendations for additional projects and for planning and controlling self-help projects so that they were incorporated in the overall plan.

For a number of reasons, however, these committees have not been performing to the expected standards. One of the major problems, which still persists to date, was lack of power by the DCs to affect significantly the behaviour of the specialists of the operational ministries as they received orders from Nairobi or provincial headquarters. Other than making suggestions or recommendations, they have had little say as far as their transfer, promotion or discipline is concerned. This has made the vertical lines of command stronger and weakened coordination quite considerably. This has been

exacerbated by the DC's ignorance of the departmental technical matters. Yet another problem has been the failure to convene meetings regularly, as for instance the Kericho DDC which had only met three times by 1970 (Wallis 1982:37). The frequency at which officers have been transferred has also been a major contributory factor. For example in the seven SRDP districts and divisions surveyed in 1970 District Commissioners had been in their stations for an average of 6½ months, and DOs for an average of only 3½ months (Chambers 1973:22). There are numerous recent undocumented cases of this or even worse nature and this applies to other departments as well. Such frequent transfers not only denies the officers opportunity to get to know one another well to facilitate harmonious coordination of activities but also rob programmes of expertise and continuity.

The lack of the committee's power to spend money was yet another problem. Oyugi (1978:23) attributes the weakness in coordination to the authoritarian attitude of the provincial administration and its orientation to law and order. It was due to some of these problems that the Ndegwa Commission commented to the effect that "inspite of every determination to make the administration into an 'agency of development', it has not been provided with the capacity to fulfill this role" (1971:112). Thus they recommended the creation of the post of the District Development Officer (DDO) to strengthen the coordination

process. Although this was effected in 1975 most of those appointed did not have the experience and/or qualifications for the post and infact most of them ended up being integrated into the administrtion as ordinary DOs without developmental tasks (Wallis 1982:38).

Inspite of the problems mentioned the committees remains the only operational tools without which the provincial administration cannot function effectively. They are the only institutions through which they tap and coordinate the professional and technical expertise of the provincial and District Teams. For example, it is through the DDCs that the district development plans are prepared and implemented by the District Executive Committee while the Provincial Monitoring and Evaluation Committees oversees the development of the province. As will be noted in the next chapter, these committees have now been set up even at the sub-locational level to facilitate the quick implementation and elicit the grassroots participation in and support of programmes. The coordination of the activities of specialists places the generalist in a strategic position in the sense that now only his office can penetrate the functions of each technical department in their respective areas of jurisdiction. The basis of their coordinating role are mainly instructions from the office of the president.

As they continue to be responsible to the central government as the chief coordinating agents, they are in a position to win a high degree of cooperation of the field officers. This facilitates effective control, follow up and close enough to see difficulties to intervene in time. To use Smith's words the DC's advantageous position lies in "the traditional status of the office, the personality of the individual holding that office and the aura and power that surrounds the chief representative of the state" (1967:47). In terms of Weber's analysis of power and authority it can be said that the DC combines authority based on the status of the office itself and the legal-rational authority which derives from the responsibilities. In fact for most people the provincial administrators remain the actual leaders in their respective areas.

### 2.3 COMMUNICATION

As the chief representatives of the central government, the provincial administrators are charged with the responsibility of interpreting public policies to the local people. It is undisputable that for national plans to succeed, the public must not only understand but also accept to participate in them. In the circumstance effective communication between the central government can hardly be overemphasized. This vital communication or perpetual dialogue is effected by

the provincial administration who shoulder the task of explaining the rationale of the objectives and timing of programmes and identifying the needs, aspirations and capacities of the people and the functional institutions. Their role is supposedly to discover, mobilize and direct attitudes of the people towards the achievement of national goals.

One of the forums in which the provincial administration use to communicate with the public is the 'baraza' (public gathering) which is considered as the most effective way of reaching the people directly. It is a major institution through which the rural periphery is linked to the centre and which both political and administrative control is effected and at the same time maximised. Through this medium, government policies can be communicated to the people and self-help movements and launching of development plans can be enhanced. Throughout the colonial period communication at barazas remained a one-way affair so that here people were told what to do and what not to do. Nowadays it is a forum through which the public reactions to government policies can be weighed particularly during 'question time', a traditional part of most barazas (Karanja 1972:184). The provincial administration is well placed in this respect since they are the only people with authority to hold barazas without having to apply for a permit.

## 2.4 SECURITY

One of the main concerns of the present day administration is security. It is considered that the solution of security problems is a pre-requisite for the ultimate success of the socio-economic programmes. Through the provincial administration, for instance, the central government is enabled to protect the national borders from the infiltration of aggressors; protect the lives and property, rights and liberties of individuals and community (Moi 1986:142). The security of the state is based upon intelligence at grassroots. This is passed through the provincial and District Security committees chaired by the PCs and the DCs respectively. So that any action taken is often the result of the reporting by the provincial administration.

It should be mentioned, however, that although the PCs, DCs and DOs are charged with the maintenance of law and order, there is no Act of parliament empowering them to do so. They rely on the chief Authority Act which confers the chiefs almost unfettered discretion in the sphere of administration. Under this Act, for example, the Chiefs are empowered to prevent offences, to order any suspected law-breaker to appear before him, to arrest any suspected wrong-doers, to control the brewing of local liquor, to employ any number of people to help him enforce order and issue orders requiring people to

perform certain functions in the event of any emergency (Laws of Kenya Chapter 128). This Act has however come under continued criticisms and there have been moves to repeal it as most people consider it a 'colonial hangover'.

## 2.5 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Since independence the provincial administration have played a major role in the initiation and organization of the self-help projects. Increased involvement in development at the local level by the people can be traced to the late President Kenyatta's "Harambee" (self-help) call in 1964 and in his subsequent appeal speeches about going "back to the land". Mutual help and the utility of local resources was the main emphasis. The "Harambee" movement has therefore been a vital vehicle in the mobilization of local resources to meet the peoples' needs. The PCs, DCs, DOs, Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs have been fully involved in the coordination of these activities. In the 1970/74 development plan (pp 171-172), for instance, the government made it abundantly clear that while self-help would remain an instrument of the people, overall planning at the provincial and district level would help guide its direction. In this connection the DDCs were given powers to approve or reject any proposal for a self-help project depending on whether it contributes to the national strategy of development. The administrators have

therefore been placed in a position of leadership of community development programmes as they work together with local leaders' committee in mobilising the people to contribute cash, labour and any necessary services. They are expected to adopt the attitudes of a community leader and an advisor rather than that of a ruler. Although harambee movements have had political undertones its contributions in almost all spheres of life have been immense. It has, for instance, contributed to such projects as schools, hospitals and public works, and it is now considered to be one of the main developmental activities in the rural areas.

## 2.6 POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION

The account of the role of the provincial administration in general reflects some change and problems resulting from the growth of structural differentiation in administration. However, probably the most outstanding factors influencing their role since independence is the fact that they now work within a political context. In principle public officers are always expected to concentrate on their executive and administrative duties and regard politics as the prerogative of the local and national politicians. In practice, however, this has been difficult especially for the provincial administrators who assume social and political leadership some of which have already been



mentioned. This has often led to continued confrontations and, in some instances, bitter rivalry between them and the politicians. The intensely competitive nature of politics, the need for mobilization of political support and poverty of the people tend to create a symbiotic relationship of machine politics. Important for an understanding of the problem of administrative-political relations is the extent to which, say, the DC is still used as focus of decision-making and, of course, where political decisions are made political pressures will be applied. The administrator facilitates the functioning of policies and decisions which are essential to political peace and progress. His duty to maintain law and order is in itself the maintenance of political stability. As is common in the field he can be a peace-maker between political faction. When political tension is rife for instance, the DC may decide not to issue permits for political meetings.

As if that is not enough the provincial administration have always been called upon to oversee national and local elections which demands fair play. The DCs and the DOIs are the returning officer and deputy returning officers respectively during such exercises. The most recent elections was the grass-roots and national KANU elections held in mid-1985 under the supervision and organisation of the provincial

administration. In fact at the time of writing they are fully engaged in massive KANU recruitment in anticipation of the 1988 general elections.

The provincial administration have also had a role to play in local government activities. The District Commissioner is, for instance, an automatic member of urban, town, municipal or county councils and, because he sits in such important committees as that of finance, he is able to exert considerable influence in the decision-making process.

Other responsibilities expected of these administrators include the issuing of permits for the movement of grains from one area to another, settling domestic and land disputes and distribution of famine relief in certain districts. They always stand host to all VIPs visiting their respective areas. They always organise and supervise the national census exercises. They are also responsible for dealing with such emergencies as floods, security, epidemics, fires etc. The 1984 and early 1985 droughts, the floods in Nyanza province are only recent examples in which the provincial administration exhibited promptness and tact in dealing with them.

It was mentioned in chapter one that there has been a persistent growing interest in decentralisation in most third world countries. We should now examine why decentralized policies have been found appealing in the Kenyan context.

## 2.7 EMERGENCE AND RATIONALE FOR DECENTRALISATION POLICIES IN KENYA

The Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965 called for a mixed planning system that extended to provincial, district and municipality level to accommodate investment proposals and allow local involvement in the development process (Republic of Kenya 1965:51). The Ndegwa Commission (1971:112) recommended that both plan-making and plan implementation be extended down to the level of the districts and even the division to incorporate the local people's ideas and feelings in all aspects of development process. All the development plans have strongly advocated for the shifting of developmental responsibilities to the district level.

The reasons for this interest are many and varied. First, rural development has been recognized as essential for agricultural development as an engine of development. Secondly data on local areas needed by planners were often unreliable or unavailable and field agents were often transferred or not well conversant with their

areas of operation. There has also been a growing realization that the local people have special knowledge about the development opportunities and constraints of their areas and thus involving them in planning could generate increased commitment to development intervention and stimulate self-help resource mobilization. Furthermore significant ecological, demographic, and historical differences between and within regions and districts made it difficult to formulate a national approach to rural development. Hence the disaggregation of national planning to district level was seen as likely to:

- (i) raise awareness of the pattern of government resource flows, permitting more rational and equitable allocation during the budget process;
- (ii) allow for evaluation of on-going activities in a particular area, facilitating the identification of investment gaps and promising interventions;
- (iii) permit field agents to identify targets needing special assistance, for example, to pastoralists or the landless;

- (iv) facilitate supervisions of operating ministries' activities, thereby monitoring implementation roles and
  
- (v) promote coordination among development programmes and projects in a given area.

Thus it was decided that Kenya need sufficiently specific resource endowments, development potential and constraints of each district and the need for incorporation of local input if project or programme planning and implementation is to meet the said needs (Cohen and Hook 1986:12-13). It is against this background that the recent adoption of the District Focus Strategy, which is to be discussed in the next chapter, can be understood.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DISTRICT FOCUS STRATEGY: THE OFFICIAL VIEW

3.1 THE GENERAL BACKGROUND

Towards the end of 1970s the government indicated a renewed and increased interest in decentralization to the district of development activities. Addressing Kenya's economic growth, reduced public revenues and inefficient management of budget resources, a major government report in 1982 noted the need for more efficient use of scarce domestic resources and the public's greater responsibility for complementary resources. It recognized, for example, the complexity of central planning and coordination of development in rural areas due mainly to rapid expansion of provincial bureaucracy, duplication of functions by agencies and excessive over-specialization of staff. To this end it outlined recommendations for achieving the national plan's proposals so that districts become operational centres for rural development planning and implementation (Republic of Kenya 1982:53-55).

His Excellency President Moi made a determined announcement on 21st September 1982 to the effect that "The district will become centres for development in the rural areas and I have instructed all ministries to ensure that this approach is put into operation by 1st July 1983." (Republic of Kenya 1983:1)

The basic strategy circular operationalizing this directive was drafted after extensive deliberations in a series of seminars organised by the Office of the President involving the DDOs, PPOs, DCs PCs, MPs, and district and provincial heads of departments where the new strategy was presented and participants contributed their suggestions. The new policy, which came to be known as the "District Focus Strategy", became officially operational on 1st July 1983.

The District Focus Strategy can be defined as a new and dynamic approach to rural development aimed at shifting responsibilities of planning and implementation of government policies from the central and provincial headquarters to the district level for efficient and effective use of scarce resources. Outlined in a June 1983 (with subsequent revision in 1984, 1985 and 1987) paper entitled "District Focus for Rural Development" commonly referred to as the 'Blue Book', the strategy is based on the principle of a complimentary relationship between the ministries with their sectoral approach to development and the districts with their integrated approach to local needs. Its objective is to "broaden the base of rural development and encourage local executive in order to improve problem identification, resource mobilization and project design and implementation" (Republic of Kenya 1984, 85 and 87). The

strategy asserts that the district-based projects implemented by operational ministries, NGOs or self-help groups should be identified, planned and implemented by the DDC. However wherever a multi-district project is located in a particular district but implemented by provinces or headquarter officers, it requires that the DDCs and the district staff be provided with information on the objectives and progress of that project (Republic of Kenya 1987:5). To promote efficient and effective use of scarce resources, more emphasis is placed on strengthening planning and coordination among field agents and expanding financial and procurement aspects of local project implementation.

Thus the new strategy centres on: increasing the DDC's supervisory authority over operating ministry field agents; revitalizing the DDC itself; upgrading the district planning capacity, increasing the financial resources available for managing development at the district level and redeployment of technical personnel to the district (Cohen and Hook 1986:44). The implementation of the strategy is coordinated by the Office of the President, with the Ministry of Planning and National Development responsible for planning while the Ministry of Finance is in charge of financial matters. The provincial monitoring and Evaluation Committee (PMEC) whose membership includes the PC (chairman) PPO (secretary), all provincial heads of



departments, DCs, MPs and DDOs have been established to facilitate inter-district coordination. It is to work closely with the DDCs in maximising complementarities between projects in different districts.

As the chief executive officer in the district, the DC is accountable for all rural development activities. His major role is to ensure that formulation, planning and implementation of projects is carried out in an efficient and effective manner. He does this through the DDC.

### 3.2 THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (DDC)

The DDC is now the supreme body in all matters pertaining to development in the district. Members include the DC (chairman), DDO (secretary), all district heads of departments, MPs, District KANU Chairman, clerks and chairmen of local authorities, DvDc chairmen, invited (ad hoc) representatives of non-governmental development-related parastatals (Republic of Kenya 1987:15-16). Apart from reviewing on-going progress and DVDCs' new proposals, the DDC establishes priorities for future projects and endorses annual submission of district project proposals to the Ministries. However, the DDC's major responsibility now is the careful monitoring of coordination of project planning and implementation of projects through the annual work programme whereby they should ensure the full and

productive utilization as well as maintenance of resources available in the district in the interest of the residents. They are required to meet four times a year.

Owing to the large size of the DDC it was found necessary to establish the District Executive Committee (DEC) to enhance efficient and effective implementation and fiscal discipline. Composed of the DC (chairman), DDO (secretary), all district departmental heads, clerks to local authorities and representatives of development-related parastatals, the DEC is charged with operationalizing the DDC's decisions by coordinating and monitoring all projects and activities in the district. They also prepare drafts of the district development plans and briefing notes to be submitted to the DDC. There are moves to establish a District Development Unit (DPU) headed by the DDO to support the DEC in such responsibilities as planning, costing and monitoring of projects as well as technical appraisal of proposals, among others. The District Information and Documentation Centres (DIDCs) are also to be established to serve as a resource and reference centre for development in the district (see District Focus circular No.1/86).

The importance of allowing the local people to be part in the critical decisions that will intrinsically influence their lives and destinies need not be overemphasized. Their involvement in project formulation, identification and implementation, for example, enlists support and gives them a share of responsibility for the project. It encourages and harnesses local initiative and compliments development initiative from the ministries. It is in this light that the government has recognized the need in the formation and strengthening of development committees to the grassroots levels to ensure that the feelings, and wishes of the project beneficiaries are incorporated.

Hence at the divisional level, the Divisional Development Committee have been strengthened. It is composed of the DO (Chairman), DDO (Secretary), MPs, KANU Sub-branch chairman, Locational Chiefs, Councillors, all divisional heads of departments, divisional representatives of development-related parastatal organisations and invited representative of NGOs and self-help groups. This committee assembles initial projects ideas from the location, sorts them out according to local priorities and forwards them to the DDC for more review and assessment.

At the lower levels are the Locational and Sub-Locational Development Committees which represents

the grassroots level communities and are responsible for discussion of community needs and the initial identification of projects and activities to address those needs. These initial project ideas are then forwarded to the DVDC, for review and appraisal before submission to the DDC. The Locational Development Committee members include Chiefs (chairman), Assistant Chiefs, KANU Locational Chairman, Councillors, departmental officers Non-Governmental Organisations and self-help groups. The Sub-Locational Development Committee is composed of the Assistant Chief (chairman) with KANU sub-locational chairman, councillors, headmasters of primary schools, coopted leaders and representatives of cooperatives, non-governmental organisations and self-help groups. (Republic of Kenya 1987:20). It should be noted that in 1985 the Government directed that women's organisations must be adequately represented in the committee at all levels to broaden participation of the rural population.

While the DVDCs have been active in all districts the LDCs and SLDCs have not been sufficiently active in almost all districts. Most members of the latter committees lack the knowledge for preliminary feasibility and costing analyses of projects which they identify and forward. Some of the committees have never held meetings and, in the few which have, there are no proper records kept. Few members can effectively communicate the

objectives of the new strategy and the need for local mobilization of resources to the rural communities. There is also a tendency for the MPs and some councillors to miss or ignore meetings at the lower levels assuming they can make their input more effectively at the district level (Cohen and Hook 1986:47-48).

\* Also at the district level there are special-purpose development committees and Boards acting as the DDC's sub-committees for Sectoral Coordination purposes and they include, the District Education Board (DEB), District Agricultural Committee (DAC), District Social Development Committee (DSDC) and the District Joint Loans Board. The DDC is authorized to establish additional sub-committees whenever necessary. The recently established District Population and Family Planning Committee, with the principal objective of analysing population issues in relation to the resources of the district and promoting education and family planning services, is a case in point.

The strategy requires that the districts are fully involved in every stage of the Government budgeting process. The ministries prepare their budget estimates as shown in figure 3.1. The districts gets involved at the Forward Budget stage through the preparation of the Annual Annex to the District Development Plans. For the projects and programmes to be included in the draft

estimates, they must be submitted in time. The first step in this process is for ministries to provide the districts with Forward Budget Ceilings for district-specific projects. These ceilings must be provided early so that the districts can base their priority proposals for the Annex on realistic assessment of available resources. In establishing the ceiling the ministries should also take into consideration the project proposal in the DDP, and the Annexes of previous years. Thus the district plans provide an important input in the process of establishing district ceilings.

The local authority projects, on the other hand, are screened by the DDC before forwarding them to the Ministry of Local Government for funding. This arrangement enables the DDC to coordinate these projects with other developments in the district. In fact, even the methods the local authority use to raise revenues is now at the discretion of the DDC. Sessional Paper No.1/86 on "Economic Management for Renewed Growth" has emphasized the need for an integrated programme of urban and rural areas on each district to promote economic and social linkages between urban and rural areas which will lead to rapid development. This integrated programme can only be carried out through close collaboration between the local authorities and the DDC (Republic of Kenya 1987:3).

### 3.3 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The new strategy gives the district treasury the responsibility for financial management of all government funds in the district. It seeks to increase the financial capacity of the district treasury to fund, on a timely basis, the activities of operating ministries at the same time ensuring their funds are effectively and efficiently expended. The Implementation Officers now receive Authorities to Incur Expenditures (AIEs) from their ministry headquarters. This reform alters the previous practices where AIEs were transferred in an unplanned ad hoc manner from the headquarters to the districts through the provincial heads. The District Accountant oversees release of money through the cash float of the district treasury by ensuring that funds are available in the vote book before the AIE holder can be paid. He then prepares monthly statements for expenditure for each AIE holder indicating all transactions and the funds remaining and forward them to the respective Accounting Officers with copies to the Treasury and Office of the President as well as the AIE holder. This facilitates the monitoring process on the utilization of the funds in the district.

To ensure liquidity, the District Cash Float Fund (used to pay AIEs) has been increased substantially. For example, between 1983/84 and 1988/87 periods this fund was

raised from K£1.3 million to K£5.15 million (Republic of Kenya 1987:59). In addition a new payment voucher auditing system for honouring and controlling commitment made in the districts has been introduced while the rates and manner of the re-imbusement has been improved. To cope with the increased responsibilities, the district treasuries have been strengthened by adding more staff. For example highly-qualified accountants and new cadre of District Internal Auditors have been deployed, not to mention the clerical and other supporting staff. This reorganization is geared to giving the district level officers more direct responsibility for the projects under them to reduce uncertainties, prevalent in the previous approaches and, therefore, hasten local planning and implementation as well as to encourage initiative at the local level.

The district, through the District Tender Board under the chairmanship of the DC is responsible for the procurement of goods and services. For efficiency and prompt implementation the tendering and procurement procedures have been reformed by raising the ceiling for locally obtained items and contracts, adopting more rapid counter-signatures for large construction projects and improving the services of the supplies branches (Republic of Kenya 1987.48 for ceiling limits see pp56-57). The increased limits alters the previous approach which was so low that virtually all important project purchases



were moved to ministry headquarters or to the Central Tender Board, a major set-back in the implementation process. The new reform is expected to permit speedier decision-making and develop local supply and contracting capacity.

### 3.4 TRAINING

The successful implementation of the District Focus depends, to a large degree, on the capability of staff involved. The desired capabilities and level of coordination demanded a rigorous and well-coordinated training programme (formal and informal) for both senior administrators and implementors to re-orient them with the concepts and procedures being instituted and to equip them with the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge for effective execution of their increased responsibilities. To this end the government embarked on the initial crash programme for the DCs, as the key managers of the new strategy. They underwent a number of specialised management courses both at the University of Birmingham (UK) and the Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA). Apart from being exposed to most subjects, more emphasis was placed on management skills, project planning and management and public finance. After this, the highest priorities for training was given to the District Heads of Departments, Senior Local Authorities Officials, the new DCs, DOIs and the DDOs, who are

primarily responsible for the planning and day-to-day management of rural development activities in the district. Since their number was too large to be sent overseas, the Government decided to mount these four-week courses at KIA. It was expected that some 3500 people were going to be involved during the early years of the 1984/1985 plan period (Republic of Kenya 1984:16). The objectives of this training is to provide a forum in which the new strategy is discussed at length with a view to ensuring that all dimensions are understood by the implementors and the interdependency of all departments is appreciated.

In 1985 the National Training Committee of District Focus chaired by the Directorate of Personnel Management prepared a National Training for District Focus issued by the Office of the President and which was reviewed and updated in 1986. This followed a statement of the training strategy which has been developed to ensure that all personnel involved in the implementation of District Focus including the development committee members at every level in the district, receive the required training. For instance, it has been decided that each district should form a District Training Team consisting of appropriate members of the DEC supported by the trainers from the training institutions, to organise a series of Divisional and Locational Development Committees seminars.

The process of curriculum development is guided by the sub-committee of the District Focus Task Force in the Office of the President. There has been changes in the training contents over time and now covers the following areas:-

1. National philosophy, goals and developments
2. Government organisation and practices;
3. Administrative and management skills;
4. Project planning and management;
5. Budget techniques and financial management;
6. Population and Socio-cultural aspects of rural development; and
7. The concept of the District Focus itself.

(Republic of Kenya 1987:43-45)

Apart from KIA there are other institutions involved in the training programmes especially the middle and lower level civil servants involved in the district planning. They include the Government Training Institutes (Mombasa and Maseno), and the Embu and Matuga Development centres. Others such as the Baringo Development Centre and Ahero Multipurpose Centre as well as the Farmers Training Centres, are also useful venues.

From the preceding discussions, it is clear that the District Focus Strategy addresses itself to solving some of the anomalies associated to the earlier approaches. It aims at making faster planning and implementation of government policies in the interest of the local population. The next chapter attempts to discuss the general performance and problems already encountered in implementation of this strategy.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE DISTRICT FOCUS IN PRACTICE: GENERAL PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEMS

It must be emphasized that so far the implementation of the District Focus strategy has not been as easy-going as might have been depicted in the previous chapter or in the various government documents. While it is undeniable that fairly steady progress and tangible results have been realized, it is equally true that many obstacles are yet to be overcome before achieving its full and effective operation. Thus this chapter attempts to examine its general performance with more emphasis on the problems encountered during implementation.

Among the problems already encountered include administrative difficulties that undermine the interest of the strategy, shortage of critical resources needed to carry out policies effectively and physical and organizational problems that make policy objectives difficult to achieve. Let us examine them more closely.

#### 4.1 ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATION

As Rondinelli (1983:79) pointed out, any attempt to bring about changes quickly meets political and bureaucratic obstacles. The introduction of the new procedures, essential for improved administration and

decision-making in the new strategy, for example, were not easily implemented because changes in attitude and behaviour among the bureaucrats and political leaders were difficult to achieve especially during the initial stages. There was clearly widespread resistance by the central bureaucracies to the transfer of functions from their control especially where financial transactions were involved. For instance the transfer and increased responsibility in tendering and procurement of goods and services to the District Tender Boards was not a welcome move at the centre where most of the transactions were being undertaken. So was the increase in the transfer of the AIEs to the districts. The senior officials at the centre looked at these moves as draining their main sources of power which they had enjoyed for a long time.

Furthermore the redeployment of officers from the ministry and, provincial headquarters to districts was viewed as purporting to demotion. Some of the Senior Accountants from the ministry headquarters and the provincial accountants, for instance, considered themselves too senior to serve in the districts. This was also true for other departments such as Agriculture, Livestock, Education, Lands and Settlement to mention but a few. In fact one of the provincial Directors of Livestock Development in one of the provinces I worked in resisted a transfer to the district for a fairly long time. There were also cases where such technical

personnel as engineers, surveyors and even accountants opted to resign due to this resistance. This attitude was reinforced by the general behavioural characteristics of central administrators who dealt with lower level officials and rural people with a paternalistic and, sometimes, in an authoritarian manner. There was also an overwhelming fear by lower and middle-level administrators of making mistakes and the pervasive practice of passing problems to others in order to lighten workloads. Although this has changed quite considerably there still remains a lot to be done especially in respect to delegation, which will be dealt with later.

Coordination is one of the critical areas for the District Focus Strategy. The DC is the chief coordinator and, in principle, has supervisory and disciplinary authority over field agents. In practice, however, he lacks legal authority, so that, for example, he does not have a mandate on such matters as transfer, promotion, or discipline. Other than making suggestions and recommendations he cannot interfere in the technical administration of a department as officers come under the direction of their respective ministries. This strengthens the vertical, rather than the vital horizontal integration to the detriment of planned and coordinated implementation of policies.

Some poor coordination has been attributed to unsatisfactory working relationships especially whenever some DCs show arrogance and authoritarian attitudes towards district heads of departments of the operating ministries. This has often resulted in a breakdown of communication and subsequently lack of cooperation and poor coordination. This monolithic and unitary conception of authority leaves no room for rival views based on technical expertise. Equally there are instances when the departmental heads also become difficult to deal with because they remain loyal to the heads of departments in the headquarters.

The many and varied responsibilities bestowed on the DCs, coupled with cases of lack of delegation, leads to confusion and inefficiency, for it is not possible for them to cope with all the activities in the district, most of which are too technical for some of them to grasp. This gloomy impression should not, however, overshadow the exemplary coordinative role exhibited by most of the DCs.

One other continuing coordination problem relates to the transfer of staff in most departments, provincial administration being among the hardest-hit. Local level staff are the captives of a syndrome of rapid transfers some of which have been so frequent that the stability of the service is jeopardized. Far from denying officers



opportunity to get together well for harmonious coordination of their functional activities, these transfers rob programmes of expertise and contribute to lack of continuity in the job which leads to low incentives to initiate longer-term activities beneficial to their areas of jurisdiction.

The DDCs are supposed to be the major institutions charged with responsibility of planning and implementation of district programmes and projects. However, although they are now operative units for the said responsibilities in all districts, they are still experiencing difficulties. For example as the strategy gathered momentum the DDC meetings became increasingly large (sometime running to 90 or more members) and too unwieldy to effectively execute their deliberations. Even the DEC which was established to provide management able to react promptly to emerging needs or changing conditions are also becoming too large (some having upto 40 members) (Cohen and Hook 1986:46) to be effective. While large numbers implies broadened participation, they can make meetings utterly inefficient. Their meetings, for instance, are normally unnecessarily long (averaging 10-12 hours) and often some of the issues do not receive the attention they deserve (District Focus Circular No.1/85). This is because most of the discussion papers/agenda are either not circulated in advance or when they are, members do not study them. Thus much of

the time is spent in becoming acquainted with its contents and the main discussions are always given a raw deal because members either contribute less or will have been unattentive owing to fatigue. In some cases much of the time is taken up by discussions of irrelevant matters. This is particularly true of politicians who always want to dominate the sessions with long and irrelevant speeches. This is further aggravated by the fact that some departmental heads send to these meetings very junior officers who neither contribute effectively in the discussions nor make decisions on their own. Partly attributed to this is the fact that some of the district heads do not have deputies senior enough to make effective representation during their absence. Important to note also is the fact that the DDCs and DECAs are clearly controlled by central government administrators and hence the central government points of views dominate committee proceedings whilst the elected representatives of the district population have very negligible involvement indeed. This defeats the purpose of the strategy which advocates local input.

The weakness of the DDCs is also attributed to the infrequency, and in some cases short-notice postponement, of meetings sometimes because of too much pressure of work on the part of the DCs. This always causes resentment and lack of interest by members.

From the previous discussions it was evident that the DDCs are dependent on inputs from the DvDCs, LDCs and SLDCs. Since their establishment, some of them have taken important roles in identifying and forwarding projects some of which were, infact, incorporated in the 1984/88 district plans. However whereas the DVDCs are now operational in all districts, the level of activity for LDCs varies widely tending to be greater in areas of relatively high incomes and with dense and settled population in contrast to pastoral areas. There are very few operational SLDCs. Although the attendance in these committee meetings is steadily increasing, there are tendencies of the elected representatives especially the MPs to ignore them with the hope of influencing decisions at the DDC levels. There are other problems which have also hampered the effectiveness of these committees.

For instance, although it varies from one area to another, there is a general shortage of technical staff and this is more pronounced in the less developed districts or regions. This is aggravated by the fact that, due to too much work, the DDOs, who are the secretaries of these committees, are unable to attend all the DvDC meetings. Thus they often operate without the necessary technical guidance.

One other factor which could be attributed to the problems of the local level committees is lack of

compensation in terms of travelling and subsistence expenses so that although some of them, who travel long distances to attend such meetings as that of DVDCs, are not compensated accordingly. Thus they have to meet these expenses from their own pockets. This lack of financial compensation is particularly striking when one considers that in such other committees as Land Control Boards and District Agricultural Committees members (Non-Government Officials) are paid to cover these expenses. Lack of this facility in the other committees could be acting as a disincentive in participation.

Another problem could be attributed to the low level of education for some of the members particularly in less developed districts. This has been a major setback because some members may not be able to contribute effectively especially in the discussion of technical matters. It may also be noted that it is at these levels that few members have been active in communicating the objectives of the strategy and the need for mobilization of resources to the rural community. This is partly because members are not well informed about the requirements of the programmes leave alone how meetings are conducted and proper record-keeping of its proceedings. No wonder Cohen and Hook (1986:48) lamented that "it is difficult to distinguish the chief's weekly baraza from the LDC meeting."

The lack of office accommodation and stationery is yet another problem which specifically affects the chiefs and their assistants. Most of them do not have offices to execute their duties from and indeed some have had to operate from their houses. Lack of stationery like files and writing materials have further complicated their work. Furthermore most of the locations especially in the pastoral and semi-pastoral areas do not have adequate technical and other supporting staff to assist them. This, and the already mentioned problems, makes the lower-level committees rather weak in effecting their expected roles.

#### 4.2 FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

As in any other developing country, Kenya experiences difficulties in effectively carrying out her policies due mainly to lack of adequate financial resources caused by, among other things, the ever increasing crude oil prices, unfavourable terms of trade and such natural factors as floods and drought. Thus unprecedented increase in government activities, the new strategy included, places strains on the public sector capacity. This is critical particularly considering the fact that decentralized planning is unlikely to be taken seriously by local leaders and field agents when financial resources are inadequate to promote their activities. Hence the government has taken steps in the

area of financial management to effectively and efficiently use the available scarce resources to strengthen the districts in their responsibilities.

The increase of authority to District Tender Boards to process tenders for building and construction has greatly improved the project proposals and implementation of the district-specific projects.

As already mentioned in chapter three, the District Treasuries have been strengthened and the district cash float has been increased substantially. In addition arrangements are at an advance stage to link the reimbursement process at the districts directly with the Pay-Master General.

The increasing proportion of AIEs are now being transferred directly to operating ministries at the districts (some 90% of which are located at the district level) for the authorized amounts at the beginning of the fiscal year. Such ministries as Agriculture, Livestock Development, Health and Office of the President have made notable progress to that effect (Cohen and Hook 1986:3) This decentralization of spending authority should reduce some of the uncertainties that have made local level planning and implementation difficult in the past. It is expected that this will give district-level officers more

direct responsibility for the success of projects in their departments.

However, whereas the capacity to issue AIEs to the districts has been enhanced the operation of the process is still experiencing teething difficulties. The levels of authorization detailed in the District Focus handbook are not fully operational. The major drawback is that the task of resource management at the district level is complicated by the fact that the funds come through such different channels as self-help, ministries, special programmes (such as ASAL) among others, each with its own characteristics (District Focus 1984:6). This makes the operations and maintenance of completed district projects difficult.

The main potential obstacle is that the Permanent Secretaries are still to remain ultimately responsible for the ministries' resources, retaining full control over them. Funds earmarked through the Annual Estimate and Forward Budgeting will not necessarily be released to the District Treasury automatically. The decision to release funds will be based on the approval of specific projects. The power of approval is a residual power that the headquarters can always use, as it has done in the past, to frustrate certain districts, officers or projects. (Oyugi 1986:157)

Apart from a pressing need to ensure completion of development-financed projects, the districts need to better maintain and use what they already have. But this is difficult because projects planned by DDCs are dependent, for their implementation, on operating ministries responsible for the maintenance of the budget-financial projects. So that for example aside from the initial stages of the district-specific project investments, development funds do not cover recurrent costs. Given that the DDCs have little influence over recurrent budget allocations of operating ministries, that the government is likely to have severely restricted budgets for at least the next decade and that the estimated annual recurrent costs of grant-financed projects as well as the fact that self-help projects will continue to be the main activities with the hope of being taken over by the Government, the operation of completed projects is a major problem which must be resolved.

(Cohen and Hook 1986:65)

The government is yet to address another contradiction between the need for increased resources for the districts and the fact that recent government pronouncements have made it clear that such revenues are only likely to come from cuts in government activities. Nor has the government devised a policy of dealing with the inevitable conflict bound to emerge in the DDCs between the technical officers mandated to contain



government expenditure and local leaders whose political position rests on bringing centrally-funded programmes and projects in their districts.

It is also apparent that if the future of District Focus is dependent on increased allocation or development and recurrent funds to district priorities, the strategy will have problems for, as already mentioned, the government will be hard pressed to increase the ceilings of operating ministries. Hence such ministries are unlikely to have large amounts of discretionary funds neither can donors make resources available through District Focus oriented grants to ministry programmes. As Cohen and Hook (1985:60) argue unless donors policies changes, it is unlikely to operate or provide office, supply, transport or housing support required to motivate officers redeployed to the districts and increase their productivity.

As one of the principal aims of the District Focus Strategy is equitable distribution of development resources to the districts, the district plans can be viewed as a major step in explicitly treating the needs, problems and opportunities in district-to-district basis. However, one of the problems which has affected the district plans, especially at the early stages of the strategy, has been the continued inability of operating ministries to disaggregate their forward budgets for five

year plan period in time for each district to have information for realistic preparation of their respective plans (Ibid pp 55).

Although some progress has been made in respect to motivation and capacity of central ministry budget units to supply information, it remains the case that increased uncertainty of revenue estimates and of the ensuing budget ceilings has plagued the process in recent years due to oil prices and commodity price fluctuation and their direct impact on export revenue as well as such factors as flood and periodic drought. All these become increasingly dependent on scarce foreign capital.

#### 4.3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

One other main problem which has been a difficulty in the District Focus strategy is the shortage of skilled and experienced staff for increasingly complex planning and implementation functions. Although the government has taken steps to redeploy more staff from the capital and provincial headquarters, the districts are still understaffed. Some Ministries, for example, do not have heads of departments at the district level. For example during the District Focus seminar held in March 1986 in Lamu it came out clearly that such departments as Culture and Social Services, Land and Settlements (Survey) were not represented in Lamu District (GTI Report 1986:4-5).

There are even more cases where the district heads of departments do not have deputies senior or experienced enough to effectively take charge during their absence. There is also the shortage of other technical staff and other supporting staff. This shortage is even more pronounced as one moves to the lower levels.

Related to this is the misallocation of the available staff. For example, at present, due to lack of proper career planning, it is difficult to promote DDOs without transferring them to other assignments unconnected to the District Focus. Similarly some of the DCs who attended the District Focus-related training in 1984/85 both in Britain and KIA have been transferred to the Ministry headquarters where their acquired skills may not be usefully utilized. As if that is not enough, some of the technical staff are still almost fully engaged in administrative work at the expense of the jobs they were trained for. This is a waste of scarce resources and should be rectified.

One other major problem which has crippled the operation of the strategy is the acute shortage of housing and office accommodation, prevalent in almost all districts following the massive and abrupt redeployment. These shortages have hiked the rents of the privately-owned premises/houses thus costing the government massive amounts of money. Coupled with

transport problems experienced in most areas. these inconveniences greatly lower morale and therefore the general officers' performance.

Seminars, as already mentioned, have been carried out in both the provinces and districts have proved useful as forums of sharing experiences and clearing any misunderstanding that may have arisen during the course of implementation. Indeed a review of problems not only reveals the constraints under which policies must be carried out but also suggests conditions that must be established to make them more effective. However these seminars are yet to be undertaken at the grassroots levels where holding them is considered crucial if the local people are to be fully involved.

That the government has issued large number of circulars on clear District Focus instructions in (14) undisputable. However, there is evidence that many of these documents are either unread or ignored as, already mentioned, some of the officers are still not fully informed about the strategy. This is a great barrier in communicating the same to the local people. The government has also established a number of rural newspapers and promoted the use of local radio stations to assist in the propagation of the rural development policies.

The cooperation between central and local authorities is certainly a key ingredient because the latter represent the people living in the rural areas. While it is true that the Kenyan local authorities have suffered chronically from financial mismanagement, it is equally important to note that their current difficulties is partly attributed to the raw deal given by the central government. For example local authorities obtain its revenues from very limited sources with heavy administrative collection costs and prevalent incidences of non-payment. The central government, on the other hand, takes taxes that are easy to collect and involves huge sums. Local authorities, therefore, have little chance of raising sufficient revenues to meet the current needs to expand their responsibilities (Cochrane 1983:8).

Without adequate financial resources they are unable to attract such professionals as accountants, assessors and surveyors, thus making it difficult to perform their financial activities effectively. The local authorities have, therefore, been continually handicapped by chronic shortage of collection and enforcement personnel. There is also improper book-keeping and some of the revenue collectors are dishonest. Furthermore the authority to enforce collection is not clearly indicated in the legislation and the collectors sometimes face political resistance during the exercise. There has also been

ambiguity in the relationship between the local authorities and the District Focus so that, for example, duplication of roles have occurred in the past.

The above problems are a clear testimony that the District Focus strategy has more hurdles on its way to succeed in achieving its objectives. The next chapter is the discussion summary, conclusions and some of the recommendations to make the District Focus Strategy more effective in the future.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

From the above discussions it is evident that the Kenyan model of decentralization approximates "bureaucratic deconcentration" (Rondinelli 1983: 13-33) run towards those lines of the French prefectoral system. Popular participation in the form of devolution has been given less attention so that, for example, the local authorities which were established before independence have had their powers severely curtailed.

It also came out clearly that rural development remains the single most important national strategy. Apart from the need to improve areas where the majority of the population live, the rural areas provide the bulk of food, the majority of exports and many materials for industries. In essence rural production is the largest single component of public sector activity and will remain so for many years to come.

Accelerated and equitable rural development has been government's major interest since independence as is testified by such documents as various sessional papers (including the well-quoted Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965), Development Plans, KANU Manifestos and several pronouncements made by the national leaders. Much of the progress achieved so far can be traced to the efforts of

the government to extend its personnel and services deeply into the rural areas and engage the people and their resources in numerous tasks of development. Hence the first decade of independence witnessed some attempts at deconcentration for rural development but, due to built-in organizational obstacles, not much was achieved (Oyugi 1986:143)

The decision of the government to establish district and provincial development committees in the rural areas to coordinate all development activities was a logical outcome in an effort to strengthen its developmental efforts. Indeed that was the first 'decentralization' move in the field administration. This was expected to generate viable development projects and coordinate their implementation generally. Over the years, however, the system did not work as was anticipated. The local committees weaknesses have been directly related to the overall national organizational weaknesses, many of which was mentioned in chapter two. Essentially the earlier period witnessed lack of effective functional leadership for the committees. They entirely depended on their existence on the initiative and goodwill of the provincial administration. But the apparent differentiated structure was unable to accommodate a machinery that emphasized integration. In a nutshell proper coordination was the missing ingredient so that, for example, although the PCs and DCs were generally



assumed to be responsible, through the development committees, for coordinating the activities at different levels, they were not able to actively and authoritatively influence the technical departments.

Hence amidst all these initiatives the tendency has been more centralization of government policies and this have been a major impediment to translation of policies into action. So that for almost two decades of independence Kenya's development has been characterised by what Chambers (1973:16) refers to as "planning without implementation and implementation without planning". The plans have had little effect on the internal decision and the actual course of events. The long shopping lists of projects forwarded from the local level were not incorporated in the formulation of the national policies. This poor plan conception was aggravated by the inherent internal weakness of administrative capacity.

Regional/sectoral disparities, therefore, continued to widen each passing year. The urban centres were growing at the expense of the rural areas which seemed to be stagnate or even deteriorate with such poverty effects as hunger, poor motivation, ill-health and little or no access to formal education. Unemployment continued to worsen. Poor project implementation, coupled with inflexibility and delays

attributed to the bureaucratic procedures, led to rampant waste of scarce resources.

It is partly due to this state of affairs that the government decided to launch the new District Focus Strategy. As already mentioned, the strategy is an approach to rural development aimed at shifting responsibilities of planning and implementation of government policies from the centre and provincial headquarters to the district levels for effective and efficient use of scarce resources. The government has taken several steps to ensure that the strategy is on a strong footing. For example senior officers have been redeployed and an increasing number of civil servants, planners and technical officers in ministries are now involved in district planning activities. The decentralization of AIEs to the districts and the expansion of District Treasuries have already started paying dividends in the direction of quick transactions at the district. The expenditure from the District Treasuries is to be reimbursed from Paymaster General at the Treasury rather than routing vouchers through provincial officers and the individual ministries with a view to reducing delays in financial procurement. The increase in powers of the District Tender Board in respect to procurements of goods and service has already reduced some of the uncertainties that made local planning and implementation difficult in the past. All

these measures give the district level officers more direct responsibility for the success of projects in their sector and hence provide the basis for coherent discussion of more district-based strategies, problems and opportunities than was possible in the past.

However, it would appear that the realization of the strategy's potential will be a longer process owing to a number of problem areas including staffing, coordination and operational constraints which, as noted in chapter four, which have plagued the new strategy and certainly this need remedial measures if their potential is to be attained in future. I will therefore, suggest some possible measures to that effect particularly in the light of the problems raised.



Going by the earlier discussions it may be deduced that the generalists' role is a major issued affecting field administration. Apart from the maintenance of law and order, the provincial administration is now involved in development activities more than ever before. Although its inherited position is being increasingly challenged by technical departmental officers, the greater activities which takes place demands better coordination and hence the generalist role seems indispensable.

There is no doubt that the provincial administration, particularly the DCs, play a pivotal

role in the implementation of the new strategy. However for good and effective coordination, a positive policy of delegation is essential to counteract the hierarchical domination of the field by the centre. The generalists must therefore recognise the limitations of their technical capacity and understand that their role is essentially coordinative and facilitative in making the best means of realising the objectives and overcoming obstacles. An environment of mutual horizontal interdependence must be cultivated. It is also necessary that there exist effective communication between ministries and districts. Communication at all levels should facilitate mutual interaction, exchange of information, cooperation and conflict resolution rather than simply disseminating instructions. For example as noted by President Moi (1986:64), because the approval of the headquarters is required for projects, liaison and professional cooperation between the district planner and his boss, who vets and approves projects, is necessary. Their relationship must be a good one since the initiation from the district and ministerial moderations and approval of projects are both essential for the success of the strategy. This mutual relationship avoids misunderstanding and delays.

It is also important that the government ensures that delegation of authority without abdication is exercised for effective and efficient planning and

implementation of government policies. There is also a need for strict enforcement of discipline, supervision and accountability to ensure that targets are accomplished accordingly. In this respect concise regulations and directives must be written to describe the relationship and obligations of officials and citizens, the allocations of functions among units and rules at each level. For example, provincial officers should be able to concentrate on monitoring and evaluation functions as well as inter-district coordination and leave the day-to-day implementation to district heads.

All these require changes in attitudes and behaviour. Centrist, control-oriented and paternalistic attitudes are all not compatible with the new strategy. Training programmes must therefore emphasize the facilitative roles that those involved in the strategy perform. Particular attention must be given to overcoming resistance and obtaining cooperation of local elites and traditional leaders. Ultimately the strategy requires trust between citizens and public officials and recognition of the important roles each can perform. Provision must be made to strengthen leadership and administrative capacity within rural communities and for mobilizing the leadership, knowledge and skills that already exist. There is for example, a need to train such personalities like Women Group Leaders Project

Leaders, Cooperative Officials, KANU officials, Church Leaders and opinion leaders on the basics of the strategy with more emphasis on the elementary project planning and implementation techniques so that their roles can be enhanced. The Farmers training centres and other local training institutions will be useful to that effect. It is even worthwhile to teach the basics of the strategy in schools so that young people will grow up with full knowledge of the importance and operations of district planning.

The seminars which have taken place are mainly aimed at the provincial and district leaders. It is now necessary to conduct them at the lower levels and more non-official members should take part. In this respect more emphasis should also be placed on building technical and training capabilities at the district and provincial level so that the district and provincial-based resources can assume leadership in training and providing services at these levels.

Regular training or seminar programmes for MPs KANU chairmen and county councillors are necessary. In the speech delivered at KIA in March 1985 during the seminar organised for MPs, President Moi remarked "I trust that when the time comes for elected members to participate in these training programmes, everyone will treat the exercise with the seriousness it deserves" PP5. It is

only when elected leaders, government officials and the general public have fully understood the implications of their involvement in the programme through such forums that team-work spirit is enhanced. Indeed MPs and other political leaders have a duty to make their contributions in a manner that will nourish the mutual trust which strengthens future interaction between ministries as implementors and elected officials in their role of specifying policy.

The experience of DDCs so far indicates that the committee system remains a basic framework of planning and implementation that are success of local development committees depends on how well they comprehend and apply the guidelines centrally determined. To make the DDCs more effective, meetings should be based on discussion papers prepared by the DECs and circulated well in advance for members to study and thus attend meetings fully prepared. (District Focus Circular No.1 1985). Prolonged meetings can best be avoided by assigning the DECs important issues findings and recommendations of which are to be made to the DDCs. It may even be productive to form a core steering committee to handle any chores of coordinating district implementation or establish appropriate standing or ad hoc sub-committee for specific tasks (Cohen and Hook 1986:62). There is also a need to ensure that important issues are not handled towards the end of the meeting when members are

tired and more knowledgeable and useful discussion of the DDC, and DEC, business should be promoted.

Other remedial measures which may be taken to make these committees more effective includes restricting the size of the DDCs, ensuring that the district heads do not bring their subordinates, increasing the number of meetings per year and instituting procedures to curb absenteeism. The frequent transfers should be minimized to enable officers to understand development problems in their areas and form acquaintances with their counterparts for smooth and effective coordination.

The proposed DPUs which will act as a secretariat to the DEC for the day-to-day planning and coordination are vital and should be effected without any further delay. So are the DIDCs which will also be essential components. Such special committees as DEB, DAC, DSDC etc must be seen to carry out their complimentary roles for effective planning and coordination of the district programmes.

The monitoring and evaluation of the PPOs offices need to be strengthened so that they can better enumerate achievements, identify problems, make recommendations on action to be taken and serve both the DDOs and operating ministries to promote increased effectiveness and efficiency. Similarly the DDOs offices certainly need to be strengthened by posting the proposed Assistant DDOs



and other supporting staff. There is also need for systematic physical visiting of projects if realistic evaluations are to be made.

We have already noted that the DVDCs, LDCs and SLDCs are the crucial levels for the identification and implementation of projects. Hence, it is essential that training of members at all levels is done so that they can effectively execute their roles. It is particularly important to strengthen the technical input at these levels in order to upgrade the capabilities of project planning and implementation. More critical are the locational and sub-locational level where project identification originate from.

Cooperation between central and local governments is certainly a key ingredient of successful rural development but this must be focused on long-range plans for improvement and on definite targets of generating revenue, managing personnel and functional responsibility (Cochrane 1983:8) It is strongly emphasized that District Focus strategy is a mechanism through which local authorities can become more effective contributors to development efforts. The present arrangement which makes it possible for the DDC to scrutinize local authority proposals with a view to ensuring that there is no duplication of activities, as was common in the past, must be maintained and maximised.

There is also need to strengthen the local authorities' administrative competence and financial resources. They will only be more effectively involved in the new strategy if their finances are placed on a more solid footing. The introduction of user fees for services and perhaps the reintroduction of such important sources of revenue as GPT will go along way to assisting the local authorities out of the present financial mess. One other area is the need to improve the performance of many councillors who are, to use President Moi's words "corrupt and corruptible" (Moi 1986:130). Local government personnel management need to be seen as part of national strategy for allocating scarce administrative resources. Without vigorous and continuing government initiatives personnel management at the local level is unlikely to improve. The government should go further than the recent arrangement where only top senior local authority officials were brought under the Public Service Commission. It must be realized therefore that although increased autonomy tends to be needed in fiscal affairs the reverse is true for personnel management.

As already mentioned in chapter four, meeting recurrent costs for the district-specific projects has been a persistent problem and it would appear that in the long run the districts will need a specific amount of funds of their own to alleviate this problem. To this

end the most promising and possible solution would be the move towards the Unified District Budget that has been under discussion since the Ndegwa Commission of 1971. The establishment of a District Development Fund outlined in the Blue Book would therefore be most appropriate. The Fund is designed to receive resources for use in financing all district-specific projects at the discretion of the DDC. As this will not be tied to any specific sector it will be particularly important because of the flexibility with which they could be used (Republic of Kenya 1984:7)

For effective utilization of available scarce resources in the interest of the local people, more emphasis should be given to maintaining or rehabilitating completed projects. As Waterson (1979:291) argues, it would be appropriate to "select a few projects and programmes and concentrate administrative improvements around them" to shorten construction and implementation periods and bring them into immediate use.

Now that the foundation has been laid, the strategy should address itself to programmes and projects which will bring direct benefits to the local people. For example, priority should be given to proposals that contribute to immediate increased production, create employment and income-generating opportunities through private production activities, assist small-scale

farmers, pastoralists, landless, rural workers or urban poor to increase their economic productivity (Cohen and Hook 1986:86). In this respect the government should strive to identify, in detail, local development resources that are underdeveloped and local projects which promote agricultural production, cottage and small-scale industries. Thus activities essential for the stimulation of local production includes cooperatives, community development and extension programmes, training through village polytechnics and other educational centres, minor construction and expansion of self-help. The Funding of small labour-intensive programmes similar to Food for Work programmes and Rural Access Roads will undoubtedly fill gaps identified in ministerial programmes and stimulate more interest in planning and implementation in the districts.

Budget disaggregation should continue to be the government's goal and everything possible should be done to ensure that forward budgeting is fully operational in all districts. In order for ministries to be seen to be working towards equity, they should communicate to the districts the criteria they use for allocating funds. One other evidence of the government's commitment to greater equity will be its follow-up on the proposals to ensure that the district plans are implemented accordingly. In changing and effectively implementing the new budgeting procedures, the districts will be in a position to see

that they get their slice of the national cake during budget time.

On personnel management, officers should be motivated by ensuring increased delegation and providing staff housing and logistic support. More important government personnel management rules will have to be revised so that, for example, terms of service will allow officers to advance their careers without having to transfer to positions unrelated to district planning. In President Moi's words " the district must no longer be regarded as a mere passageway to Nairobi for the most capable" (Moi 1986:64). Transfers should be minimised and there should be clear career path and timely promotion to attract and retain qualified personnel at the district levels. Furthermore it is necessary to work out comprehensive schemes of service for all categories of staff to enable them to know their future prospects. The periodical salary reviews should be made an integral part of personnel management functions and such reviews should be undertaken on a systematic and logical basis to compensate the rising costs living.

The success of the strategy, will depend on inducing changes in areas ranging from availability and access to information to change in attitudes both in districts and the headquarters. Thus it is important that both central government officials and the local community must be

committed to the philosophy of decentralization. Participation must be generated among political leaders for transferring planning, decision-making and administration. It is obvious that until a solid political support for decentralization is established, there can be little real change in the way decisions are made and carried out regardless of administrative procedural reforms.

In conclusion therefore, it can be said that, aside from their traditional duties, the generalist field administrators have assumed more responsibilities over the years especially the developmental roles associated with the new District Focus Strategy. It is also pertinent to note here that while it is rather early to predict what is likely to become of the strategy it is undisputable that it has taken root. There are already signs of improvement. In fact Kenya has, in place, a well defined planning system generally accepted by government officers, major political leaders and even in international circles, donors and academics included. Continued careful evaluation with a view to raising the quality and ability of the district planning exercise is necessary. This process demands that the operational strategy must continue to be renewed and where necessary incorporate new realities in the course of implementation. The success of the District Focus Strategy will undoubtedly be an innovation for Kenyans to

be proud of since it provides an opportunity for them to work out a system which is appropriate to their needs.

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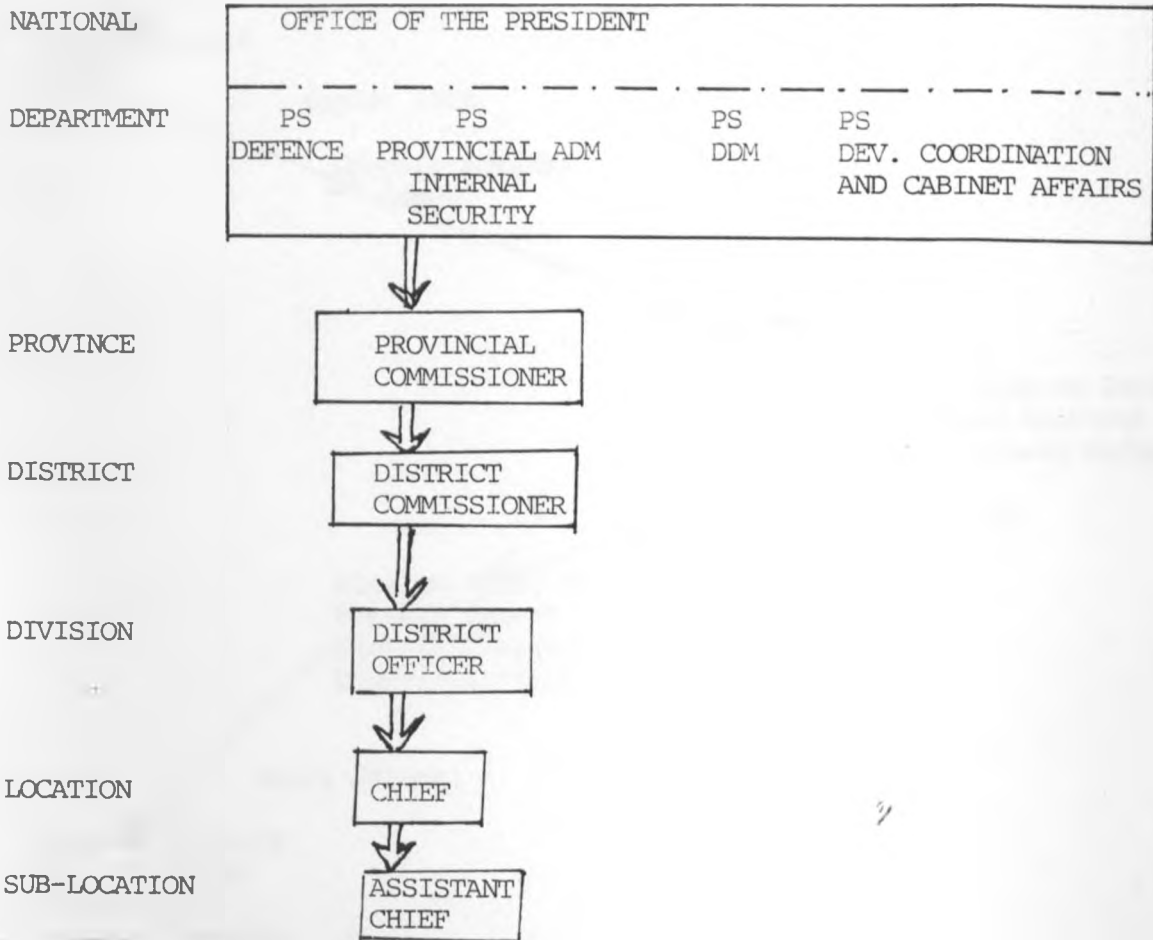
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FIGURE 2.1

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION HIERARCHY

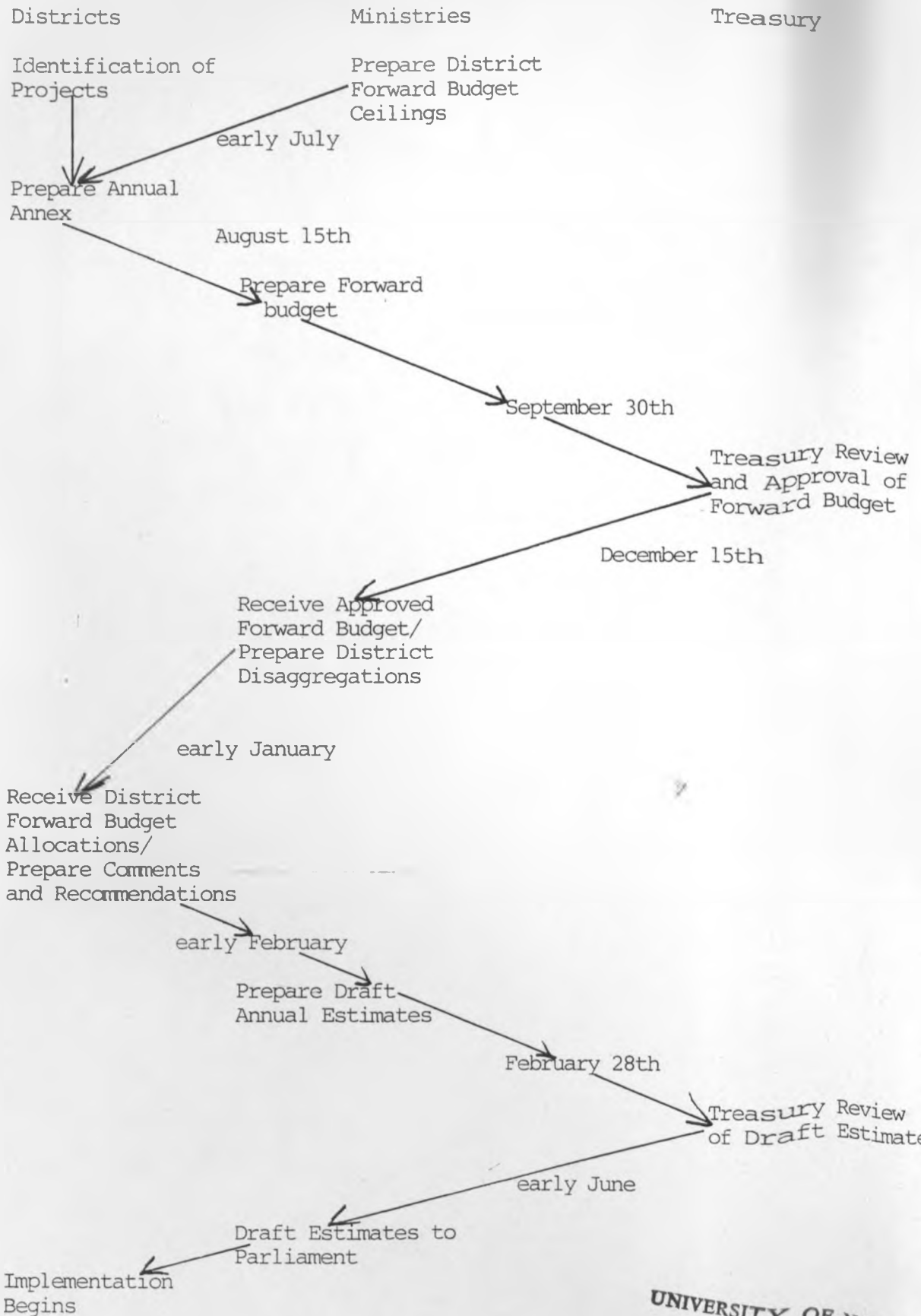
LEVELS



Ps - Permanent Secretary.

NB. The Provincial Commissioners have direct access to the President, and can thus bypass the PS (in charge of the Provincial Administration and Internal Affairs) who is their boss.

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