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**DEVOLUTION AND EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
SYSTEM IN UGANDA:
A CASE STUDY OF HOIMA DISTRICT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

ISINGOMA MWESIGWA PATRICK

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GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN UGANDA: A CASE STUDY OF HOIMA
DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

BY

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Promoter: Professor P.S. Reddy

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“ The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government”.

Thomas Jefferson (1809)

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Peace, Mother, Wife and Friend.

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June 2004

Patrick. M. Isingoma

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is a result of my own investigation and research. All sources used or quoted have been acknowledged. This thesis has not been previously submitted in part or full for any other degree or to any other University.

PATRICK MWESIGWA ISINGOMA

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ABSTRACT

Decentralisation has not only transformed the structure of government but has also fundamentally altered the political landscape in Uganda. Since 1986, the country has witnessed a gradual but comprehensive transfer of power, responsibilities and resources from the centre to local governments. The exercise began as a shift from appointed to elected councillors and leaders, initially of resistance committees, and then later of local councils that have been formed in rural areas and urban wards as vehicles for local government and popular participation.

Decentralisation has also appeared in the form of devolution of major functional responsibilities such as primary education, health, water and sanitation, and rural feeder roads from the centre to local governments. Indeed scholars and planners who subscribe to the ideology of centrifugalism as a prominent management and planning discourse have seen this level of decentralization as a fundamental point of departure towards institutionalization of a level of reform which seeks to transfer political, administrative, financial and planning authority from the centre to local governments. Many have also seen it as the right direction towards the promotion of popular participation, empowering local people to make their own decisions and generally enhancing the levels of accountability and responsibility within the local communities.

Nevertheless the process of decentralisation has not entirely been a bed of roses. Despite the existence of abundant goodwill on the part of the national political leadership, lack of civic competence, apathy, disillusionment and fatigue are some of the debilitating factors that have combined to render citizen participation generally unattainable. Moreover, because decentralisation has tended to be a top-down approach, participation has largely been seen as a government obligation rather than as a people-driven process.

Lack of both financial and human resources have compounded the situation. Districts have consistently lacked sufficient financial resources to run decentralised functions because of a tax base, which is so narrow that revenue to districts is basically limited to graduated personal tax and grants from the Central Government.

In spite of the existence of the above shortcomings, democratic decentralisation remains the only viable answer in the quest for good governance, active local government and an empowered local population.

This study analyses the process of devolution in Uganda with the aim of identifying the underlying constraints that continue to impinge on it, and proposing ways and means of ameliorating them. Using Hoima district local government as a case study and results from the national service delivery survey conducted by the Uganda Ministry of Public Service in the year 2000, the study highlights most of these constraints, prominent among which are poor service delivery, lack of community participation, inadequate financial and human resources, a narrow local tax base, a weak civil society, and underscores the need to ameliorate them if devolution is to attain the anticipated results.

The first part of the study examines some of the theories, concepts and views that underpin the policy of decentralisation and sets the pace for its contextualisation.

The second part looks at the deeper process of decentralisation by analyzing the structures and institutionalization of local government in Uganda and highlighting critical issues that are pertinent in local government management and development. The study argues that while enormous goodwill exists on the part of the national political leadership, devolution in Uganda and local government development generally are still beset by a range of factors that include weaknesses within the institutional structures mandated to actualize the policy. Centric tendencies are still

pervasive with the unfortunate results of stalling the pace of transformation especially in the financial sector.

The third part dwells on the research methodology used, the nature and extent of data collected, the sampling techniques applied and how these affected the outcome of the study. This part also highlights the findings of the study, which are discussed and the causative factors analyzed.

The fourth and last part focuses mainly on recommendations arising out of the conclusions, with particular emphasis on key areas that require urgent action. It also identifies areas for further research and suggests how such research would assist in expanding the scope and understanding of the subject under study.

This study cautions against the tendency to romanticise devolution as the new-found solution for past and current institutional and socio-economic distortions and argues that devolution itself can make state institutions more responsive to the needs of the communities, but only if it allows local people to hold public servants accountable and ensures their participation in the development process.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

We live in an era in which virtually all political men claim they are for the economic development of their own country and the world. Yet we know that the reality is that over the past few centuries a few countries have developed far more rapidly than the rest of the world, and that, at present by a host of indicators, the economic gap between the more and the less developed countries seems to be increasing rather than narrowing despite the presumed efforts of multitudes of groups and governments (**Wallerstein**, 1971:277)¹. The need to circumvent the above trend has led to numerous calls for reappraisal and review of the role and nature of the state in the developmental sphere, especially in less-developed countries. The undercurrents of these phenomena have necessitated a new thinking about the state and its developmental role and democratic nature. In reconstructing the theoretical inquiry the question has been; what role should the central government play in shaping people's daily lives and to what extent should the people be empowered to determine their own destiny? The recognition of this theoretical dichotomy is producing different responses and results (**Sabiti-Makara**, 1998:31). More significant is the emerging consensus among scholars and developmental analysts that the top-down method hitherto employed by the so-called developmental state, on its own can no longer fulfil its intended goals (**Sabiti-Makara**, 1998:31). The current trend of thought is therefore refocusing on a bottom-up approach to questions of local government, democratisation and development. **Wallis** (1989:124) sets the tone:

The argument for local government, however, has an ethical element as well, and is linked to questions of human rights and democracy. There is a

¹ Paper presented at a special session on Sociology in the second Development Decade, 7th World Congress of Sociology. Varna, Bulgaria, 15 September 1970.

widely accepted notion that people should have the opportunity to participate in public affairs, especially where they are directly affected by whatever decisions are made and implemented. Thus, the stifling of local participation can be condemned from an ethical, as well as a pragmatic standpoint.

This study examines the concepts of devolution, empowerment and local government in Uganda using of one of the district local governments as a case study. Specifically, focus is put on the centre-local relations of the state by examining more importantly how the interface between the centre and the local loci of power has conditioned the evolution, organisation, activity and sustenance of the civil society, if at all, as well as the promotion of good governance through decentralisation and democratisation. Further more, emphasis is directed in a more critical way at intra-local government relations by examining how the relationship between higher and lower tiers of local government have nurtured, or inhibited the blossoming of participation and empowerment as the epitome of devolution.

1.2 Background to and Rationale for the Study

Up until recently, the trends of most newly-established states, at least in Africa, initially concentrated on a strong central authority (**Monteiro, 1993:12**). The political and bureaucratic elite were mostly made up of managers trained in the School of nationalism and their first priority upon attainment of independence was to take over the institutions that had been externally managed and identify these with national aspirations and the development of a national conscience (**Monteiro, 1993:12**). A number of other factors supported this strong centralising force, and these included:

- The perception that development objectives could be achieved more quickly through central leadership;
- A progressive transfer of competent managers from the local to the central level;
- Intervention by the central government in local decision-making in order to produce good results;

- The importance given to the state in contemporary international organisation; and
- External dependence of local institutions on the central budget as well as inadequate attention paid by the central administration to the building up of local managerial capacities.

This centripetal bias of development dominated the ideological mindset of the post-independence Uganda leadership and was subsequently to be instrumental in the configuration of the country's political landscape in the later years. **Kabwegyere** (2000:13-14) attests to this reality when he recalls how the 1962 Independence Constitution that had devolved significant powers to local authorities and granted them sufficient revenue to enable them deliver services efficiently, was abrogated and replaced with the 1967 Republican Constitution, whose effects were practically the reverse. The latter ushered in the 1967 Local Administrations Act that centralised powers and severely constrained local authorities (**Kabwegyere**, 2000:14). Between 1967 and 1970 local governance deteriorated rapidly as local administration political offices became appointive. **Lubanga** (1998:49) notes that without direct accountability to the electorate for efficient and effective provision of services, the discipline of local government councils degenerated and so did the services. With the loss of legitimacy by the local political leadership, enforcement of by-laws became ineffective while self-help and community development projects ground to a halt leading to general decay of the socio-economic infrastructure (**Lubanga**, 1998:50).

The Amin² regime (1971-1979), which replaced the first Obote government, dissolved District and Municipal Councils in 1971, suspended the constitution, abolished Parliament and proceeded to rule by decree. In 1973, Amin re-organised local administration into ten provinces headed by governors appointed by himself and largely drawn from the army. District

² General Idi Amin was commander of the army when he overthrew the first post-independence government of Milton Obote in 1971. He presided over one of Africa's bloodiest and most autocratic regime, and was deposed in 1979 by a force of Tanzania troops and Uganda exiles.

Commissioners largely drawn from the traditional civil service headed the districts, while counties, sub-counties, parishes and sub-parishes were headed by paramilitary chiefs who had undergone specific military training to reorient their thinking towards the military. During the military regime, directives flowed from the military government to all levels of local governance. In his analysis of the situation, **Nsibambi** (1998:14) observes that during this period, the state was so authoritarian that for all practical purposes civil society had ceased to exist. The second Obote³ government, whose tenure lasted five years between 1980 and 1985, did not make any effort to revive democratic local governance. Instead the regime set out to monopolise the control and distribution of resources at both the local and national levels, partly to acquire a decisive capacity to starve opponents into submission and partly to reward proven party functionaries and loyalists. To paraphrase **Nsibambi** (1998:15), the main characteristics of the relationship between local administrations and central government before 1986 reflect a pathetic picture of local governments that had little power and impact on the population and this was exemplified by the following fact:-

- The Minister of Local Government had to approve all budgets of local governments councils;
- The Ministry of Local Government had to approve the local government councils' by-laws and had power to revoke them if need arose;
- Immediate accountability for transferred resources was to the Minister of Local Government and not to the local people;
- The Minister of Local Government had power to terminate the mandate of local councillors and to dissolve local government councils where and when the need arose and;

³ After the overthrow of Amin, Milton Obote was returned to power in 1980 and ruled Uganda up to 1985 when he was militarily overthrown by General Tito Okello.

- Local government councils had little power over their employees as even the lowest-ranking employee in local government was appointed by the President.

Nsibambi (1998:12) further observes that the cumulative effect of over-centralisation was a weak civil society that could not check the excessive powers of the state nor enforce accountability of public officials. The state and its institutions continued to dominate and infiltrate the civil society and this not only led to lack of democracy, but also incapacitated the emergence of organisations to champion and articulate citizen interests at the local level (**Nsibambi**, 1998:12).

Another effect of over-centralisation that **Kabwegere** (2000:74) highlights was the emergence of a dependence syndrome whereby citizens had always looked to the state as the provider of everything.

This background forms the basis for Uganda's adoption of devolution as the bedrock of its decentralisation strategy which, according to **Bidandi Ssali** (1993:29-30), was driven by five main motives enumerated below:

- To develop, broaden and deepen political and administrative competence in the management of public affairs by transferring real power to local governments and reducing the workload on remote and under-resourced central government officials;
- To free managers in local governments from constraints of central authorities and as a long-term goal allow them to develop organisational structures that are tailored to local circumstances;
- To promote good governance by bringing political and administrative control over services to the point where they are actually delivered, thereby improving accountability, effectiveness and promoting a sense of people's ownership of programmes and projects executed in their local governments;

- To improve financial accountability and responsible use of resources by establishing a clear link between the payment of taxes and the provision of services they finance and finally;
- To improve the capacity of local councils to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituents.

While this study appreciates the extent of Uganda's devolution of authority to various tiers of local government, the level of empowerment of the local population through democratisation, participation, accountability, responsibility, efficiency and effective use of resources is still a matter of serious debate, given that the best outcome of decentralisation for any people ought to be their political, economic and managerial empowerment. The sharing of functions under the 1995 Constitution and the Local Governments Act, 1997 requires that line Ministries should focus on setting broad policies, legislation and standards for public programmes leaving the determination and implementation of local policies and the delivery of services to local councils. In true devolution, local actors should progressively take the lead in service delivery, while central government agencies and external partners back their efforts to assume greater responsibility for their own development (**Bidandi-Ssali**, 2001:5). This is one of the fundamental challenges introduced by devolution because it implies a loss of certain powers previously held by the ministries. It also brings in the reality of comprehending inter-governmental relations within the principle of non-subordination.

The principle of non-subordination has however been negated by the fact that, although in the past five years line ministries have put in place sector strategies, and in particular sector wide approaches (SWAPS), these programmes have tended to promote vertical reporting and accountability arrangements which inadvertently encourage centralisation and weaken accountability towards local government institutions (**Bidandi-Ssali**, 2001:5). Despite various sensitisation efforts that have been made to inform key stakeholders, notably the elected councillors, central and local

government staff and the local population generally, most civic groups do not have a sufficient understanding of decentralisation and local governance processes, while key local staff are new and lack basic skills (**Bidandi-Ssali**, 2001:5). The sequencing and design of systems and procedures has so far concentrated on the district, while a more detailed specification of guides, taking into account the capacities of lower local councils is yet to be developed. Another significant discrepancy in Uganda's decentralisation implementation process is that financial decentralisation has lagged behind political and personnel decentralisation (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2002:103). Although a host of service delivery responsibilities have been devolved to local governments by law, and although former central government employees have been ceded to local governments under the separate personnel systems, the implied expenditure has not been accompanied by matching grants from the Centre.⁴ As local governments have repeatedly noted, over 70 per cent of the development budget is still handled by the Centre instead of local governments that are mandated to implement devolution (**Kiwanuka-Musisi**, 1999:9).

There continues to be a visible absence of defined career paths for devolved personnel, while low local revenue collection, slow absorption rate of resources and delayed accountabilities, misunderstandings of the roles of councillors and technical staff, and misunderstandings between different councils about their roles are some of the practical problems that still jeopardise the decentralisation process in Uganda.

Matters are further complicated by the fact that the development planning process is still lopsided and haphazardly done. Given that, both the central government (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development) and district local governments are all planning levels, a new dichotomy in the national planning process has now emerged, with the overall effect of compromising efficiency and focus in the entire process. In principle,

⁴ Approximately 25,000 officials formerly employed by the central government were automatically transferred to local governments as a result of decentralisation.

planning should start at village level and move upwards. Village development plans are incorporated into parish development plans, which are in turn incorporated into sub-county plans, which are themselves incorporated into district development plans. Parish development plans in urban areas are incorporated into division plans, which are then incorporated into municipal or city plans. The requirement is that an independent National Planning Authority (NPA) should incorporate the district/city plans into a single national development plan in order to complete the 'bottom-up' planning process. The LGA (1997), requires higher local governments to mentor and provide assistance to lower ones to enable them carry out their mandated functions, including development planning. To that end, District Planning Units (DPUs) were set up to facilitate the planning process at district level and to assist sub-county and division local governments as well. However, most DPUs have limited capacity to do the work effectively due to both inadequate financial resources, and lack of comprehensive, timely and accurate data (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, (2002:104). It is these, and other capacity-related problems, that render a research project like this all the more necessary.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is underpinned by the following research questions:

- What has been the role of major stakeholders notably the Central and Local Government Officials, Politicians, Civic, NGO and Community Leaders in the entire decentralisation process?
- Have the broad aims and objectives of decentralisation through devolution and empowerment been achieved in Hoima District Local Government?
- How can successful decentralisation also ensure successful socio-economic development?
- What is the visible impact on the civil society resulting from the decentralisation process, and how relevant are these in the enhancement of civic competence and promotion of community-

based development initiatives that are vital for the consolidation of the process of local government democratisation?

- What are some of the major impediments/obstacles to the decentralisation process, and how will they be overcome?
- Are there in-built structures within the process of decentralisation, or the existing legislation sufficient to resolve obstacles encountered on the way, or will recourse to external solutions be inevitable?

1.4 Focus of the Study

This study basically focuses on the operation of the local government system in Uganda within the broad framework of devolution and empowerment at the various levels of participation. Using Hoima District Local Government as a case study, and the twelve-year life span of the policy as the point of departure, the study analyses the process of devolution with a view to establishing whether or not decentralisation has increased the efficiency of the central and local governments and if the latter are now empowered with the capacity to mobilise and secure adequate resources to carry on their new load of work; secondly whether local councils have political and administrative control over services delivered in their areas of jurisdiction and if local ownership of programmes has been attained; thirdly whether local governments have eventually developed organisational structures tailored to local circumstances and if decentralisation has now increased participation of local people, especially women and other interest groups; and finally whether decentralisation has increased the capacity of local councils for self-reliance and if local councils now have the capacity to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services.

The study covers all the 11 sub-counties of Hoima District, one of the 56 district local governments under the current local government system.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study are:

- To critically examine the historical development of the decentralisation process in Uganda, in the context of empowerment and strong local governance.
- To evaluate the impact of the decentralisation policy and process within the broad framework of the need for improved service delivery, good governance and strong civil society, and using Hoima District Local Government as a reference point, to assess the extent to which the policy has been able to strengthen human and institutional capacities of local councils, thereby enabling them to meet internal challenges and avert the failures of decentralisation.
- To identify the shortcomings of the decentralisation process using Hoima District Local Government as a case study and propose a viable political and management discourse for sustainable local governance.
- To draw on the lessons of decentralisation in order to address the challenges facing local governments in Uganda and, more particularly, Hoima District Local Government.

1.6 Research Methodology

Along the phenomenological paradigm that is used in its design and general framework, the study also adopts the methodological triangulation approach by combining both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of data collection in varying degrees.

The critical incident technique is used to assist in eliciting data, especially during personal in-depth interviews, while a positivist approach is used to conduct structured interviews. The critical incident technique is a procedure for gathering certain important facts concerning behaviour and events in defined situations, and is renowned for its flexible principles which can be modified and adopted according to circumstances.

The research instruments used are of two categories, namely the interview guide to be administered to key informants, namely the local council politicians and managers (civil servants) at various levels, and the interview schedule for structured interviews to be administered to civic and opinion leaders.

1.6.1 Primary Data

The study draws on two sources of primary data. The first source is in the form of findings of the research conducted in Hoima District on the relevance and effectiveness of the local government system in Uganda in relation to the goals of devolution, empowerment, and general level of service delivery.

The second source of primary data is in the form of findings of the Uganda national service delivery survey (NSDS) conducted by the Ministry of Public Service in August 2000, with the aim of collecting information on perceptions of Ugandans regarding the quantity and quality of services delivered by government in the areas of crime prevention and delivery of justice, good governance, education, health services, water and sanitation, and agricultural extension services.

1.6.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is obtained from various sources of literature connected with the research topic. Stakeholder institutions relevant to the process of devolution constitute fundamental sources in this regard and these include the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; the Local Government Finance Commission; the Population Secretariat; the Uganda Bureau of Statistics; and biannual status reports from the Decentralisation Secretariat, Ministry of Local Government, on the implementation of the decentralisation programme. Some additional key data is also obtained from district local governments, such as Kibaale, Kabarole, and Kampala City Council, besides minutes and reports from various fora and institutions within Hoima District Local Government.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Due to the domination of the phenomenological paradigm in the process of data collection and analysis, some shortcomings of this paradigm could not be avoided. For example because the study was taking place in a natural setting i.e, in the field, the researcher had to contend with the effects of various socio-cultural stereotypes that would naturally impinge on the attitudes of respondents in such an environment.

The phenomena under study also posed its own set of problems. Decentralisation and good governance being fairly recent phenomena on the Ugandan political landscape meant that most of the responses from respondents were heavily subjective in the sense that they depended on individualistic experiences and perspectives which, besides spanning over a shorter period, could be different from the real situation on the ground. Such a trend could negatively affect the level of reliability of the research findings.

The study was carried out in an environment of limited financial resources and this grossly affected the size of the sample. It would never have been possible to guarantee the attendance of participants without an undertaking by the researcher to compensate them for their time and resources spent in order to be available for the interviews. The need for funds therefore to pay out transport and lunch refund to respondents meant that the sample size had to be kept at the minimum.

1.8 Clarification of abbreviations and terms

1.8.1 Meaning of Abbreviations

AG	Auditor General
ASSEFA	Association of Sarva Seva Farms
CBO	Community- Based Organisation
CPC	Constitutional Planning Committee
DENIVA	Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations

DLC	District Local Council
DPU	District Planning Unit
DS	Decentralisation Secretariat
DSC	District Service Commission
DTB	District Tender Board
DTPC	District Technical Planning Committee
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GOU	Government of Uganda
GPT	Graduated Personal Tax
IFAD	International Fund For Agricultural Development
IGG	Inspector General of Government
KCC	Kampala City Council
LC	Local Council
LGA	Local Governments Act of 1997
LGDP	Local Government Development Programme
LGFC	Local Government Finance Commission
LGPAC	Local Government Public Accounts Committee
LGSC	Local Government Service Commission
LOGOSP	Local Government Support Project
MLGH	(Zambia) Ministry of Local Government and Housing
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National Planning Authority
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NSDS	National Service Delivery Survey
ODA	Overseas Development Agency

PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PFTA	(Zambia) Provincial Finance Training Advisor
PLGO	(Zambia) Provincial Local Government Officer
PMA	Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture
PMTA	(Zambia) Provincial Management Training Advisor
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPA	Priority Programme Areas
PSC	Public Service Commission
RC	Resistance Council
SCTPC	Sub-County Technical Planning Committee
SWAPS	Sector Wide Approaches
ULGS	Unified Local Government Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United National International Children's Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar

1.8.2 Clarification of Terms

ASSEFA – Association of Sarva Seva Farms is a Hindu expression that refers to movements started by followers of Mahatma Gandhi with the aim of developing the lands donated for the use of India's millions of the landless through the Bhoodan or land gift movement.

BHOODAN – Literally means a land gift or donation. As it evolved, India's caste system generated socio-economic strata within the population,

resulting in a small percentage of rich high-caste landowners amid a sea of poor low-caste landless people. Bhoodans are donations of land by individual rich landowners to the landless in order to improve the quality of the latter's lives.

CCFD FRANCE – An International Non-Governmental Donor Organization from France.

DECENTRALIZATION – Is defined from an administrative perspective as the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and the raising and allocation of resources from the Central Government and its agencies to field units of governmental agencies, subordinate units or levels of government, semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, area-wide regional or functional authorities, or non-governmental private or voluntary organizations. Decentralization is of four major categories namely: Deconcentration; Delegation; Privatisation; and Devolution.

Deconcentration is the handing over of some administrative authority or responsibility to lower levels within Central Government ministries and agencies – a shifting of workload from Centrally located officials to staff or offices outside the national capital;

Delegation is the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to organizations outside the regular bureaucratic structure. It implies that a sovereign authority transfers to an agent specified functions and duties which the agent has broad discretion to carry out;

Privatisation is a process through which governments have divested themselves of responsibility for functions either by transferring them to voluntary organizations or by allowing them to be performed by private enterprises; and

Devolution is the creation and strengthening, financially and legally, of sub-national units of government, whose activities are substantially outside the direct control of the Central Government. In this thesis, the term decentralization denotes devolution and the two are used interchangeably.

DEMOCRATISATION – Is defined as a process of putting in place systems, structures and practices of government which answer the following: freedoms (of opinion, association, press and worship), periodic free and fair elections of national and local leaders, decent living standards for every member of society and accountable administration.

GRAM SABHA – A Hindu terminology used to refer to Local Council(s) that handle local affairs and disputes and plans other schemes to improve the Village, including small Agro-based Industries to provide employment and increase incomes.

GRAM SWARAJ – A Hindu terminology used to refer to village self-rule. It is a form of empowerment whereby the rural poor collectively participate in schemes to improve their villages, increase their incomes and in so doing, create self-reliant communities.

GRAMDAN VILLAGES – A Hindu terminology used to refer to areas where land has been donated collectively by landowners.

ICCO HOLLAND – An International Non-Governmental Donor Organization from the Netherlands.

INTER PARES CANADA – An International Non-Governmental Donor Organization from Canada.

MSP ITALY – Movimento Sviluppo e pace. An International Non-Governmental Donor Organization from Italy.

SARVODAYA – A Hindu term which means “the welfare of all”.

1.9 Chapterisation Summary

The study is organised in seven chapters. Chapter one conveys the general introductory background. It narrates the genesis of local governance in Uganda against the backdrop of the country's turbulent

political history. Secondly, it highlights some of the initiatives towards democratic decentralisation that were inherited from the colonial period and later negated through the centralising influence of subsequent centrist regimes of Milton Obote and Idi Amin. In particular, the chapter outlines the ambivalence and volatility that has characterised the central-local relations in much of Uganda's post-colonial era. Also included in the same chapter are a statement of the research problem, the research questions to be answered, the focus of the study and an outline of the study objectives. It concludes with a chapterisation summary.

Chapter two deals with conceptual and theoretical perspectives. It defines decentralisation and local government and outlines the conceptual framework within which both paradigms should be understood. It further defines other related concepts of good governance, democratisation and the civil society within the broad context of devolution and outlines key legislations that have been enacted to nurture and emasculate local governance in Uganda. Using analogies based on views of various writers and authorities on local government and decentralisation, the chapter outlines the trend of central-local government relations and intra-local government relations with a view to establishing the extent and nature of cooperation within the context of the principle of non-subordination.

Chapter Three deals with the general trend of Local Government in Uganda, and traces the policy right from Independence in 1962 to the present day. Among the major issues highlighted are: the history and evolution of local government, its institutional and operative aspects and the nature and extent of local government financing. Chapter Three also highlights the dilemma caused by the principal-agent problem in the delivery of services in local governments, and concludes with the emphasis on the role of gender in the empowerment process.

The research methodology is dealt with in Chapter Four which also includes detailed aspects of the study design, pre-testing of questionnaires, sampling techniques, data-gathering methods used, types of data

gathered, problems faced in data collection and how they were overcome, plus a detailed explanation of how the data collected was analysed.

The presentation of research results is done in Chapter Five under eleven broad themes as enumerated below:

1. Understanding of stakeholders responsibilities under devolution;
2. Understanding of central government roles;
3. Understanding of local government (district, sub-county) roles;
4. Attitudes towards the effectiveness of service delivery;
5. Attitudes towards community participation;
6. Knowledge of effective planning and budgeting skills;
7. Attitudes towards adequacy of local financial resources;
8. Visibility and strength of the civil society;
9. Awareness of democratic methods of work;
10. Presence of Non-Governmental Organisations and;
11. Knowledge of the existing devolution obstacles.

Chapter Six discusses the results, and finally Chapter Seven presents the main conclusions and recommendations arising out of the findings of the study. It also provides recommendations on the improvement of devolution as a policy and topics which could be covered by further research.

In summary, the Government of Uganda is pursuing a policy of deepening decentralisation as one of the ways of empowering its people. The transfer of power and resources to the local level will help to empower communities to work together to define and resolve their problems. Decentralised structures can bring the government closer to the people and has the potential for enhancing efficiency and democratic accountability (Reddy, 1999:27). The local government system is characterised by a multi-layered structure to achieve economies of scale, while its representative nature is designed to promote inclusiveness and gender-sensitive decision-making. Nevertheless, local government activities continue to be hampered by limited capacity for planning, budgeting and resource mobilisation.

1.10 Projections for the Next Chapter

Chapter two will outline the general theoretical and contextual framework within which the various terms connected with devolution and local government are conceptualised. The key concepts to be analysed will include local government democracy, democratisation, decentralisation and how these interface with good governance and the Civil Society in order to empower local people. The chapter will also highlight the role of ethics in service delivery and how public integrity is fundamental in the efficient and effective delivery of public services in local governments.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the theoretical and conceptual perspectives regarding decentralisation and empowerment through local government. An initially broad outlook on local governance gradually narrows down to examining key concepts of democratisation, good governance and participation including a critical analysis of some key linkages that characterise good governance, decentralisation, democratisation and the Civil Society. The theoretical context of empowerment as a concept is analysed and so too are the key factors that underpin the process of empowerment as a precursor to good governance, such as the role of NGOs. The key role played by participation in local government development is stressed and conceptual differences existing between participation and involvement highlighted. The chapter ends with an analysis of the debilitating role of local elites and the extent to which their power and influence undermine the organisational and operative capacities of local communities. It also highlights the dangers posed by corruption, both political and bureaucratic, to local government development and emphasises the importance of public integrity on the part of actors and stakeholders in local government to ensure effective utilisation of resources in the delivery of services to the community.

2.2 The Case for Local Government

Local governance is a system or level of government deliberately created to bring government to the local population as well as give its members a sense of involvement in the political processes that control their daily lives (Reddy, 1999:9). The basic economic argument for local government, however, rests on the inherent inability of central governments to deliver many public services efficiently (Bird, 1990:279). Since people have different preferences for public services-some may be more concerned with

good roads and others with good schools-and since many services, including roads and schools, are consumed in a spatially-differentiated pattern, the most efficient allocation of public sector resources can in principle be secured only if such services are provided and paid for by governments responsible to those most directly affected (**Tiebout**, 1956:47). Economic analysis, like democratic theory, thus provides a rationale for the establishment of local governments that are responsible to the wishes of their citizens instead of being simply the instruments of central planners. Local self-government and decentralisation can support the process of democratic consolidation by, among other things, improving the relationship between the government and the governed, changing the relationships between different social groups from confrontation to cooperation, supporting the formation of democratic institutions, particularly political parties, and by enhancing development, generally (**Schmidt**, 1997:43). Although recent debates about the role, form and function of local government have tended to focus on local authorities as mechanisms for delivering services, it has been argued for some years now that while local government does offer a range of ways of providing good quality services, it is about much more than service delivery (**Hambleton**, 1988:125; **Hambleton & Hoggett**, 1990:18). If local government stands for a notion of community, if it is concerned to foster a vigorous civic culture and to improve the quality of life in the broadest sense, then attention must focus on the welfare of the local polity. Councillors and officers need to devote energy, time and resources to strategies designed to improve the quality of government, as well as the quality of services (**Hambleton & Hoggett**, 1990:22).

This is because local government has a crucial role to play in protecting political liberties. By supporting political diversity especially in situations of political pluralism it is able to moderate a tendency towards autocracy which is itself destructive of good government. **Hambleton & Hoggett** argue that local government contributes enormously to political education because it provides a setting in which democratic habits are acquired, practised and advanced. They further observe that it is a central means by which collective goals are set and, if it works well, it enables the views and

concerns of citizens and communities to be injected into the process of local policy-making. They conclude that in view of all these reasons the quality of local government is just as important as the quality of service delivery. This is an argument that extends well beyond the local level because local democracy contributes directly to the health of the national polity and any valid theory of local government cannot be built on management theory alone, but must bear in mind the broad political dispensation.

2.3 Defining Local Government

According to the **International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Volume 9** (1968:451), local government may be loosely defined as a public organisation authorised to decide and administer a limited range of public policies within a relatively small territory which is a sub-division of a regional or national government. Local government is at the bottom of a pyramid of governmental institutions, with the national government at the top and intermediate governments, states, regions or provinces occupying the middle range. Normally, local government has general jurisdiction and is not confined to the performance of one specific function or service. This simple definition obscures wide variations in local government systems and operational patterns, and should be supplemented by a system of classification for both description and analysis. **Chandler** (1993:3) uses the term, local government, to refer to political institutions that are subject to directly-elected policy makers. According to him local government is distinguishable from federal government in that, in a federal system, the Constitution of the State divides power so as to prevent either the federal or state governments eroding each other's powers. He adds that local governments, be they small or large, are established by national or federal polities that retain the right to regulate through legislation the power and functions of their subordinate local units. On his part, **Meyer** (1978:10) defines local government as, 'local democratic units within the democratic system which are subordinate members of the government vested with prescribed, controlled governmental powers and sources of income to render specific local services and to control and regulate the geographic,

social and economic development of defined local areas.' **Reddy** (1999:10) extenuates the above definitions further by identifying five key characteristics of local government. Firstly, locality, local government must have relevance for a particular geographical area. Secondly, legal personality, the local government system owes its existence to the law. Powers should be clearly defined in laws based on relevant clauses of the country's Constitution. Thirdly, autonomy, the ability to make binding decisions and policy choices within a legally stipulated framework and to allocate resources and provide services other than those of the central government. Fourthly, governmental power, the authority to carry out formal governmental functions, notably coercive-revenue raising, staff decisions, implementation of binding by-laws and allocation of resources. Finally, participation and representation, these would be promoted by local government because those making decisions or directing its affairs are either elected or appointed from the community it serves.

Several other important theories on the nature of local government and the state, within a broader framework of democracy and democratisation, have been developed. Several neo-Marxist writers such as **Castells** (1977:69) and **Saunders** (1981:34) have developed important and challenging theories on the nature of the state, based largely on analyses of urban politics. They argue that local government plays an important role within the capitalist state by helping to provide the conditions necessary for the maintenance of a workforce sufficiently healthy and well educated to keep the wheels of industry in motion. In contrast, public choice theorists such as **Peterson** (1981:88) have constructed models of urban development and decision-making that depict the process as a product of economic self-interest. Several writers **Mahwood** (1993:4), **Meenakshisundaram** (1994:11), **Nzouankeu** (1994:213), Mushi (1992: 28-30) and Olowu (1995:5) to mention but a few, believe that there is still a need for some working definition of the paradigm of local government in developing countries which would distinguish it from bodies which are representative but have only minimal or specialised responsibility. Given the assumption that a local government has its own budget and a separate legal existence,

with authority granted to it by the central government to allocate substantial material resources on a range of different functions, the definitions of local government by **Mahwood** (1993:4) and **Meyer** (1978:10) will be adopted in this thesis with some modification to the extent that local government should see its power not as an end in itself, but as a resource to be shared and used in conjunction with groups and social movements in civil society (**Katiza**, 1995:107).

2.4 Local Government Democracy

Local government, or decentralised decision-making and management, is the level of democracy that is closest to the people and allows the local populace to actively participate in affairs which affect them directly. Local governments can regulate matters that pertain to their local citizenry, within the framework set by the law, using their own knowledge and local expertise and consulting a democratically-elected local representative body. **Reddy & Sabelo** (1997:573-575) have identified five ingredients which they describe as the hallmarks of classical representative local government democracy as practiced in many countries. The first is popular consultation; the implication here is that government requires the consent of the citizens whose rights it is bound to respect and protect. The dignity of the individual is best manifested in the determination and control of the own affairs. Therefore that form of government which best projects the dignity of the individual, protects and fosters it, is what **Reddy & Sabelo** (1997:573) propose to call democracy. In a nutshell, democracy cannot be said to exist where the majority of the people in a political system are denied a say in the process of governance. There must be a constant dialogue between the governors and governed at all times. Only then can peoples' views and aspirations be ascertained and taken into account in the policy-making process.

The second is popular participation, implying that individual full participation in making societal choices and decisions is a natural outcome of the endowment of individual dignity because it contributes to individual self-development. Responsibility for the governing of one's own conduct

develops one's dignity. In particular, full individual participation within the local government context contributes to the creation of community solidarity because everyone feels involved in what is going on relative to their welfare. **Reddy & Sabelo** (1997:574) add further, that individual full participation boils down to popular participation where the largest proportion of the citizenry is invited and expected to express their wishes on issues of governance. In this regard, on every issue, the views of the majority should prevail. This popular participation may be achieved through meetings in small and large communities, through ratepayers association, neighbourhood groups, and other social and political associations (**Reddy & Sabelo**, 1997:574).

Consequently, public or popular participation in decision-making is an imperative tenet for democratic local governments (**Gildenhuys et.al.**, 1991:124). However, in order not to deny the majority its right of self-assertion, it is also a democratic imperative that while the majority would have its way, the minority must also have its say. In return the minority must accept the majority decision, once that decision has been freely arrived at.

The third is competition, whereby people with varying political views or ideological standpoints must be allowed to articulate these views and canvass support for them on the platform of the political party of their choice. It is absurd to talk of democracy in a situation where individuals with particular political interests or views are denied the opportunity to compete for popular support as long as such views and interests are not inimical to the survival of the entire political community. Within the context of democracy therefore, elections are viewed as an important vehicle for the free exchange of views in which the voter can make a choice.

The fourth is freedom of expression. According to **Reddy & Sabelo** (1997:575), another consequence of the right to self-determination and popular participation is the necessity for freedom of expression. Individuals must be free to express themselves on those issues of the day, as they

cannot fully influence the course of events, especially governmental policies, without this freedom. Indeed there is no way to ascertain the popular will if the individual citizen is not free to express his or her opinion. The availability of wide-ranging views provides vital information and assist in that popular control of government by creating a well informed citizenry.

The fifth is equality. The argument of equality is premised on the concept of creation, that since all men are created equal, they should also be treated equally before the law, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, economic, class or social stratification. Equality before the law naturally extends to political equality, as all citizens should have equal access to political power and influence in shaping policy. **Ayoade Mni et.al.** (1992:11-12) states that in modern times the notion of equality has been expanded to include equality of opportunity in many important aspects of life. In that respect, equality aims at equality of opportunity in education, employment and social justice for the oppressed, neglected and disadvantaged. This expansion of the notion of equality is to ensure that each person has an equal opportunity to develop his/her naturally endowed potential to maximum capacity.

In concluding on this point, it is vital to highlight one of the crucial factors that impinge greatly on local governments, and in particular the extent to which the same local governments are able to act as vehicles of transformation at the periphery. This factor is ideology. As **Wallis** (1989:126) observes, ideologies can have implications for the kinds of institutions a regime decides to create to facilitate local participation. In Uganda for example, the local government structure based on the Local Council (LC) system has been heavily influenced by the non-partisan, broad-based⁵ ideology of the NRM Government, whereby since 1986, in contrast to the views of **Reddy & Sabelo** (1997:575), political parties have

⁵ On assuming power in January 1986 the NRM formed a broad-based government whereby various members from the broad spectrum of society, including political party activists were given ministerial posts in the new government. The position remained virtually unchanged up to the 1996 general elections. There has since been a persistent purging of pro-pluralism elements leaving only hard-core believers in the monolithic political orientation.

had absolutely no role to play. The dilemma often posed in such cases is that governments will want strong local participation which is supportive of their particular ideological standpoints, but may become uneasy if these grass-roots become focal points for dispute and confrontation with the centre (Wallis, 1989:126). This is also true for Uganda where in spite of an all-embracing local council system, the government has for long been mistrustful of local councils in the northern part of the country, often accusing them of rebel collaboration ostensibly on the grounds of the region's perceived disposition as a bulwark of support for ousted political groups opposed to the NRM Government. It is however still premature at this stage to determine whether or not the absence of political pluralism in Uganda has an important bearing on the vibrancy and activism of local governments especially within the context of bottom-up policy formulation and decision-making. Such a position will emerge in chapter six when research findings arising out of the case study in Hoima district local government are discussed.

2.5 Democratisation

Nsibambi (1998:7) describes democratisation as a process of putting in place systems, structures and practices of government which answer the following: freedoms (of opinion, association, press and worship), periodic free and fair elections of national and local leaders, decent living standards for every member of society and accountable administration. He further posits that democratisation transforms political and administrative institutions as well as behaviour directing them towards the empowerment of people to participate effectively in shaping their economic, political and cultural well-being.

According to **Rueschemeyer et.al.** (1992:63-68), democracy is above all a matter of power; democratisation accordingly must involve a substantial increase in political equality. Consequently, the possibility of democracy is a function of power relations and they advance three salient dimensions to these relations: the balance of power between different social classes; the structure, strength and autonomy of the state apparatus and its interrelation

with the civil society; and thirdly, the impact on the first two dimensions of trans-national power relations.

Still more famous is **Moore's** (1993:418) emphasis on the role of the bourgeoisie as the bearers of the democratic project, 'no bourgeois, no democracy'. In this respect he disagrees fundamentally with the argument propounded by **Rueschemeyer et.al.** who in setting out their proposed theoretical framework suggest that rather than the bourgeoisie, which may fear threats to its interests posed by an enfranchised working class, it is the working classes themselves who have most to gain and are thus the most likely agents of democratisation. Secondly, **Rueschemeyer et.al.** maintain that the consolidation of state power is an essential pre-requisite to democracy. They conceptualise this largely in terms of state autonomy from social forces and they stress the need to operate with a differentiated conception of society. In this regard, **Rueschemeyer et.al.** completely part company with **Nsibambi** (1998:7), **Reddy** (1999:39), **Reddy & Sabelo** (1997:577), and **Olowu** (1995:5) all of whom look at dispersal of state power to local governments through decentralisation as a key ingredient and prerequisite to democratisation.

Beetham (1993:56-57) in a summary of views that he terms as the 'liberal democratic conjunction', identifies four major benchmarks that are essential for the democratisation process to take root and blossom. He outlines these as:

- The securing of the freedom of expression, movement and association as individual rights subject to special legal or constitution protection. He argues that while not all individual rights are democratic rights, without access to information to persuade others as well as to vote, democracy would be meaningless. Democratic rights in other words are those individual rights which are necessary to serve popular control over the process of collective decision-making on an on-going basis, and which need protection especially when their exercise involve opinions or actions that are unpopular either with government or society at large.

- The institutional separation of powers between the executive, legislature and judiciary without which the idea of the rule of law, and all that it embraces such as the protection of individual rights, the guaranteeing of free and fair trial, the subordination of state officials to the rule of law and the availability of legal redress against mal-administration or abuse of office, would be illusory.
- The existence of a representative assembly, elected on a geographical basis through universal adult suffrage, with powers to approve all taxation and legislation and to scrutinize the actions of the executive. In comparison with the direct assembly of all citizens, the representative assembly is justifiable as the most effective device for reconciling the requirements of popular control and political equity with the exigencies of time and the conditions of the modern territorial state.
- The existence of good will and knowledge among the population. This view is grounded in the epistemological premise that the only criterion for the public good is what the people, freely organised, will choose and not what some expert or prophet decrees on the basis of superior knowledge. In this regard, the anti-paternalistic view of democracy is identical with that of liberalism and both rest on the same epistemological foundations (**Beetham**, 1993: 56-57).

Leeds (1981: 39) also identifies four conditions necessary for a democracy, namely tolerance, widespread participation, political consensus and diverse institutions which he goes on to enumerate as universal adult suffrage, a legislature, the executive and an independent judiciary. He observes that for a democracy to be consolidated, the country should not be too large or populous, there should be a wide distribution of wealth and property ownership, and the electorate should be well informed.

2.5.1 Multi-Party Democracy: Opportunities, Constraints and Prospects

According to **Diamond et al** (1989:11), multi-party democracy or political pluralism denotes a system of government that meets three essential conditions. The first is competition. There should be meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organised groups, especially political parties, for all effective positions of governmental power. The second is political participation. There should be a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies through regular and fair elections in a way that does not exclude any social group. The third and last is the existence of civil and political liberties. There should be a high level of civil and political liberties, such as the freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom to form and join organisations such as political parties so as to promote political competition. **Barya** (2000:25) summarises the functions of political parties as follows:

- **Aggregation of different interests into common realisable goals**

In modern societies it is not possible for every individual to analyse and comprehend society on his or her own and to act and effect change. Political parties keep people informed of developments, changes and issues and pinpoint the wrongs that tend to be committed by the party in government. In essence political parties play an educative and conscientising role. Individuals cannot perform this role nor can a single political organisation check itself.

- **Political parties provide choice to the electorate**

Democracy cannot exist without a free choice by the citizens between several different and alternative political programmes presented to them. In other words, democracy is not a choice between different individuals but rather what they represent in terms of ideology, interests and programmes. Without the opposition, any failing, repressive, non-developmental or undesirable regime cannot be removed peacefully or democratically and this creates room for undemocratic and violent methods of changing

government to evolve. Democracy cannot be nurtured under such circumstances.

- ***Political parties provide ideological alternatives***

Since political parties provide alternatives at the level of ideology, values, programmes and leadership, they put pressure on the incumbent government to be accountable and responsive to people's interests and demands. In the process they become effective guarantors of democracy and human rights and operate as a protection against dictatorship. Without the fear of a possible loss of power to the opposition, there is no incentive for the group in power to be responsive to people's demands, needs and interests. It is the fear of losing power to a visible, organised and credible opposition that keeps any government in check, responsive and on its toes.

- ***Political parties ensure the quest for excellence***

The existence of political parties and pluralist political competition at all levels of society, central and local, ensures that each party strives to the best of its capabilities to develop programmes that appeal to the electorate. Under competitive multiparty politics, the ruling party would strive to excel so that it is re-elected. On the other hand opposition parties would do everything possible to correct past mistakes and develop credible policies that would propel them to power in the next elections. It is this kind of competition that has the potential to stimulate and accelerate development and democratisation.

2.5.2 No-Party Democracy: The case of Uganda

Advocates of the no-party democracy which is also referred to as the Movement type of democracy have consistently argued that a poor and backward country like Uganda, recovering from decades of state-sponsored violence and economic decay, cannot afford the luxury of multipartyism. **Kabwegyere** (2000: 32), one of the key proponents of this view, argues that when political parties were allowed to operate, both in the 1960s and 1980s, they were simply breeding grounds for religious, ethnic and tribal cleavages. In his view there is need for more time for the country

to restore political sanity, forge national unity, reconstruct the economy, inculcate democratic values and practices, and build viable and sustainable democratic institutions. **Wapakhabulo** (2000:80), another strong proponent of the Movement type of democracy identifies three essential elements which are pertinent to this type of democracy and any meaningful practice of democracy. According to him these are:-

Parliamentary democracy, popular democracy and a decent level of living for every Ugandan. In other words, there should be an elected parliament, elected at regular intervals and such elections must be free from corruption and manipulation of the population. In addition to this exercise, there must be people's committees at the village, parish, sub-county, county and district level.

In spite of the above justification, critics of the no-party democracy insist that it is a negation of the fundamental human right of association. They argue, and rightly so, that no-party democracy is simply a one-party dictatorship whose aim is to crowd out from the political arena views of opposing political organisations. In his vehement opposition to the Movement type of democracy, **Kasfir** (2000:5) contends that although it began as a radical and unprecedented attempt to empower ordinary Ugandans both in towns and the countryside, over the years it has been abused by the NRM government to enhance its legitimation and deepen its position of power rather than to extend the frontiers of democracy. In his view, the original good intentions have been reduced to self-perpetuation and entrenchment by the group in power.

This thesis agrees with **Kasfir** to some extent, and argues that while the Movement system has increased the scope for democratic participation through, for example, the proliferation of democratic councils in villages, sub-counties up to district level, which in itself constitutes a radical change in Uganda's politics, the presence of these institutions has not led to any further creative political applications. A close analysis will reveal that

energy comparable to that put in their formation has not been invested in teaching villagers to use their new positions to reform their own lives nor to use their councils to form their own views on national issues. The role of Parliament has tended to be fused with the activities of the Executive thus negating the principle of the separation of powers—which is a key prerequisite of any meaningful democracy. Ultimately, this has affected consolidation of the devolution process because both the centre and the periphery have been deprived of the multiple platforms necessary for initiation, synthesizing, aggregation and advocacy of alternative values and interests that are critical to the process of local government democratisation and development. A review of literature of various authors on the subject matter have highlighted the right of association through political parties, and popular participation in the decision-making process by the population as basic denominators in any process of democratic governance. In essence, the continuing absence of political pluralism in Uganda would in this regard be viewed as a major aberration in respect of a truly democratic dispensation.

2.6 Defining Decentralisation

Conyers (1983:101), like **Randinelli** (1981:137), defines decentralisation in a broad sense to refer to any transfer of the authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from the national level to any organisation or agency at the sub-national level. These include semi-autonomous public corporations, area wide or regional development authorities, non-governmental organisations and autonomous local governments. According to **Randinelli** (1981:137), the degree of political and legal power that is transferred or delegated with the authority to plan, decide or manage, depends on the form of decentralisation used and the amount of support that the central government provides to other organisational units in carrying out decentralised functions. He outlines three forms of decentralisation namely:-

- *Deconcentration*, which he defines as the shifting of workload from central government ministry headquarters to staff located in offices

outside of the national capital through a system of field administration which allows the field staff some degree of decision-making discretion that can enable them to make routine decisions and adjust the implementation of central directives to local conditions.

- *Delegation*, which he defines as the transfer of decision-making and management authority for specific functions to organisations that are only under the indirect control of central government ministries. Such organisations or agencies to which public functions are delegated tend to have semi-independent authority to perform their responsibilities and may not even be located within the regular government structure, and
- *Devolution*, which is the most extreme form of decentralisation and denotes the creation and consolidation of independent levels and units of sub-national government. Devolution implies the divestment of functions by the central government and the creation of new units of governance outside the control of central authority.

Reddy (1999:16), citing **White** (1959:23), defines decentralisation as the transference of authority, legislative, judicial or administrative from a higher level of government to a lower level. Referring to a United Nations study **Reddy** (1999:16) gives two distinct applications for the term decentralisation which they categorise as; de-concentration of decision-making authority to dependant field units of the same department or level of government, which put alternatively, implies delegation to civil servants working in the field, of power to make decisions in the execution of central government policies; and of devolution of decision-making authority, including restricted policy making power, to relatively autonomous regional or local governments or to special statutory bodies. The study refers to the former as administrative decentralisation and the latter as political decentralisation.

Besides the above two applications for the term, both **Meenakshisundaram** (1994:11) and **Kotze** (1997:25-26) introduce another two; delegation, the transferring of responsibility for specifically-defined functions to organisations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and are only indirectly controlled by the central government; and

privatisation, the passing of responsibility for functions to non-governmental organisations or private enterprises independent of the government.

According to **Nsibambi** (1998:6), decentralisation is a term that presupposes centralised and unitary states and describes a process by which powers, political, financial and managerial, are transferred from the centre to local governments (corporate bodies) giving them more autonomy and liberty to manage their local affairs within the framework of a unitary state. A successful decentralisation policy therefore must respect national unity and indivisibility as well as local diversity and autonomy (**Nsibambi**, 1998:6). Within these parameters, decentralisation should not be seen as a struggle between central and local governments but rather as a reform process geared towards redesigning the profile of the state to enable it exercise its essential functions while letting local governments complete the delivery of services to local populations effectively.

In a closely related observation, **Burki et.al.** (1999:31) argue that decentralisation is also important because it increases local influence over the centre. They insist that if decentralisation does not increase local influence over the public sector, then the principal case for decentralisation, other than political stability, vanishes. The presumption of some decentralisation advocates is that decentralisation automatically increases the influence of all strata of society. But there is an equal possibility that decentralisation simply transfers power from national to local elites, and that improved access of local elites to public resources simply increases opportunities for corruption. This fear is also echoed by **Bardhan** (1997:53) who observes that while decentralisation can be powerful for achieving development goals in ways that respond to the needs of local communities by assigning control rights to people who have the information and incentives to make decisions best suited to those needs, and who have the responsibility for the political and economic consequences of their decisions, it also has important caveats and the most important is that decentralisation can bolster the power of elites in settings with highly unequal power structures.

While in principle, decentralisation itself would be expected to increase local participation, writers on institutional economics have long observed that peoples' willingness to participate will vary according to their perception of how much impact such participation will have (**Hirschman**, 1970:62 **North**, 1990:38 **Ostrom et.al.**1993:112). Individuals who are expected to invest resources, including their own time and labour, must believe that the benefits they receive will exceed the costs of doing so. The more interest groups perceive that they can influence political decisions, the more likely they will be to mobilise (**Smith**, 1996:169). It is for this reason that **Bamberger et.al.** (1996:62) look at decentralisation as probably the most often advocated path to increased popular participation in decision-making and development. This policy, they argue, allows more people to participate in the development process while making their voice heard through the political system. Popular participation in this case may be seen either as a desirable end in itself (a basic component of democracy), or as a means of improving the management of development programmes by making them more relevant to the local needs and increasing local commitment to and involvement in them. Through popular participation government can foster economic growth and spread the benefits to those groups traditionally by-passed by economic progress. Bamberger et al. are supported in their line of thinking by former World Bank President Robert S. McNamara who noted that if governments were serious about distributing the benefits of development more equitably, then "experience shows that there is greater chance of success if institutions provide for popular participation, local leadership and decentralisation of authority" (**World Bank**, 1996:62). Hubert Allen (**World Bank**, 1996:63) was even more succinct when he said, "in all systems everything depends on people's participation, which can enable the most inept structure to succeed and cause the most admirable model to fail". In this thesis, the term "decentralisation" denotes devolution and the two are used interchangeably. Secondly, given that the system of local government in Uganda is created by the Constitution (Chapter 11), which in Article 176 (2) (a) states inter alia that,

the local government system shall be such as to ensure that the functions, powers and responsibilities are devolved and transferred from the Government to local government units in a coordinated manner,

it is postulated that the decentralised system of governance in Uganda is based on the principle of devolution, and this is also enshrined in the preamble of the Local Governments Act (1997) where the objectives of the Act are stated as the "consolidation and streamlining of the existing law on local governments in line with the Constitution to give effect to the decentralisation and devolution of functions, powers and services; and to provide for devolution at all levels of local governments to ensure good governance and democratic participation in, and control of decision making by the people".

2.7 Good Governance

A Ugandan working group coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and composed of various representatives from government ministries, NGOs, donors, the police and prisons that met to discuss ways of strengthening instruments of governance in Uganda gave the following definition and benchmarks of good governance:

Good governance is the exercise of politico-administrative and managerial authority and order, which is legitimate, accountable, transparent, democratic, efficient and equitable in resource allocation and utilisation, and responsive to the critical needs of promoting human welfare and positive transformation of society. It manifests itself through benchmarks which include: a Constitution, pillars of the state derived from the Constitution (i.e the Executive, Parliament, the Judiciary, including local councils), mechanisms of checks and balances on governments, security, good leadership, rule of law, participation by the people, freedom of expression, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, devolution of power, informed citizenry, strong civil society, protection of basic human rights, regular free and fair elections, political stability and protection of life and property.

Though generic and all-encompassing, the above definition nevertheless brings out three distinctive aspects of good governance around which the entire descriptive paraphernalia seem to revolve, and these are; constitutionalism manifesting itself through the doctrine of the separation of powers between the three pillars of the state; participation of the people in development programmes that affect their lives; and empowerment manifesting itself through devolution of power and a strong civil society.

On the other hand, **Dunn** (1996:12) looks at good governance in terms of organisational effectiveness. According to him good governance implies a high level of organisational effectiveness and does not imply the choice of a particular ideological model of state organisation. **Hyden** (1992:7-8) on his part looks at good governance as the conscious management of regime structures aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of the public realm. **Le Roy** (1992:299-300), insists that the following factors must prevail if one is to talk of good governance: legitimacy of authority, public responsiveness, public accountability, and public tolerance of other actors with a public character, information openness and public management effectiveness. He outlines six other definitions of good governance as:

- authority or administrative order which is accountable, transparent, democratic, and conforms to the rule of natural justice and established norms acceptable to society.
- a system of managing society in such a way that resources are responsibly used in a democratic and participatory manner for the maximum realisation of human potential and people's aspirations.
- legitimate, responsible and efficient management of human and material resources for the equitable and qualitative transformation of society in a suitable manner.
- a process that allows for the establishment of a workable system of managing public affairs under laws agreed upon by the community where rulers are periodically elected through universal adult suffrage and both the governors and the governed play their roles in a perceived social contract.

- the transparent, just and equitable exercise of authority by the regularly and democratically elected representatives of the people that ensures accountability, the rule of law, sustainable development, national security and improved quality of life of the people.
- a democratically established system of conducting public affairs by a society for their own welfare; it is a system that is responsive to the critical need of transforming human welfare and positive transformation of society. Such a system is characterised by adherence to constitutionalism, the rule of law, accountability and transparency in the conduct of public affairs.

Rosenau (1992:4) espouses a more conservative view of good governance when he classifies it as a system of rule that works only if it is accepted by the majority or at least by the most powerful of those it affects.

The **UNDP** (1994:22) in its publication, *Background to the Global Research Framework of Decentralised Governance Programme*, has identified seven features of sound good governance: legitimacy established through rule-based opportunities for changing government in an orderly and predictable manner, freedom of association and participation, fair and effective legal frameworks and due processes, accountability of public office and service and transparent processes for determining whether public trust was respected, availability of valid and reliable information, effective and efficient public sector management and cooperation between government and civil society organisations. The **World Bank** (1989:73) argues in its report, "Sub-Saharan Africa: From crises to sustainable growth", that good governance must guarantee human rights, check corruption and promote democratisation as well as accountability. The importance of these virtues is echoed by **Landell-Mills** (1992:563) who look at the proliferation of associations at all levels, rural and urban, and in a variety of forms and types as a powerful factor constraining abusive central government authorities and the predatory conduct of dominant elites. By empowering

groups throughout society to voice their concerns and take direct action to achieve their ends, the trend is strongly in favour of more participatory politics, greater public accountability, and basic democracy. Looked at analytically, all these definitions of good governance display an amazing combination of political and leadership systems, both structural and behavioural, public sector management, civil society development, and efficiency in service delivery, but suffice it to mention though that good governance must not only concentrate on mechanistic aspects of service delivery but also focus attention on qualitative and equity aspects of empowering the people. But whatever the relative merits of these various viewpoints, it is evident that a modern state will only become and remain democratic if there are strong, in-built systems of political and bureaucratic accountability.

2.8 The Civil Society

The concept of Civil Society is difficult to employ as an analytical tool. The problem partly lies in the complexity of its definitions. As a concept however, it has lately acquired intellectual visibility in African scholarship because of the related concept of governance. According to **Woods** (1992:85), civil society implies a process of differentiation. Its constitution is precisely about the separation of public/private, state/society and economic interests with distinct spheres of action. This does not mean that the process of differentiation is sharply dichotomised; however, it does suggest that norms around which society is organised and how economic interests are aggregated are the crudely reductionistic interests of social classes.

According to **Moyo** (1996:19-21), the concept of civil society has three definitions: civil society as free associations; civil society as self-organisation; and civil society as political community. The first definition of civil society as free associations presupposes the existence of free associations such as political parties, trade unions, NGOs, Community-Based organisations and church groups that are empirically seen to be free from the control of the state. As regards the second definition, civil society

exists where the public or political community as a whole is able to organise itself and coordinate its activities without the control of the State. The third definition applies when the political community is composed of an ensemble of free associations which have the political and organisational capacities to coordinate their activities and also to determine or influence the type, sequence and development of state policy significantly. Within this framework, the government of the day cannot rule arbitrarily because it is a product of the political community as a whole. On the basis of the above definitions, **Moyo** (1996:21) deduces the overall definition of a Civil Society as a political community capable of accommodating a variety of individual and associational interests within a pluralist or multi-centric social framework in search of a greater common good.

On his part, **Diamond** (1994:10) defines civil society as a realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, self-supporting, autonomous from the State and bound by a set of shared rules. However, it is necessary to emphasise that, although Civil Society stands apart from the State, articulates and defends civil interests, it is not necessarily in basic contradiction to the State. The major interest of the greater part of the civil society is not to capture state power but to check its abuse as well as to influence the formulation and implementation of public policy. This distinguishes it from the general society, since the former refers to the political realm and in particular the means and processes through which citizens shape the character of political and economic life in their country. The pressure and strength of the civil society will therefore be verified by the existence and dynamism of organisations such as NGOs, Community-Based organisations, professional and private sector associations and trade unions. In sum, there is concurrence between the foregoing and the view of **Landell-Mills** (1992:552), that the interlocking formal and informal associations of individuals pursuing common interests constitute the warp and wool of Civil Society, that the key features are the shared values of members, as well as their willingness to adhere to a set of rules governing their organisation, and that these will inevitably be a reflection of their cultural norms. Consequently, the strength of Civil Society will be

determined by the richness of associational life, and hence governments must be willing to accept the establishment of various groups and institutions outside their control and to refrain from harassing them by means of unnecessary regulation. From the above analysis, Landell-Mills discerns four distinct ways for Civil Society to be nurtured. The first one is by facilitating the dissemination of information; the second is by strengthening the rule of law; the third is by expanding education so that there are more people able both to understand what is happening and to articulate clearly the interests of the groups to which they belong in a language understood by state bureaucrats and the fourth is by generating surplus resources in cash or kind to support associational activities without compromising their autonomy. The situation in Uganda remains highly desirous of the aforementioned conditions. This need can be discerned from one of the documented conceptualisations of the problem:

The main challenges to institutionalising democratic governance are the establishment of its ethos. The ethos of democratic governance flourishes through the interface between institutions of governance and those of the Civil Society. While decentralisation has reformed the institutions of governance by entrusting powers and responsibility to local elected leaders, Civil Society in Uganda remains weak. Local leaders remain trapped in old practices and transparency is yet to come (Sabiti-Makara, 1998:44).

This lack of a strong Civil Society, particularly in the periphery, has rendered the process of political and administrative empowerment of the masses synonymous with unloading a heavy dose of unknown and sometimes unwanted responsibility on unprepared shoulders.

While **Kabwegyere** (2000:95) attributes the fragility of Civil Society institutions as pillars of democracy in Uganda, and indeed in Africa to the colonial past, and wants us to understand the problem in the context of colonialism which, he argues, disorganised and swallowed pre-colonial states and disrupted kinship networks so severely that it took a long time

for the people to re-organise themselves to fight against the colonial system, this thesis disagrees with him to some extent and instead concurs with **Hadjor** (1987:16) in his dual perception of the problem as being of colonial creation but sustained or even entrenched over time by successive Ugandan regimes.

The exclusion of the masses from political participation both during the colonial period and after independence led to:

A growing concentration of power; the emergence of the omnipotent president who holds the reins of power in his own hands; heavy dependence on the army and the bureaucracy with, therefore, no independent support; the leader becomes insecure and consequently real power resides in the state machine. That is why so many of those in authority, who yesterday were so powerful, now reside in exile pondering what went wrong (**Sabiti-Makara**, 1998:44).

There is also evidence that as far back as the 1940s efforts were made by the colonial government to listen to the needs of the people and to encourage its officials and chiefs to explain various aspects of the colonial policies and development programmes to the subjects. **Thompson** (2003:307) observes that the establishment of the Public Relations and Social Welfare Department of the Protectorate Government in late 1946 was a step in that direction. The purpose of the department was to serve as a channel of information between the government and the people, and to popularise and promote all measures directed to the social progress and material welfare of the population.

Back in January 1945 the Chief Secretary had sent a memorandum to all government departments urging them to keep "the African" informed and "supplied with full explanations of measures that government is taking affecting the African population, so as to anticipate wherever possible misunderstanding or false rumour" (**Apter**, 1967:260). Indeed

Hall's⁶ analysis of the role of the Department of Public Relations and Social Welfare at its establishment, included these words:

...ignorance by the people of what their government is doing or attempting to do for them, and for what object, and ignorance by the government of what the people are wanting, saying and thinking, create misunderstanding, suspicion and discontent which, starting as mere grit on the wheels, can, if neglected, become a large sized spanner in the works. In almost every case they are avoidable (Quoted in Thompson, 2003:308).

On the basis of the above argument, it is therefore not prudent for Kabwegyere to apportion all the blame for Uganda's weak Civil Society on colonialism when it is clearly evident that instead of mobilising the people, Uganda's post-colonial leaders relied on force and state bureaucracies, resulting in popular apathy and cynicism. During the first Obote and Amin eras, the people withdrew from the political arena, and it was dangerous to question the decisions of the two regimes, let alone to take an independent line or to offer contrary alternatives to official orthodoxy. Apart from the authoritarianism of the State and its impact on the people, weak organisational capacities of the people in Uganda is another possible constraining factor regarding the dynamism of the Civil Society. The formal educational system that was established during the colonial period has continued to pursue more or less the same objectives of producing an elite uprooted from society. Ultimately the low quality of education has meant that the mass of the people are not aware of their collective strength.

2.9 Problems of Accountability: Civil Society and the State

Lehmann (1990: 204) observes that many of the inefficiencies and biases in resource allocations made by the State are not merely the effects of bad decisions, but more fundamentally, consequences of the weakness or absence of mechanisms through which society can hold the state accountable for its actions, and demand from it policies and programmes

⁶ Sir John Harthorn Hall was Governor of the Uganda Protectorate from 1944 to 1952.

which meet societal needs. In support of this view, **Healey & Robinson** (1992:90) note that a survey of the literature on governance and democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa concluded that the general experience of the African State has been quite different from that of the liberal western model of the State as a neutral arena in which interest groups seek to influence policy and resource allocation. Rather, the African State has typically been controlled by small elites. They conclude that:

The apparently irrational policies of the 1970s seem to be partly explained by the following features. Firstly, policies have been made in small, exclusive political circles...with little consultation of societal interests... Second, the most powerful influence seems to have been the search for political legitimacy... through a patronage and clientelistic process rather than through open politically competitive electoral systems... A third but weaker influence on policy was the regime's ideology.

They further contend that such situations of extreme neglect by the State of societal concerns are often due in part to the political and organisational weakness of the Civil Society, and in particular, of the rural poor. The significance of this factor is demonstrated by the determination with which authoritarian and rightist regimes in Chile and Bolivia sought to destroy peasant organisations, which had in earlier periods been strong enough to gain policy concessions, as significant as land reform (**Thiesenhusen**, 1989:44 **Lehmann**, 1990:207 **Caroll**, 1964:37). In Africa the peasantry has been consistently far weaker as a political force, and this has been explained by several scholars as the cause of its inability to affect general state policies (**Hyden**, 1983:70 **Bates**, 1981:87 **Healey & Robinson** 1992:91).

It is in this vein that the governance debates have led both scholars and reformers of the political landscape to focus more attention on local governance and Civil Society. Many have suggested that if local governments are strengthened by channelling funds through them and

increasing their control over development programmes, so too will be the Civil Society as a whole.

2.10 The Civil Society and Self-Managed Development

According to **Bebbington et.al.** (1993:12) the activities of the institutions of civil society have attracted the interests of analysts not only for their potential to make the state more accountable, but also for their role in development. They argue that many local organisations and agrarian movements, besides being political agents, have assumed a self-help and developmental role. In their view, these self-help actions represent an attempt on the part of the grassroots to assert greater control over the environments in which they live. In their contention **Bebbington et.al.** (1993:12) look at local self-development actions as contributing to a process of collective self-empowerment in two senses. Psychologically and organisationally they begin to build grassroots capacity to take hold of local development problems – an issue on which **Carroll** (1992:53) also places paramount importance. At the same time, they have a more obvious economically-empowering role in reducing material poverty. However, in principle the significance of this argument within the context of devolution is that development should not only be about growth, but also about the construction of a society that gives people more power to fashion and enjoy the spaces in which they live. It should broaden democracy beyond the simple right to vote in elections, into a direct democracy that would increase the range of contexts outside politics where people can exercise the right to vote while also taking on board wider issues of gender, democracy, local development initiatives and sustainability.

On his part **Friedmann** (1992:77) observes that while the theory and practice of development must recognise and develop human agency, populist formulations that concentrate only on consciousness-raising, local knowledge, and grassroots action, must be more politically realistic. They must find ways to link local action with strategies to remove structural obstacles to human development and this is where his argument turns to grassroots organisations and those NGOs which give them support.

These, he asserts, are the organisations that can empower people both economically and psychologically, developing their capacities and determination to claim their rights. They also become vehicles, albeit imperfectly so, for helping to link local action back into national and structural change. Consequently, for **Friedmann** (1992:77) and **Lehmann** (1990:84) local organisations membership and non-membership inspire the thinking behind a theoretical reformulation of development, and become the vehicles through which the Civil Society both as free associations and political community galvanise their efforts towards local development. On the basis of the foregoing analysis, the linkage of NGO activity to the debates on democracy, development and Civil Society becomes profound and all-pervasive. Given that NGOs have the potential of reaching the poorest strata of society, and of promoting the participation of rural people in design, implementation and monitoring of local development programmes, their presence in particular areas in the countryside has been marked by an equally synergetic Civil Society, more efficient in resource use and more effective in implementation of community programmes.

2.11 Interface Between Good Governance, Decentralisation, Democratisation and Civil Society

When the paradigms of good governance, decentralisation, democratisation and Civil Society are closely analysed, it becomes evident that they all seek to empower people to exercise as much influence as possible on their social, political and economic destiny. Put in another way, economic, political, legal and social empowerment is the meeting point of good governance, decentralisation, democratisation and Civil Society. Decentralisation is thus a process that, depending on its objectives, the way it is implemented, and the prevailing environment, may lead to the installation of a politico-administrative framework conducive for good governance. Nevertheless, decentralisation is not synonymous with good governance, neither is it the same thing as democratisation. If decentralisation does not lead to empowerment of the people, then it cannot constitute an element of good governance, nor can it contribute to democratisation or the strengthening of the Civil Society (**Nsibambi,**

1998:9). When power which is decentralised to local governments is monopolised at district level, decentralisation in this context does not necessarily lead to good governance. Decentralisation only serves as a tool of empowerment and therefore enhances democracy and good governance if local governments and institutions at lower levels as well as people at the grass-roots are vested not only with responsibilities but also with the legal authority to decide and commit allocated resources in discharging those responsibilities. Good governance must therefore be underpinned by a democratic system of government, but democracy cannot thrive unless space is given to the Civil Society to operate effectively. Indeed to emphasize the above, using **Landell-Mills** (1992:552),

Democracy will not necessarily lead to rapid economic growth, nor to the alleviation of poverty and protection of the weak, and it does not inevitably lead to benevolent and efficient government. But if democracy is underpinned by a strong and responsible civil society, it is likely to result in more accountable government.

If one accepts the logic of the above analysis, the practical task both for Ugandans wishing to build a more prosperous country, and for outsiders committed to assisting its development, is to deepen and broaden the civil society. This, in contrast to the argument of **Brett** (1992:24), requires much more than giving political roles to hundreds of thousands of people in resistance councils to stimulate growth in social responsibility. Conversely, the solution lies in the proliferation of associations at all levels, rural and urban, as a factor to constrain abusive central government authorities and the predatory conduct of dominant elites. The bottom line for the political relationship between the centre and the periphery is that rich associational life fostered by decentralisation will help buttress a strong Civil Society that will serve as the vanguard for the process of empowerment.

2.12 Governance, Empowerment and Human Agency: The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations

According to **Bebbington** et. al. (1993:21) and **Annis** (1987:131) a certain convergence is emerging between the concerns of those who talk of good governance and democracy, those who talk of empowering local people, and those who stress the need to respect local people as human agents who can and should be allowed to take active roles in fashioning the contexts in which they live. All are elaborating an argument that development should be more participatory, diverse and all-inclusive than has been the case in the past. All are questioning the dominance of the economic thinking in definitions of development. All have argued that for future development to be reoriented so as to respect these concerns, more spheres of local action and support should be passed over to non-governmental institutions, and that the role of NGOs ought to be strengthened. In accepting the proposition that NGOs are an essential catalyst for spurring rural development and invigorating rural associational life, hence building the Civil Society, the notion that they are the main panacea to the problem of lack of empowerment wherever and whenever this occurs, should to be accepted with caution. It is an argument of this thesis that while they may be major players in stimulating grassroots development directly through local action, success is actually dependent on positive processes outside the sphere of local action. These processes include cooperation from local beneficiaries and support from the state. An example of ASSEFA – Association of Sarva Seva Farms in India will be used to illustrate this point (**Thomas** 1992:118). This is one of the movements in India through which followers of Mahatma Gandhi have attempted to give practical expression to his vision of a non-violent revolution leading to a new kind of society based on the concepts of Gram Swaraj (village self-rule) and Sarvodaya (the welfare of all). ASSEFA was created in 1969 by a small group of Sarvodaya workers, with the aim of developing the lands donated to the landless through the Bhoodan (land gift) Movement and making them into self-reliant communities. Over 4 million acres of land have been donated since the 1950s by individual

landowners, and there are also over 15,000 Gramdan villages, where land has been donated collectively by a majority of the landowners.

Supported by Oxfam of UK, Movimento Sviluppo e Pace (MSP) of Italy, CCFD France, Action Aid from UK, ICCO from Holland and Inter pares Canada, ASSEFA grew steadily from one farm of 70 acres in 1969 to encompass nearly 100 projects and almost 10,000 acres in seven states by 1985 (**Thomas** 1992:120). From an initial emphasis on settlement of allottees and land development on Bhoodan plots, it has broadened its approach to include rural industries and provision of education and health facilities in a more integrated concept of community development.

In view of the above analysis, this thesis concurs with an assertion made by **Poulton** and **Harris** (1988:48-51) that empowerment at the grassroots should be seen as a process that relates to other wider processes. In the example of ASSEFA, it is apparent that success was actually dependent on positive processes outside the sphere of direct local action. These included the following:-

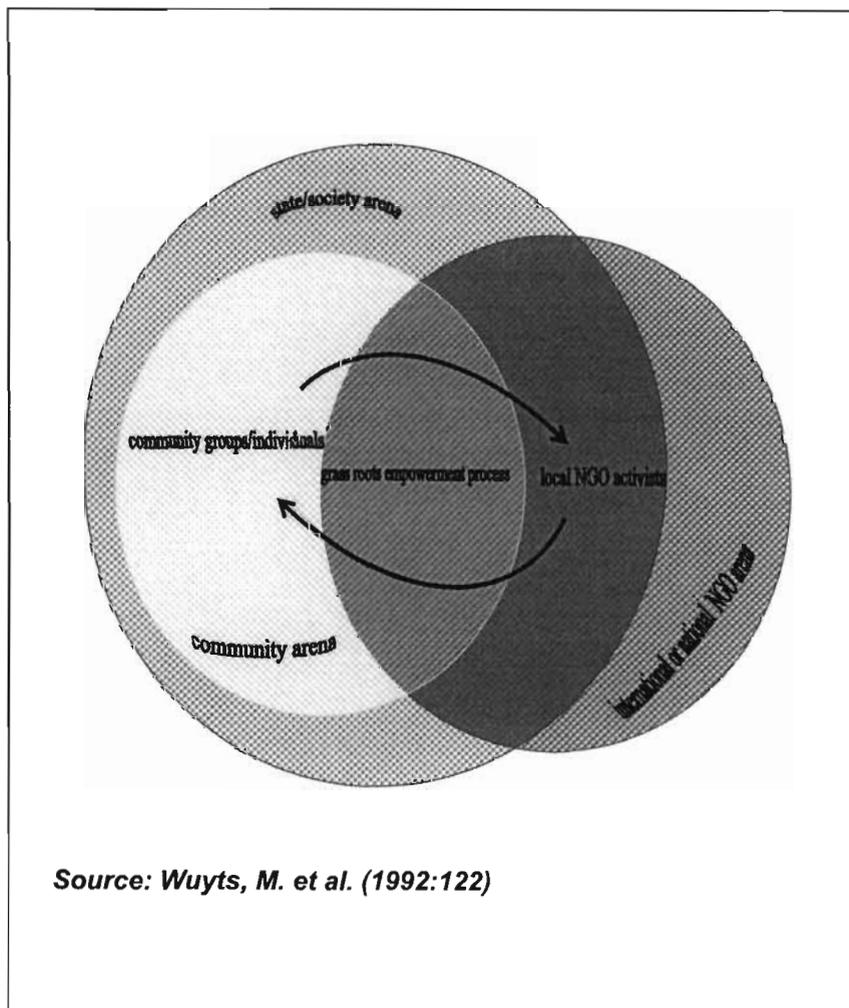
- Landowners individually and collectively were foregoing their property rights.
- Resources were made available by the states and central government. Secondly there was a process of legitimising certain democratic forms of local government by allowing the Gram Sabha to be recognised as representatives of local interests.
- Gandhian activist workers were recruited to work in ASSEFA, while resources were also acquired from international NGOs.

Thomas (1992:121) looks at the above as representing three important types of processes:

- The first relates to local community level processes of social differentiation and changing power relations. This manifests itself in terms of the dialogue and bondage that emerge between the landless, low caste communities and rich high caste land owners;

- The second relates to wider processes joining that community to the state and society at large, including representation of interests, broader social differentiation and democratisation; and
- The third relates to processes occurring within the NGO itself or between NGOs, relating the local action to the parent NGO and others, including both mechanisms of accountability and the means by which material and staff resources for such local actions are made available and maintained.

Figure 1
Grassroots Empowerment Through NGO Activities as a Process Within Three Intersecting Arenas



According to Thomas (1992:121), these processes go on within three intersecting arenas, as shown in **Figure 1**. In the event of an NGO appearing to be successful on its own terms, it is likely to be because of favourable circumstances in these arenas, as is notable from the ASSEFA case.

On the basis of the foregoing, it will be argued in this thesis that the role of NGOs as agents of grassroots empowerment ought to be analysed within the context of the existing environment. Their absence from a particular locality may affect development in that area, in terms of reduced capacity to organise and articulate societal interests and priorities so as to have them addressed by the State, but their presence is not necessarily a guarantee for local development, especially if there are no favourable circumstances in the three intersecting arenas as depicted in **figure 1**. It is argued further that NGOs need to recognize and address some of the acute limitations they face if they are to be effective in the empowerment process of the local population. Some of these limitations include their small size, restricted impact, distance from policy decisions, poor co-ordination, problems of representativeness and accountability, and professional and technical limitations. Discussion of these failings ironically lead the discussion back to the state – for in different ways it has been suggested that some of these limitations could be addressed if NGOs engaged in more co-ordinated relationships with public sector organisations. Nevertheless they still remain important as conduits or intermediaries to close the gap between the centre and the periphery by encouraging local communities to participate in developmental activities in their areas of abode.

2.13 Empowerment

Thomas (1992:132), gives a brief definition of empowerment as a desired process by which individuals, typically including the poorest of the poor, take direct control over their lives, thus becoming agents of their own development. Whereas local governance for some has to an extent been seen in a residual role, filling in gaps in human and political needs not adequately covered by the State and the market, for others local

governance has potentially much more importance as the promoter of a distinctive form of development (**Wuyts** et. al. 1992:118). The argument here focuses on two interrelated notions of grassroots development and empowerment. Grassroots development implies direct improvement in living standards of groups of the poor and under-privileged in local communities. Promoting development at this level means working directly with such groups on projects designed and run collaboratively with them. The phrase of **Chambers** (1983) "putting the last first", encapsulates this way of thinking. The idea of empowerment takes the notion of collaboration a stage further by indicating that development should be undertaken with the direct aim of increasing the power and control of communities of intended beneficiaries over the circumstances of their own lives to enable them become their own development agents in future.

In reinforcing this view, the **World Bank** (1989:54-55), in a long-term perspective study carried out in 1987, concluded thus:

Many basic services are best managed at the local level-even at the village level-with the central agencies providing only technical advice and specialised inputs. The aims should be to empower ordinary people to take charge of their lives, to make communities more responsive for their development, and to make governments listen to their people.

By empowering the people throughout society to voice their concerns and take direct action to achieve their ends, the trend is strongly in favour of more participatory politics, greater public accountability, and hence establishment of basic democracy.

While Uganda, in spite of its elaborate devolution programme, still exhibits some central government constraints on local decision-making especially in areas of local taxation, including the capping of local tax levels, thus affecting the resources available to support local development initiatives, these constraints have not extinguished the desire to develop new ways of involving people in the decisions that shape their lives at local level, and as

Clarke & Stewart (1992:9) observe, empowerment is so much a theme of our times that local authorities need to develop strategies which increase public influence and control over the activities of their councils.

In order to develop effective approaches to local citizen empowerment, **Burns et. al.** (1994:154) argue that it is important to reflect carefully on the notions of choice, participation and control. They further argue that the rhetoric of 'control' is used across the political spectrum and is generally perceived to be a desirable outcome of a local democratic process. They note however that neither the political left nor right actually offers 'control'. Rather, the right offers the extension of individual choice (largely by undermining the political system and placing greater emphasis on the economic system) and the left offers the extension of collective choice (by attempting to increase participation in the system of representation). They illustrate the distinction between choice, participation and control using the analogy of a theatre performance.

A traditional play will be written by an author (read this to be a majority political party) and performed by a group of actors (council officers) to the audience (the public). The audience is not involved in either the writing or the performance, except as the viewer. A more creative approach introduces audience participation. Here there is still a script, but the actors have a certain amount of freedom, and the audience is encouraged to participate. However, if there is any danger of the script being undermined, the involvement of the audience is diminished or withdrawn. The audience can complain, but the most probable outcome of their complaint is that they will be excluded from the theatre in the future. This according to **Burns et al.** (1994:155) is managed participation. The dissatisfied audience could alternatively go to another theatre but they would still have no involvement in writing the script. This is what is meant by choice. If the choice the audience wants is not available, then the exercise of choice does little to empower the audience. The attempt to equate choice and participation with control is then flawed because on the basis of the illustration expressed in the above analogy, control means the power of directing. This would entail

participation in the process of production (writing the script), and not only in the process of consumption (watching or participating in some one else's script).

Thus one might conclude that citizen control of the process of local development can only be achieved once the citizens can in the words of **Burns et al.** (1994:155) 'get behind the scenes'. In many countries however, including those pursuing ambitious local democratisation policies, existing political arrangements keep the citizen in front of the stage and offer only a passive role. While there may be binary political systems in these countries in which, at root, the voter is able to say yes or no to a particular party by either voting it in or out of power, the role of the citizen is still almost entirely reactive because while the products or policies may be packaged differently so that they appear to offer choice, it is a heavily constrained choice.

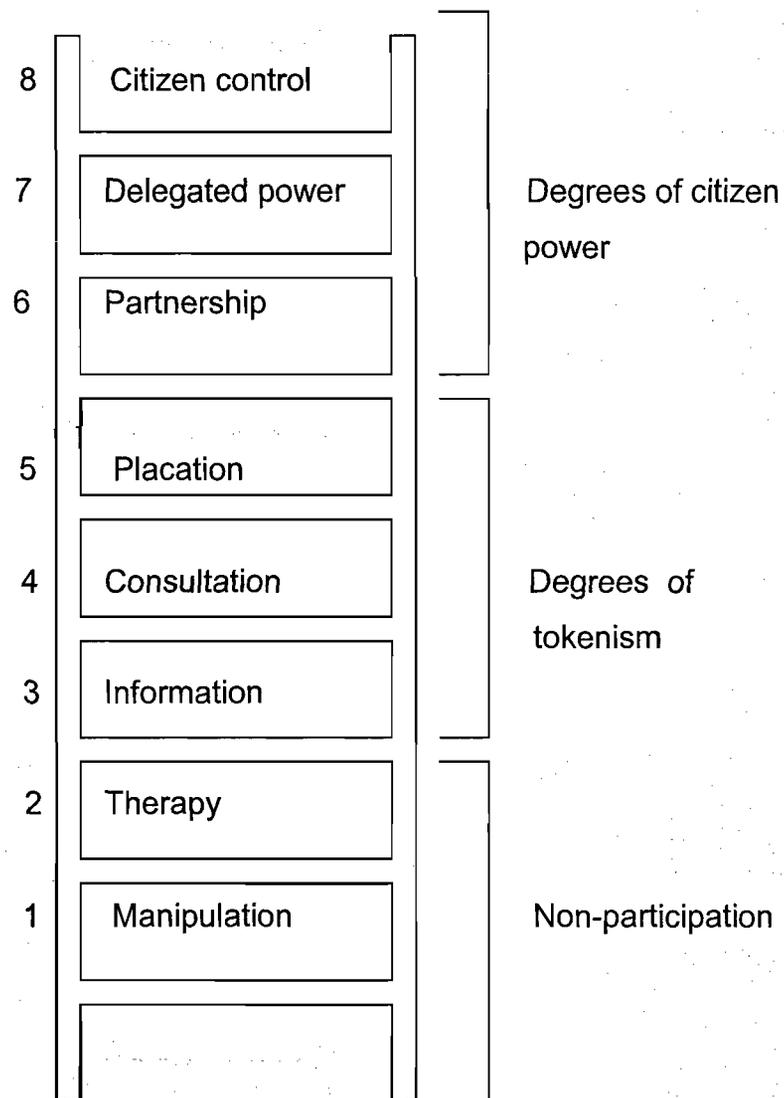
In the final analysis, the key question that emerges from this discussion is that if the state or indeed any public institution wishes to pursue a strategy for empowering local people, it needs to decide whether or not, basing on the above analogy, it really wants to invite citizens 'behind the scenes'. If it does not want to move in this direction, it should not pretend that it does. As Arnstein argued in her article on participation and empowering local people, over thirty years ago,

There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process. (Arnstein, 1971:176).

Arnstein, in an effort to encourage a more enlightened dialogue, set out a typology or ladder of citizen participation shown in **figure 2**. Her typology identifies eight levels of participation, with each rung on the ladder corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining the end product.

Figure 2

Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation



Source: Arnstein, 1971: 176

At the bottom of the ladder are two rungs of non-participation. The objective here is not to enable people to participate in the planning or conducting of programmes, but to enable power-holders to 'educate' or 'cure' the participants. The next three rungs involve dialogue with the public. Citizens to varying degrees have the right to be heard even if they do not take a direct part in decision-making. In this zone of the ladder we find one-way communication from the authority for example, announcements, pamphlets, posters, annual reports; two-way exchanges for example, attitude surveys,

village or ward meetings and public hearings; and co-option for example through citizens sitting on committees but with power holders retaining the right to decide. Further up the ladder are three rungs which give citizens increasing degrees of decision-making clout. In this top part of the ladder citizens share directly in the process of policy-making and service provision. Though **Arnstein** (1971:178) is at pains to point out that the ladder is a simplification, thirty four years on, it still provides a helpful starting point for discussion of citizen empowerment by underscoring the interconnectedness of the latter with participation, since the power of citizens to effect changes in day to day operational practices and programmes will depend increasingly on their ability to participate in and thus control key local development decisions.

2.13.1 Exit and Voice: The market and democratic models of empowerment

According to **Hirschman** (1970:14) there are different ways of empowering local people in relation to the organisations and institutions that are intended to serve them. As the consequence it is not surprising to observe that different mechanisms have evolved not only in the private and public but also in the non-profit sectors. This thesis finds the concepts of exit and voice developed by **Hirschman** (1970:15) to be very helpful in understanding the power relationships between local people and the organisations and institutions with which they interface. Stated simply, the market model, in theory at least, gives individuals the power of exit since dissatisfied customers can take their business else where. The democratic process, again in theory at least, relies on individuals or groups having the power of voice since dissatisfied citizens can obtain a response by taking political action. It is, of course, possible for an organisation to have both sets of reaction mechanism by having various institutions and voluntary organisations being responsive both to the views expressed by their members and to the shifts in membership and participation rates. **Hirschman** (1970:15) argues that there is no implication that organisations which are equipped with both feedback mechanisms are necessarily more advanced than those which rely primarily on one alone, as everything

depends on the responsiveness of the organisation whichever mechanism or combination of mechanisms it is equipped with.

While he is concerned to explore ways of mixing exit and voice mechanisms he is at pains to point out how different they are. This is primarily because exit belongs to the realm of economics and voice to the realm of politics. In his view:

Exit is the sort of mechanism economics thrive on. It is neat – one either exits or one does not; it is impersonal – any face-to-face confrontation between customer and firm with its imponderable and unpredictable elements is avoided and success and failure of the organisation are communicated to it by statistics; and it is indirect since any recovery on the part of the declining firm comes by courtesy of the Invisible Hand, as an unintended by-product of the customer's decision to shift.

In all these respects voice is just the opposite of exit. It is a far more 'messy' concept because it can be graduated, all the way from faint grumbling to violent protest; it implies articulation of one's critical opinions rather than a private, 'secret' vote in the anonymity of a supermarket; and finally, it is direct and straightforward rather than roundabout. Voice is political action par excellence. (Hirschman, 1970:15-16)

Hirschman's strategy for empowering local people by giving them voice is, of course, much more familiar to those concerned with local government. Indeed, a central justification for local authorities is that they can at least give local people an indirect voice because they are democratically elected and are accountable to their citizens. In essence therefore it can be suggested that, in relation to local government, citizens can exercise voice in two main ways – through the ballot box and through direct participation in local affairs, thus combining together elements of representative and participatory democracy.

2.14 Participation

The term "participation" appears with increasing frequency, emotion, and looseness in the development discourse. This imprecision may have rhetorical value in certain political contexts, but for purposes of analysis it serves merely to cover up fuzzy or non-existent thinking (**Johnson & Clark 1982:170**). In this thesis, the conceptualisation by **Uphoff & Esman (1974:81)** of participation by its *ex-ante* sense of before-the-fact involvement in the choices and efforts producing benefits will be adopted in preference to the economists' *ex-post* sense of after-the-fact distribution of benefits.

The Peasants' Charter, (**FAO 1981**), which is the epitome of the declaration of principles and programme of action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development held in 1981 at the Food and Agricultural Organisation Headquarters in Rome, Italy, made the following observation on participation:

Participation by the people in the institutions and systems, which govern their lives, is a basic human right and also essential for realignment of political power in favour of disadvantaged groups and for social and economic development. Rural development strategies can realise their full potential only through the motivation, active involvement and organisation at the grassroots level of rural people, with special emphasis on the least advantaged, in conceptualising and designing policies and programmes and in creating administrative, social and economic institutions, including cooperative and other voluntary forms of organisation for implementing and evaluating them.

Unfortunately, participation, even when taken beyond mere rhetoric, is often felt to be sufficient, for example, when villagers turn out on request to dig irrigation channels or build roads or schools or community health units merely to participate in the labour element of project implementation **Burkey (1993:57)**. Participation in project design and decision-making is all

too often limited to a few village meetings where the project is explained and the people are asked to give their comments, and where the few comments made are by the school teacher in a language unintelligible to the majority. A major study of the many participation initiatives of the 1960s and 1970s concluded that:

Though there have been great moves towards public involvement in local service provision in recent years, little has been achieved by way of a fundamental shift in power, a shift which implicitly underlay the ideas of radical proponents of participation in the late 1960s. In the end, elite perspectives have won out, and participation has served the purposes of building up a consensus for the proposals of those in power, thereby legitimating them. (Boaden et al, 1982:179)

Participation, if it is to really release the peoples' own creative energies for development, must be much more than the mere mobilisation of labour forces or the coming-together to hear about pre-determined plans. Participation must be more than a policy statement-there must be a genuine commitment to encourage participation in all aspects and at all levels of development work. In the Ugandan context, this commitment seems to be discernable within the framework of the existing law as exemplified in the preamble of the Local Governments Act (1997:9):

An Act to amend, consolidate and streamline the existing law on local governments in line with the Constitution to give effect to the decentralisation and devolution of functions, powers and services; and to provide for decentralisation at all levels of local governments to ensure good governance and democratic participation in, and control of decision-making by the people; and to provide for revenue and the political and administrative set-up of local governments; and to provide for the election of local councils and any other matters connected to the above.

The extent to which the above commitment has practically manifested itself on the ground is still a subject of discussion in this study.

Analysis of participation, as a concept is still incomplete without reference to one of the leading researchers in the field. **Fals-Borda**, (1981:18) refers to participation as a philosophical approach to development rather than as a policy. He points out that even General Pinochet of Chile believed that his government was participatory and warns that we should not deceive ourselves by the official or common definitions of the concept of participation, lest we end up with a jaundiced view of the term. **Freire** (1972:42) from his neo-Marxist perspective of society as a social class notes that:

Attempting to liberate the oppressed without their reflective participation in the act of liberation is to treat them as objects which must be saved from a burning building; it is to lead them into the populist pitfall and transform them into masses which can be manipulated.

In such a case participation merely serves as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. But the biggest caution that participation is quite often deployed as a mask to cover up quite different objectives is made by **Samoff** (1979:43). He argues that, in situations where plans are formulated centrally, and administrators dominate representative institutions, participation is seen as an instrument to instruct, guide and legitimise rather than to locate decision-making powers in the hands of local people. He further argues that participation is incompatible with the bureaucratic and technocratic values held by the newly-emerging bureaucratic bourgeoisie which are necessary to their continuing dominance. While other classes might benefit from representative institutions and high levels of participation, a bureaucratic bourgeoisie does not. Participation is further precluded by the ideology of "government as expertise" through which the bureaucracy claims authority based on knowledge. Accordingly, to the extent that increased productive capacity in the countryside depends on local level participation and self-government, it is unlikely to be achieved when a programme of decentralisation is "undertaken within the setting of a

ruling bureaucratic class and a dominant ideology of technology” (Samoff, 1979:57).

Parnell et. al. (2002:12) on their part argue that participation as a development practice and political ideal is vulnerable to disillusionment as reform practitioners increasingly see it as a brake on rapid service delivery. In their view it is increasingly cast in terms of the process-versus-product dichotomy, meaning that participatory processes tend to bog down planning and implementation due to incessant conflict between different sections of communities. The net result is stalled service delivery and growing frustration that the policy approach of inclusive development is practically unviable and too cost-intensive. This experience fuels arguments that participation should be reassessed and made less important in the development process to allow government to implement its mandate to get infrastructure and services into the ground and households (**Parnell et. al.** 2002:12). The problem with this analysis is that it does not interrogate the quality of mediating institutions and practitioners who are the brokers in such processes. It also fails to explore whether sufficient investment is being made to nurture and strengthen democratic and accountable community-based associations that can legitimately engage on behalf of their members within a transparent political framework.

In the final analysis, the above conflicting view points would seem to suggest that participation should not be seen as a blanket solution for all developmental issues and problems, and as **Parnell et. al.** (2002:13) will argue, participation is a political practice that fosters access to relevant information, influence over allocation of scarce resources, awareness about the benefits of collective action in terms of strengthening livelihood strategies and increasing social capital, and citizenship. It is, by definition therefore, a process of social learning because it serves to empower uninformed, marginalized citizens about how they can advance their interests in conjunction with their communities.

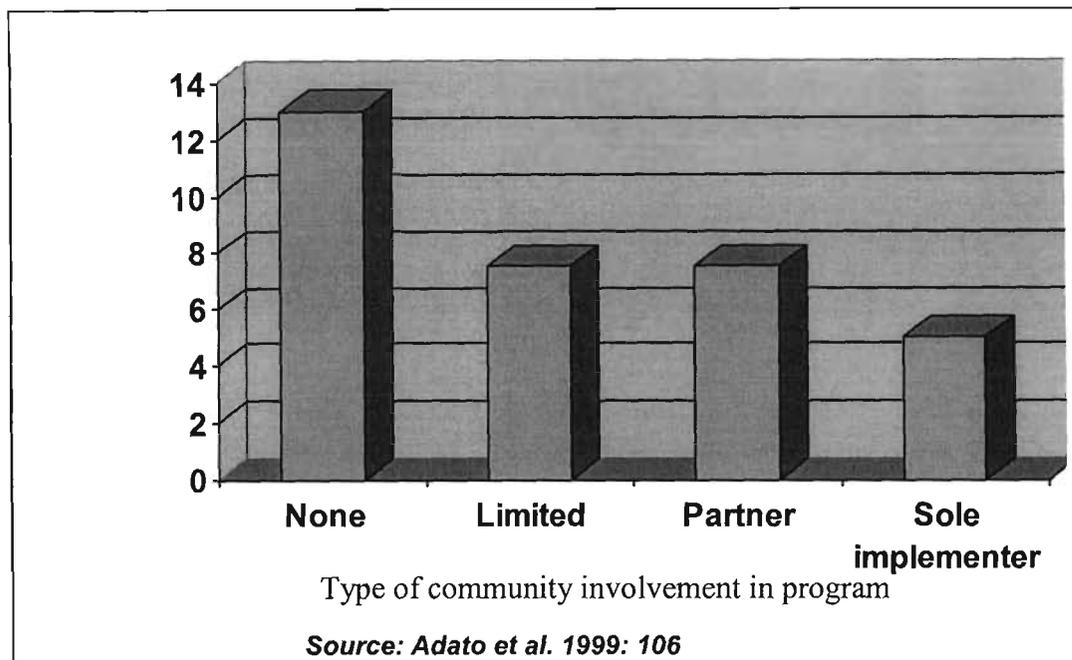
2.14.1 Participation and Involvement

A distinction between participation and involvement is drawn by **Jagnadham** (1979:137) as follows: participation implies "to share in", while involvement implies that there is a feeling of belonging and that people become involved on the basis of this feeling. In development, such a feeling of belonging follows when people can identify with development efforts. They feel therefore that they belong to the various projects or programmes. Being involved with and belonging to development programmes means that participation is not enforced. It may therefore be argued that development can only take place with the preparedness of the local people and their desire to possess the development programmes and to be permitted to make their own physical and economic input in implementing them. Therefore, local people can either be allies, or else their collective strength can be used to offer resistance. Ultimately, their involvement may be more of political than of technical value, that is to say, although participation may not necessarily guarantee the success of a programme, it will enable participants influence its efficiency (**Bryant & White** 1982:212).

A study in South Africa found that community involvement reduced the cost of creating jobs and improved the cost-effectiveness of transferring resources to poor people. As can be noted from **Figure 3⁷**, where there was no community involvement in the programme, it cost government about 13 Rand to transfer 1 Rand to a poor person, and where the community was either a partner or involved in a limited way, it cost government about 7.5 Rand to transfer 1 Rand to a poor person. But where the community was a sole implementer of the programme, it cost government only 5 Rand to transfer 1 Rand to a poor person. This made a strong case for the importance of decentralisation in lowering the cost of raising the income of poor people in South Africa.

⁷ Adato, Michelle, Timothy Besley, Lawrence Haddad and John Hoddinott, 1999, "Participation and poverty Reduction: Issues, Theory and New Evidence from South Africa", Background paper for World Development Report 2000/2001, The International Food Policy Research Institute and World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3
South Africa: Programme Cost of Transferring 1 Rand to a
Poor Person, 1995-97



2.14.2 The Problem of Local Elites

Johnson & Clark (1982:167) have observed that traditional group structures and strong patterns of social differentiation often combine to create a system of organisation dominated by a few powerful local elites. The elites are linked to the poor through a variety of patronage/dependency relationships. And although people look to kinsfolk, or at most to individuals whom they know personally for help, because of the traditional group attitudes ingrained in most members of the community, locally-acknowledged stratification ensures that only individuals with wealth or contacts are seen as able to offer such help (**Chambers**, 1974:86). Poor local people⁸ then tender support of various kinds in exchange for, and in expectation of such patronage. In general the exchange reinforces the stratification on which it is based. Patronage further secures the privileged

⁸ The term 'people' as used in this thesis describes the majority of Ugandan-farmers, cattle keepers, primary school teachers, labourers, petty traders, and the unemployed, living in the country-side. It is a heterogeneous group who, although they perform different jobs, live together in the rural set up, share the same facilities and have a more or less similar standard of living. This term distinguishes them from the Kampala-based educated middle class or political elites who possess a high level of education and have fairly remunerative positions with government. Ideologically, they see themselves as different from the rural populace and identify themselves with the values of the West.

position of the elite, while reciprocal dependency further undermines the position of the poor (Hunter, 1969:38). Viewed from the standpoint of egalitarian ideology, the power of local elites appears to be just one more unmitigated evil visited on the local people, and the evidence emerging from developing countries is monotonous and depressing.

Most attempts to organise local people, if they survive at all, are captured by the local elites, who exploit them to enhance their position, power and wealth more effectively than before (Hunter, 1969:70). The cumulative effect of this relationship is the negation of the principle of empowerment and participation on which sustainable local government democracy is premised. In Uganda, the other problem lies with the unethical and corrupt behaviour of public representatives and officials and the way these influence the obtaining, allocation and utilisation of public resources in ways that systematically ensure the crowding out of local people in the decision-making process. Where the delivery of public services gets curtailed because public officials and local politicians have fraudulently misappropriated funds or caused wastage through misallocation of public resources, it is impracticable to nurture conditions palatable for promoting the empowerment of local people. While such a scenario would call for active involvement of the Civil Society as part of the larger society and a stakeholder in maintaining, promoting and consolidating a just governmental and administrative system, it also brings into perspective the importance of public integrity and ethical behaviour of all stakeholders in the monumental task of nurturing developmental local government.

2.15 Local Government and Ethics: The Question of Public Integrity.

The growing recognition of the threat posed by ethical violations accounts for the attention being given to public integrity programmes in different parts of the world (Balogun, 2003:127). The focus of the programmes is mainly on the demarcation of ethics boundaries, the elaboration of codes of acceptable conduct in public life, and the role of leadership in championing the cause of ethical compliance and punishing deviation. While ethical codification and leadership (through legalistic mechanism such as the

Leadership Code Act of 2002) in Uganda might suffice in upholding the ideals of public service, this thesis argues that achieving a consistently-high ethical standard on the negative side of the rectitude scale requires that the rudiments of public morality be instilled in the entire citizenry. In a special report entitled *"How decentralization took corruption to the districts"*, (Sunday Monitor, 1st of February, 2004, Page 14) **Onyango**, quotes the words of one district chairperson to his councillors and officials at the close of 2003.

"Don't shy away from eating government money, you will die poor if you remain holy".

Among other things, the Chairperson assured Councillors that they would be protected if they diverted only 5 percent of the money budgeted for a project as long as the project was accomplished. In this special report **Onyango** (2004:14) attempts to assess how decentralization, which government had hoped would erode corruption, has instead taken the old vice to greater heights. A case in point is one of Mbarara District Local Government which lost about 400 million Uganda shillings, (US\$ 320,000) and an equivalent to a quarter of total revenue collected by the district in the financial year 1995/96, through printing of false GPT tickets (**Kibuuka-Musoke**, 1997:46). According to the report, Charles Kagombe, the then District Secretary for Finance formed two companies, namely Chesi Ltd and Castext Ltd, which were awarded 75 percent of the total council contracts. He used his position as finance chief to bulldoze the Treasury into giving priority to payments for his companies. The companies over-invoiced and partially delivered goods, occasioning substantial financial loss to the district. The Inspector General of Government (IGG) and Auditor General (AG), the two most powerful watch-dog institutions fully mandated to stamp out corruption and other unethical behaviour in the central and local governments, have not gone far on investigating this matter. **Balogun** (2003:127) admits that the biggest bottleneck in the struggle against unethical and deviant behaviour in government and the

public sector generally relates to contextualization. He argues that contemporary integrity programs proceed on the assumption that leadership support for ethical codification and enforcement, together with the establishment of a network of anti-corruption institutions, is all it takes to combat the scourge of corruption. A contrary view is that a leader is only human – a person who, in making ethical choices is liable to confuse the right with the wrong, and whose judgment tends to be shaped by fleeting circumstances. As argued in this thesis, resolving integrity issues in some societies, particularly, where consensus on right and wrong is lacking, requires going beyond leadership and engaging society at large in an ethics dialogue.

2.15.1 Meaning of Ethics

Ethics, when applied to governance and public administration, refers to moral principles, norms, attitudes, values and obligations that guide public representatives and public officials so that their actions promote the general welfare of all the population (**Sing & Ntshangase** 2003:105). **Sing & Ntshangase** (2003:105), citing **Kreitner** (1995:152), add that public representatives and officials lacking awareness may be labelled amoral. They are neither moral nor immoral but indifferent to the ethical implications of their actions. Ethical behaviour, according to **Dwivedi** (1997:10), is considered a blend of moral qualities and mental attitudes, essential to moral governance and public administration. Consequently, ethical behaviour is the foundation of legitimate and effective governance and public administration, which is founded on public trust and confidence (**Dwivedi** 1999:10).

2.15.2 Nature, Magnitude and Significance of the Ethics challenge

The first challenge in tracking ethical compliance or violations is one of definition (**Balogun**, 2003:128). While rules have been developed that make it possible to assess the rationality of decisions taken by public officials, there is yet no foolproof method of evaluating the integrity and fairness of their decisions. A recent case provides an illustration. The Head of the United Nations tribunal for Rwanda, Carla Del Ponte, refused

to renew the contracts of seven African and Indian prosecutors, citing incompetence as her reason. The dismissed attorneys, for their part termed the decision a racist act (<http://www.CNN.COM/World>, May 15, 2001). As individuals with rigorous training, the parties to the dispute would undoubtedly prepare briefs, enter pleas, and marshal evidence in support of their positions. Knowing what is at stake-reputation, power and position – they would be unsparing in the use of factual information, highlighting what favoured them and downplaying awkward pieces of data. To vindicate their positions, they would be generous with facts, even if, at times this meant being economical with the truth. According to **Balogun** (2003:128), this is what rational individuals do, they channel means toward preferred ends. In contrast, their ethically-inspired counterparts are likely to obliterate the distinction between self and others and agonise over right and wrong.

Ethical dilemmas, (**Balogun**, 2003:128), are not limited to the personnel-selection process, but are closely intertwined with decisions taken in contracts and procurement, tax administration, law enforcement and adjudication, revenue collection and service delivery agencies. They are thus fundamentally linked to the process of local government management and development.

Commissions of inquiry into suspected frauds in Mbarara and Tororo District Local Governments in Uganda as well as special audit inspection in Iganga District Local Government by the Auditor General revealed important data which suggested that, in the wake of decentralization, local governments were not sufficiently trained to exercise financial and political power in a responsible and transparent manner (**Nsibambi**, 1998:66). But the experience since implementation of decentralization started shows that if this argument was sustainable, one would now be seeing a high level of ethical compliance and dwindling levels of corruption, given the intensive capacity-building and training programme districts have undergone, including the putting in place of ethical codification measures, such as the Leadership Code Act of 2002. The persistence of the amoral, ethically-

deviant behaviour in local governments testifies to a much graver problem and calls for a much wider analysis of the matter.

2.15.3 Ethical Violations in Local Governments: The Society-Individual Relations.

The argument that identifies society as a senior partner in society-individual relations is quite compelling. It is based on the logic that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (**Balogun**, 2003:139). In Uganda, while tracking the incidence of corruption across local governments, the practice up to now has been to ask panels of experts or focus groups, both in the business community and Civil Society, to assess the integrity of specific components of public policy. The corruption perception indices developed by Transparency International and the World Bank (and frequently used by the Inspector General of Government), rely heavily on the responses of those who, because of their daily interactions with government officials, are assumed to be sufficiently knowledgeable about the level and magnitude of corruption. **Schwella** (2001:384) observes that useful as the conclusions from such exercises might be, the methodology has serious limitation because for a start, it takes a narrow view of corruption, since it excludes non-business forms of ethical violations.

Second, it starts with the assumptions that public officials are *Ipso facto* corrupt and their clients saints. This assumption overlooks the possibility that private business firms on many occasions, in an effort to expedite transaction with local governments, are the initiators, rather than helpless victims, of corrupt acts (**Balogun**, 2003:140).

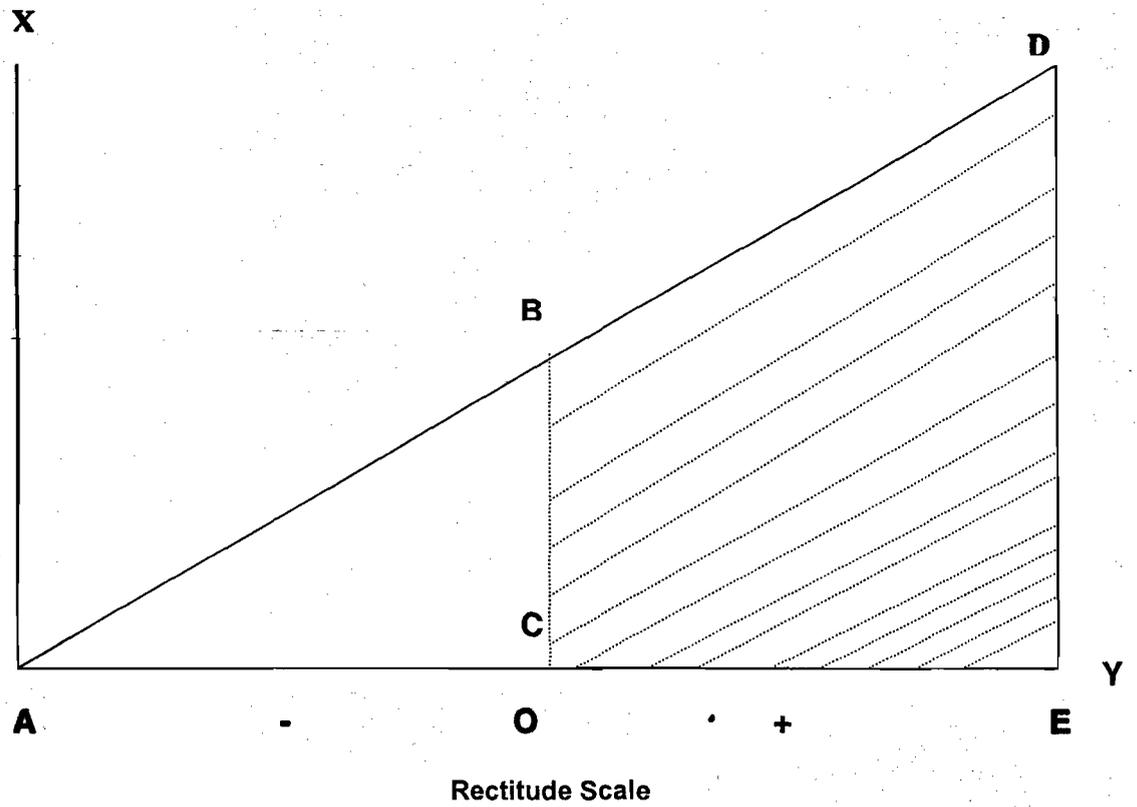
Third is the routine and *a priori* association of the average government official with sleaze and the client with rectitude (**Balogun**, 2003:140)

In the light of the methodological limitations of contemporary orientations, this thesis explores a new approach to the analysis of ethical violations in relation to local governance. First, it assumes that corruption goes beyond the obstacles to private sector growth, for example, the crooked judicial

and law – enforcement mechanisms, flawed public procurement procedures, incoherent revenue assessment and collection practices. Second, it is interested not only in the outcome of ethical violations, but also in the symptoms and causes of the malaise. The discussion here contends that, depending on the influence exerted on them at any given time, societies are likely to fall into one of three broad ethical categories : the ethically-sound, the totally-decadent, and the ethically-median (**Balogun, 2003:140**).

The starting point in the analysis is the society. **Balogun (2003:141)** observes that in times when belief in the retributive power of a Supreme Being is deep-seated, the inclination of societies will most probably be towards rectitude. Discounting past deviations from the norm, religion is likely to be a strong influence on human behaviour in societies under traditional influences, and institutions (the family, schools, churches, mosques) propagating values deemed acceptable to God or the Supreme Being would play crucial roles in the life of the people. Population distribution in this type of society (the ethically-sound society) would then correspond to the one plotted on the graph shown in **Figure 4** below. With the exception of a few deviants (located within ABC along the X and Y coordinates), the majority of the people (within CBDE) would have no problem in living up to society's high ethical standards.

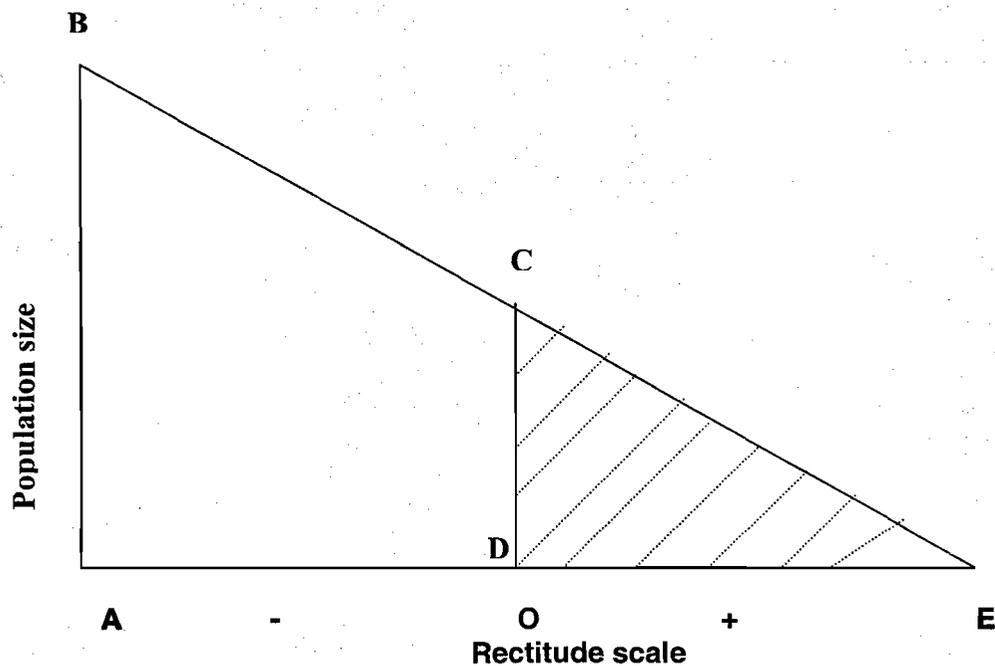
Figure 4
Population Distribution in a society Guided by a clear Ethical Code



Source: Balogun, M.J. 2003: 141

Figure 5

Population Distribution in a society with out an Ethical Bearing

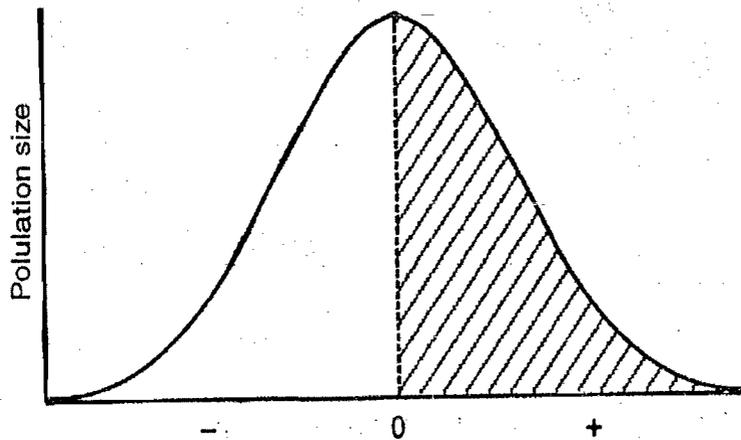


Source: Balogun, M.J. 2003:142

As **Balogun** (2003:141) further notes, no society is perfect. What is not so obvious is whether there are societies that can justifiably be pronounced totally and irredeemably corrupt. Indeed some observers envisage the possibility of the perpetual struggle between the social right and wrong ending up in favour of the latter at the expense of the former. In the circumstances, the vast majority of people would find their standard falling en masse within the confines of the amoral zone, in the form represented by **Figure 5**. In such circumstances, neither the minimalist nor the developmental nor even the professional strategy would prove adequate in meeting the public integrity challenge.

It should be noted however that where the campaign for rectitude appears to achieve the intended results, population distribution on the rectitude scale would begin to follow the normal

Figure 6
Population Distribution in a Normal Human Society



Source: *Balogun, M.J. 2003: 143*

pattern shown in **Figure 6**. Specifically, a small fraction of the populace would ignore the reform message and stick to their bad old ways on the negative end of the scale. Another small proportion would consolidate their position on the positive side of the scale, while the majority would fall in between the moral and amoral zones. It is also to this majority that the two opposing forces on the two ends of scale would appeal for support from time to time.

In conclusion it is significant to emphasize that **Figure 6** accords with the central proposition put forward in this study – namely, that the individual is a blend of good and evil, and matters in the formation of public morality. Local government managers act as individuals most of the time and are rarely influenced by the rudiments of collective responsibility and public good, and as **Nigro (1970:426)**, cited by **Sing & Ntshangase (2003:107)** observes, a code of ethics will not cure this malady because codes of ethics are regarded as legislating morality. They cannot reform people who do not inherently adhere to high ethical standards. In charting the way

forward, therefore, attention ought to shift toward accentuating the individual's positive tendencies and neutralising the negative ones.

2.15.4 Promoting Public Integrity to Enhance Local Government

Effectiveness

The upshot of the preceding analysis is that public service ethics is too important to be left in the hands of a few individuals occupying leadership positions. When left alone, the average human being – leaders included – is not incapable of substituting self – interest for the general public good. Public integrity is, in any case, very much like a seed. Whether or not it will grow and germinate depends largely on the soil in which it is planted. The soil, in this case, is the character type that has the upper hand in, and sets the moral tone for, an organisation or society at large.

Character formation, a product of the dominant socio-historical forces, is therefore the causative factor in public integrity with leadership and institutions performing an enabling role (**Balogun**, 2003:143). This thesis therefore argues that it takes, at the minimum, a combination of character education and training societal rules a network of integrity – promoting institutions, and a dispersal of leadership roles among several competing centres, to bring individuals to the realization that they must of necessity fulfil obligations of public good. Going by the preceding analysis, it would not be entirely correct for **Onyango** (2004:14) to assert that the effect of decentralisation in Uganda has been to take corruption to the districts. Such a view would presuppose that the vice was absent before the onset of decentralisation.

Yet in a national integrity survey done by the Inspectorate of Government in 1998, corruption is noted to have existed right from Independence and was exacerbated by deteriorating working conditions in subsequent years. Efforts by the Inspector General of Government to fight corruption should involve creating an environment in which the independent Civil Society can be facilitated further to monitor and hold government accountable. Such a measure could be centred on increasing the flow of government information

to Civil Society through cooperation with media, legal stakeholders, private sector associations and religious and cultural institutions. The irony with the above argument however is the assumption that a strong Civil Society already exists in Uganda. Most of the available data tends to point to the contrary, which implies the need to nurture a strong Civil Society capable of monitoring government and holding it accountable.

In the final analysis, this thesis is unequivocal on the fact that the unethical and corrupt behaviour of some public representatives and public officials affects immensely the public resources of local governments, as it does the resources of the Centre. An understanding of the nature and implication of ethics and corruption should inform strategies for enhancing ethical behaviour and countering corruption in local governments. In order for devolution to realise its key objectives of empowerment and improved service delivery, corruption must be countered through all means available, and as noted earlier, the success of anti-corruption programmes hinges to a large extent on the role of individuals, whether they are in government or in the Civil Society. If people see nothing wrong with ethical violations or deem themselves helpless victims of the system, even the most ambitious anti corruption programme will either fail to get off to a promising start or falter midway.

Ruzindana et. al. (1998:166) propose some of the new paradigms that should drive the governance and anti-corruption programmes in Uganda in a bid to improve the quality, timeliness, cost and coverage of services to the public.

2.15.4.1 Accountability through transparency

Lack of accountability both for national and local civil servants is probably the most important factor why sustainable development has not taken place in many of Uganda's local governments, despite large transfers of money over the last ten years. Accountability, integrity and the rule of law are very much dependent on leadership and political will both from the top and at the local level, but even with the necessary political will, there is no

guarantee that there will be transparency and accountable local government. Given that in Uganda less than 2 percent of the population work for government, with an even lower percentage working in local authorities, the approach of this thesis is based on the assumption that accountability in local governments can only occur through active education and involvement of the 98 percent of the people outside the government rather than through the traditional pressure from central government agencies.

According to **Ruzindana et. al.** (1998:166), the challenge is to look for synergy through sequencing and timing of the two pressure points highlighted above. In this regard, education and involving the public should be the centre-piece of the awareness-raising strategy, coupled with other key elements such as:-

- Giving the public an active voice by involving them in periodic service delivery and integrity/corruption surveys;
- Deepening the democratisation process through regular democratic elections (presidential, parliamentary and local);
- Increased transparency by opening up the government and by delivering services closer to the customers; and
- Raising the public's awareness about its rights and responsibilities through introducing citizen charters by which the public knows what services to expect in terms of quality, cost, timeliness and coverage.

2.15.4.2 *Raising awareness and expectations of the civil society*

Ruzindana et. al. (1998:167) use the experience of Mali, where a service delivery survey was conducted in 1995 to justify the rationale for this task. Despite the fact that Mali has some of the worst social indicators in the world, the survey indicated that a majority of the population did not have a problem with the situation pertaining in the country. It was realized that after so many years of misery people had lost hope and did not expect anything from their government.

Based on this experience, the adoption of a citizen charter model is necessary, (**Ruzindana et. al.** 1998:168) in addition to periodic service delivery surveys in order to increase the accountability of government through:

- Informing the Civil Society about their rights; what services they are supposed to get from their government, at what cost, in what quantities and when;
- Obtaining more accurate information about the services actually reaching the people at community or village level through household service delivery surveys; and
- Giving the people a voice by going back to them with regular household surveys and initiating a process where by this information is returned to the national and local policy-makers in an efficient and effective manner.

2.15.4.3 *Strengthening the pillars of integrity*

Langseth (1998:159) observes that pervasive corruption reduces the efficiency of government in general, and in particular reduces the effectiveness of local and national investment. Corruption also makes citizens feel alienated from their government. Indeed leaders in the campaign against corruption will only achieve real gains when a society collectively changes its expectation of public behaviour, or when people believe that they are entitled to expect a government that is not corrupt.

The starting point in this respect is the strengthening of the pillars of integrity and in particular, the Executive, Parliament, the Judiciary, watchdog agencies, the Media, the Private Sector, Civil Society and enforcement agencies such as the Police and Public Prosecution. Ultimately, the bottom line as regards improved governance and public sector management rests on strengthened institutional capacity, improved service delivery and enhanced national integrity.

2.15.5 Disseminating information

Another important measure is disseminating information to allow people to monitor public services. Using newspapers and other popular information sources to disseminate information on budget allocations and spending could enable people to hold civil servants accountable, thus reducing inefficiency and corruption in the process.

In Uganda, when primary school enrolments did not improve despite substantial increases in budget allocations, a survey of schools examined public spending on primary education (**Ablo & Reinikka, 1998:35**). The study found that budget allocations may not matter when institutions or their popular control is weak: in 1991-95 on average less than 30 percent of the intended non-wage public spending on primary education reached the schools.

The government has since improved performance by increasing the flow of information within the system. A major breakthrough was achieved by making regular announcements in local newspapers and on radio of the public funds transferred to districts and posting information on transfers at each school. A follow-up survey in 1999 showed dramatic improvements since 1995, with schools receiving close to 100 percent of the non-wage public funding.

Improvement in the flow of information coupled with revision of the existing legislations some of which inhibit the disclosure of useful information will help to establish cues for ethical behaviour in local governments. Though not providing a full scale solution, at local government level, codes of ethics have been accepted as one of the strategies for improving the moral behaviour of public officials, and as **Lake (1991:175)** observes, in an era of increasing globalization and demand for localization, local government needs to re-examine existing approaches to enhancing ethical behaviour and public integrity. According to **Lake**, some of the challenges include:-

- Balancing demands for personal and individual ethical behaviour against the demand for institutional outcomes and collective behaviour.
- Focusing more on environmental interdependences and interconnectedness rather than focusing on inward political and administrative complexities.
- Balancing tension between self-interest and public interest with multiple definitions of public interest that cut across regional and national boundaries and generations.
- Overcoming restrictive measures that force public representatives and public officials to pay attention to personal conduct only.
- Encouraging thinking that focuses on the interests of contemporary and future generations of citizens.
- Balancing the education of public representatives and public officials so that they not only make choices in just, fair, honest, and accountable ways, but also consider the long-term effects and consequences of policy and programme outcomes.

2.16 Conclusion

A detailed analysis of the views of a number of authors namely **Woods** (1992), **Landell-Mills** (1992), **Reddy** (1999), **Bebbington** et. al. (1993), **Wuyts** et. al. (1992) and **Jagnadham** (1979) look at empowerment, participation and partnerships with the Civil Society as dominant themes in the gamut of developmental theories that underpin local government democratisation and development. According to them democratic decentralisation can produce effective local government that is responsive to the needs of the poor and can provide opportunities for participation around issues that matter most in peoples' lives. Their views are grounded in a sound historical appreciation and an astute analysis of the international policy context within which devolution and the new local government dispensation has been constructed. Prominent in these international discourses is the tendency to valorise 'the local' and local government generally as the site of strategic defence against powerful centripetal

forces, by portraying them as the bulwark for democratic local participation and empowerment.

On the other hand, the second group of authors namely **Samoff** (1979), Freire (1972), **Fals-Borda** (1981), **Boaden et. al.** (1982) **Burkey** (1993) and **Rahman** (1983a) believe that state inspired influence is so pervasive at the local level that participation and empowerment are merely seen as instruments to instruct, guide and legitimise rather than locate decision-making powers in the hands of local people through democratisation. They are so unequivocal on the omnipresent influence of the state in all spheres of life that they believe it is impracticable to nurture a strong Civil Society to buttress local democratic participation.

The third school of thought is of **Hirschman** (1970) and **Le Grand** (1990) which advocates for the power of the market as a key instrument for empowerment within the broad framework of peoples' ability to choose and or exempt themselves from certain services as and when they deem it so. According to this group, the state should stop being both the funder and provider of services. Instead it should become primarily a funder, with services being provided by a variety of private, voluntary and public suppliers all operating in competition with one another.

In essence therefore the empowerment and participation discourse divides between these three broad groups. The first who see civil society empowerment and local democratisation as the primary functions of participation. The second who look at empowerment and participation as a useful process to legitimise state actions and foster local compliance, and the third group composed of mainstream liberals and the public choice school who believe that the main role of government is to maintain liberty and to provide a framework within which the competitive markets can operate un hindered.

A significant characteristic of the first and second group's views on empowerment and participation is that they all focus on the relationship

between citizens and specific governmental agencies and programmes and tend to overlook the existence of a number of other spheres of influence regarding citizen power that lie outside the state-local government arena. **Figure 7** highlights these spheres and sets the framework within which the paradigms of empowerment and participation should be contextualized. The first sphere is that of the individual person or household. To what extent do they have power to determine the nature of services they receive and, if they are ill, old, disabled or otherwise deemed 'dependent', the care or treatment plans that are designed for them? The second sphere, which is very much the focus for community participation and involvement, is the sphere within which local people or individuals use public services, programmes and goods in common and maintain these services based on the principle of community ownership.

Maintenance of bore holes by water source committees in Uganda and village schools by Harambee committees in Kenya are some of the examples of such community ownership. The third sphere which is of local government and administration provides the mechanism through which the citizens are able to access national resources through the process of devolution, while the fourth is of the state or national governance mandated with the task of providing the legal and policy framework through which the broad process of devolution and empowerment should manifest itself.

Figure 7
Spheres of citizen power

(1) The Individual sphere	(2) The sphere of the village Community, Parish or Neighbourhood	(3) The sphere of local government and administration	(4) The sphere of the state or national governance
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Source: Burns *et.al*: 158

This thesis argues that it is quite possible for citizens to enjoy a high degree of power within the second sphere yet comparatively little within the third and none at all within the first. Citizens may for example be denied power within the third sphere because the local strategic powers which should reside there have been absorbed by the fourth sphere, and this will ordinarily occur in conditions where political pluralism is absent. Conditional grants in Uganda that are accessed by local governments upon signing memoranda of understanding between the latter and the central government constitute another manifestation of the absorption alluded to above, since by signing these memoranda, local governments undertake to implement central government plans to the letter.

Regarding the third group's view which in this thesis is identified as Hirschman's model of empowerment, it is important to stress that this model has serious drawbacks in the public service delivery context. In particular, power and choice become illusions when there is nowhere to exit to. Even where there is an element of choice, such as in the education sector, the evidence suggests that, as with conventional markets, quasi-markets create inequalities and foster social injustice. Thus critics of the Uganda government's education policy argue for example that some private and public elite schools will cream off the most able pupils and leave the rest to struggle in 'sink' UPE schools. It is argued in this thesis therefore that, despite the enthusiasm of some of its advocates, the fact remains that there are few, if any, success stories demonstrating how the competitive model has created high-quality, cost-effective services which meet the needs of all citizens.

Finally, it is postulated that while absolute empowerment of local people is utopian, and that no institutional or political structure can guarantee participative democratic governance, meaningful participation at local level is possible and should manifest itself through maximization of the power of citizens as opposed to non-elected elites within the communities. In doing so efforts should be made to integrate women into all stages of local decision-making by ensuring that mechanisms to facilitate community

participation are targeted and inclusive. Secondly, focus should also be directed at the degree and quality of ethical behaviour and level of integrity among local leaders and managers since this would help to conserve the available resources and utilise them to eradicate poverty and address other aspects of local government development. Political pluralism, though still strongly discouraged by the NRM government, still remains a fundamental element of the democratisation process, and would go a long way to enhance people's participation by providing multiple platforms for the initiation, aggregation and advocacy of alternative political values and interests necessary for development. Although they are cross-cutting aspects, gender, ethics and public integrity are part of the broader approaches which are essential in the strengthening and development of local government.

While these measures could go along way to enhance participation at the local level, most of the intractable issues which render participatory development difficult will remain. Some of these are enumerated below:-

- Participation will develop in different ways in specific situations dependent upon the problems faced by specific groups of local people and the specific factors inhibiting their development. The promotion of peoples' participation according to neatly defined standard 'development objectives' may actually inhibit peoples' initiatives rather than promote them.
- Generally local people need to be approached as a specific group and their economic situation ought to be improved if participation is to be successful. This will in most situations automatically imply conflict with more well-to-do elements (local elites) in differentiated rural communities.
- There is a complex relationship between local self-reliance as one of the basic tenets of empowerment of local people and the need for external assistance. Participation requires self-reliance and is surrendered by dependency. However the promotion of participation

in initially non-participatory, dependent situations often requires some initial external assistance. This dilemma is real and must be approached with extreme sensitivity if the process is not to result in new dependencies.

- Participation requires organisation and yet organisations easily become centres of formal power controlled by a few. Maintaining peoples' power requires that local people retain genuine control over their own organisations.
- Participatory processes seldom begin spontaneously. Such processes are generally initiated by a leadership whose vision is external to the perceptions and aspirations of the people concerned. Resolving this contradiction implies going beyond mere mobilisation for the support of an externally defined cause.

2.17 Summary

The decentralisation process has initiated a comprehensive and thorough transformation of the entire Ugandan public sector and of the political landscape with wide-ranging consequences for the Ugandan society. It has been an essential part of the government's national-building strategy for a period spanning fifteen years. Given that decentralisation in Uganda has been a radical departure from the centralised governance of earlier governments, and has manifested itself through extensive devolution of power and reasonable grassroots participation, it will be the preoccupation of this thesis to assess and analyse the magnitude to which local government democracy has been strengthened, and more particularly, whether this strengthening has any relevance to the level of community participation as a mode of empowering the people.

This chapter focused in detail on the most critical aspects of devolution and local government democracy and the theoretical framework within which they are conceptualised. Efforts are made to review and analyse the concepts of decentralisation and local government democratisation and to define the key circumstances pertinent to their realisation. The importance

of community participation as a process whereby people learn to take charge of their own lives and solve their own problems is emphasised, and its significance as an essential ingredient of societal development highlighted.

The chapter underscores the negative role of corruption, both political and bureaucratic, to local government development and asserts that this is symptomatic of bad governance and a weak, unstable and immature system of public institutions and public order, low popular participation in politics, and a weak protection of civil liberties.

In sum, empowerment through local governance will emerge as a consequence of interplay of various factors of which devolution is one. Others are good governance, democratisation, community participation, a strong civil society, and a high level of public integrity, commitment and transparency in the dispensation of public services.

2.18 Projections for the next chapter

Chapter three will examine the trends, constraints and prospects of local government in Uganda. It will highlight the historical and contemporary nature of local government, the current local government system in Uganda, its legal and institutional basis, and some of the critical issues in local government management and development. The chapter will also analyse the country's nature and scope of local government financing, decentralised taxation and expenditure and through comparisons with other cases such as that of Papua New Guinea suggest ways of improvement. The role of gender in the local democratisation and empowerment process will be examined and so too will be women's participation in the political, economic and social life through their integration in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER THREE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN UGANDA: TRENDS, CONSTRAINTS AND PROSPECTS

3.1 Introduction:

Local Government is the level of governance created to ensure that government is brought to the grassroots population to give its members a sense of involvement in the political processes that control their daily lives (Reddy, 1999:1). This chapter provides a general overview of local government development in Uganda since Independence, focusing particularly on the post-Independence period up to the present day.

The initiatives towards strengthening of local government started by the Colonial Government in the mid 1950s are analysed and the centralising influence of the one-party Obote Government and the military regime of Amin highlighted. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, there have been practical and consistent efforts to re-establish and consolidate the local government system in Uganda with the main purpose of improving service delivery and empowering the local people to become agents of their own development. The chapter outlines this trend and analyses some of the key constraints encountered on the way. There are also other key elements critical to the process of devolution that are discussed, ranging from issues such as political will, financial and management capacity to the human resources management factors and control of staffing.

The chapter also looks at the broad spectrum of local and central government financing and undertakes a deeper analysis of the taxation policy in Uganda, especially in as far as it relates to local government revenue mobilisation. It underscores the importance of reform through best practices in ways that not only target the traditional local revenue sources such Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) but also focus on new potential sources of revenue, such as the farming sector. The role of gender as a cross-cutting concept is highlighted and its synergetic effect in

galvanising the efforts and involvement of women in local development initiatives emphasised.

3.2 Historical Evolution of Local Government in Uganda

The modern state of Uganda was a colonial creation. Before the establishment and consolidation of effective colonial administration, each ethnic nationality had its own system of local government, ranging from the centralised monarchical system of the kingdom of Buganda which was based on a hierarchy chiefs, to the highly-decentralised republican organisations in the non-kingdom areas of the North, East and South-west (**Lubanga**, 1996:47). The first attempts by the colonial authorities to set up local administrations were in 1919 when the African (Native) Authority Ordinance was passed, providing for the powers and duties of African chiefs and for the enforcement of African authority (**Apter**, 1967:74-77). The chiefs collected taxes, presided over native courts, maintained law and order, enforced laws and constituted native councils at district and lower levels. The native councils were neither representative nor democratic. They simply provided a forum for chiefs to exercise their powers (**Apter**, 1967:79).

The chiefs in Buganda derived their power from the Kabaka (the King), owed allegiance to him and held office at his pleasure. In non-kingdom areas, the chiefs owed their creation, appointment and allegiance to the District Commissioners, who in turn were responsible to the Centre. After 1919, the evolution of local government in Uganda went through two notable watersheds. First were the reforms under the African Local Government Ordinance of 1949 that provided for the setting up of body corporate councils in all districts and a system of standing (functional) committees (**Lubanga**, 1996:47). This followed a dramatic breakthrough that had taken place in 1947 when the Colonial Office decided to introduce what it described as an "efficient and democratic system of local government" in each of its imperial possessions. The explanation given by Arthur Creech Jones, the then Colonial Secretary for the dual emphasis on efficiency and democracy was quite succinct:

I use these words because they seem to me to contain the kernel of the whole matter: local because the system of government must be capable of managing the local services in a way which will help raise the standard of living; and democratic because it must not only find a place for the growing class of educated men, but at the same time command the respect and support of the mass of the people (Wallis, 1989:127).

Second were reforms under the 1955 District Councils Ordinance, which provided for elected majorities in the councils and also endowed councils with the legal basis to assume wider functions, the most salient ones being: primary education, granting bursaries and scholarships, maintenance of local dams and boreholes, local forests, local police, provision of dispensaries, provision of ambulances, local courts and rural leprosy work. All in all, four basic tenets that characterised the local government system under the Colonial Government can be highlighted.

The first is in respect of revenue collection. Local governments collected limited "own" revenue, employed some staff and carried out a small range of functions. They were under considerable powers of tutelage of the Central Government through the District Commissioners. The powers of tutelage were more robustly applied to non-kingdom areas which had a unitary relationship with the centre as compared to the kingdom areas and Busoga Region, which enjoyed a semi-federal status.

The second is in respect of public administration. A parallel central government field administration was headed by a District Commissioner. The District Commissioner supervised and coordinated district officers responsible for delivery of services such as works, agriculture, community development etc., who were answerable to their Permanent Secretaries at the Centre in Entebbe and Kampala. This generated functional departmentalism, as each department had very strong vertical communication and budget links with its national or regional headquarters,

with a marked absence of effective horizontal communication and harmonisation at district level (**Lubanga**, 1996:48).

Thirdly is the “*hub and wheel*” style of administration where an individual colonial officer provided all the complex and abstract functions of administration himself (**Morris**, 1977:91). Any complex task would be reduced to a set of rudimentary and specific instructions which the centre-post official could then pass individually to a ring of poorly trained subordinates, each of whom bore only limited responsibility not requiring much lateral communication (**Leys** 1967:121, **Karugire** 1980:190-197).

The fourth and last is in respect of role differentiation. Local government councils were assigned functions mainly in the area of service provision and public order but not in development. The period between Independence in 1962 and 1966 witnessed a blossoming of local governments. A majority of members of kingdom assemblies and district councils were directly elected. Kingdom governments and district councils exercised considerable authority in their areas and had noteworthy opportunities to set their priorities and execute their decisions. But it is also during this period that the seeds for the emasculation of local governments were sown. The Central Government became worried about autonomous local governance and started curtailing the powers of councils on the pretext that they were breeding grounds for the opposition (**Lubanga**, 1996:49). In 1963 for example, district councils lost powers to appoint and remove from office their political heads, the Secretary-Generals. In the same vein local district appointment boards also lost their independence. The Centre-local relations continued to deteriorate leading to the abrogation of the 1962 Constitution and its replacement with the 1967 Republican Constitution that centralised all powers and gave all districts, including those in former kingdom areas, equal status in the eyes of the Central Government. The final nail in the local governments’ coffin came with the enactment of the 1967 Local Administrations Act which relegated local governments to a status of local administrations, with severely

reduced powers so much so that even their budgets and development plans had to be approved by the Central Government (**Leys, 1967:123**).

3.3 Overview of the Local Government System in Uganda

Uganda's decentralisation policy, based on the devolution of power, functions and responsibilities to popularly elected local governments has made a big difference in the way the country is governed (**Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2002:100**). All local governments in Uganda now have the power to make and implement development plans based on locally determined priorities. They have the power to set, approve and execute their own budgets, raise and utilise resources according to their own priorities after making legally mandated disbursements and to appoint statutory committees, boards and commissions. They can also make ordinances and by-laws, hire, manage and fire personnel, manage their own payroll and separate personnel systems and implement a broad range of decentralised services previously handled by the Centre (**Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2002:100**). All this is in sharp contrast to the centralising tendencies of earlier post-Independence governments. As regards finances, major reforms have followed the Local Government (Resistance Councils) Statute, 1993. In the initial phase of decentralisation of services, funding continued under the central budget vote system through the respective service ministries. These payments were later replaced with a single block grant consolidating payments into an intergovernmental transfer (**Reddy, 1999:46**). The formula for the block grant is based on an assessment of needs taking account of local revenue raising capacity. Annexure C is an extract of parts 1 and 2, among others, of the second schedule of the Local Governments Act (1997), which details functions and services of the Central Government as differentiated from those of district local governments, while **Table 1** shows the numerical distribution of authorities across the urban-rural divide.

Table 1
Distribution of Authorities

	Rural	Urban	Total
District/City (Local Council V)	55	1 (Kampala)	56
County/Municipality (Local Council IV)	170	13	183
Sub-county/Municipal Division/Town council (Local Council III)	903	113	1016
Total	1128	127	1255

Source: Ministry of Local Government, Decentralisation Secretariat, Status report on the implementation of the decentralisation programme for the period 1st July-31st December 2000, Kampala, March 2001.

3.4 Local Government Organisational Set-up

Table 2 shows the distribution of district local governments and populations based on the current status.

Table 2:
Distribution of District Local Governments and population

Districts (LC V)	Counties (LC IV)	Sub-counties (LC III)	Population	% Rural
Adjumani	1	7	201,493	90
Apac	5	21	676,244	98
Arua	7	36	855,055	91
Bugiri	1	19	426,522	96
Bundibugyo	2	10	212,884	93
Bushenyi	5	30	723,427	95
Busia	1	10	228,181	83
Gulu	5	23	468,407	76
Hoima	2	13	349,204	90
Iganga	4	25	716,311	95
Jinja	4	11	413,937	76
Kabale	4	19	471,783	90
Kabarole	3	14	359,180	89
Kalangala	2	7	36,661	92
Kampala	-	5	1,208,544	0
Kamuli	4	23	712,079	98
Kamwenge	2	8	295,313	95
Kanungu	1	8	205,095	94
Kapchorwa	3	11	193,510	95
Kasese	2	21	532,993	89
Katakwi	3	15	307,032	98

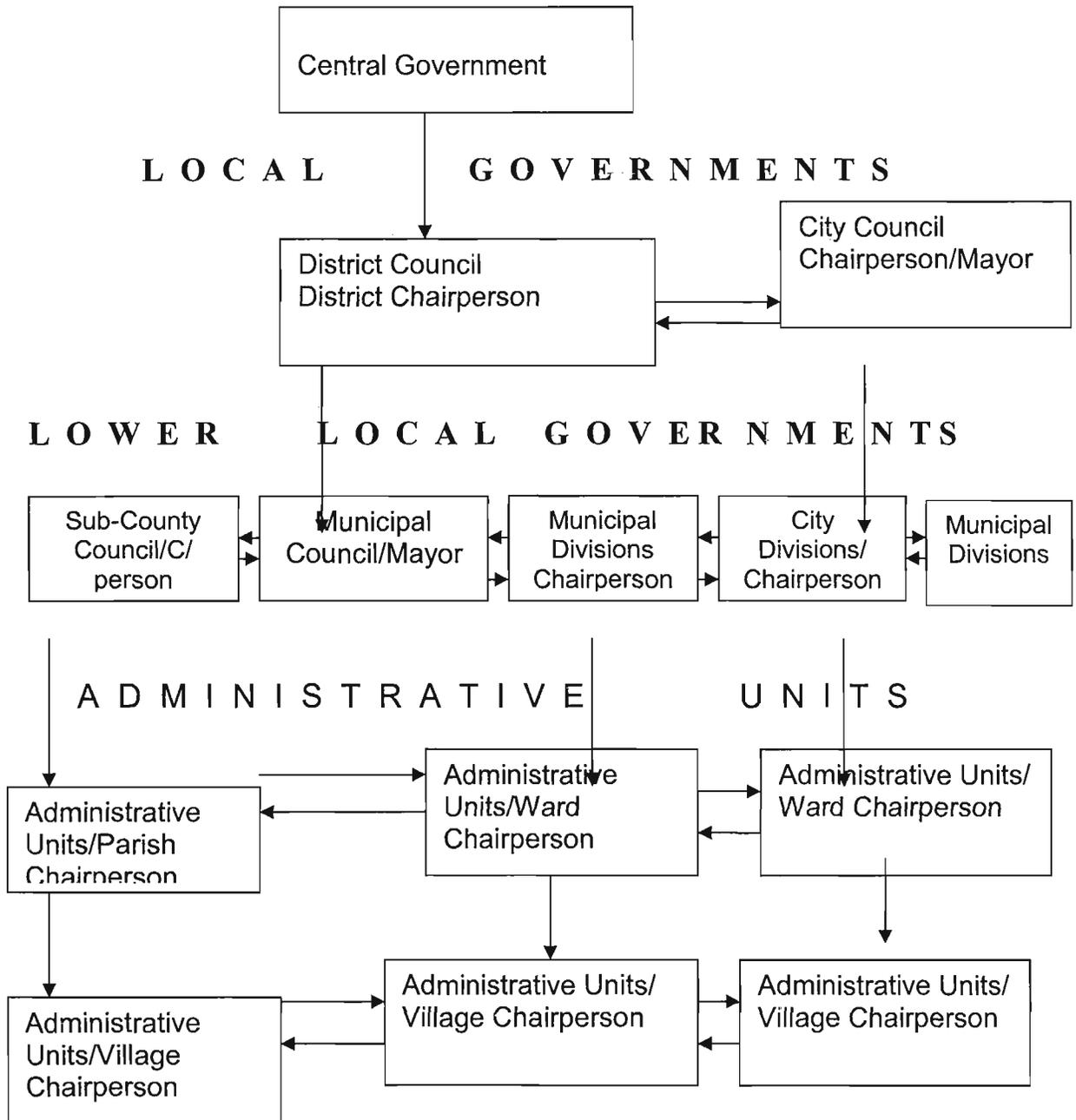
Districts (LC V)	Counties (LC IV)	Sub-counties (LC III)	Population	% Rural
Kayunga	2	9	297,081	93
Kibaale	3	19	413,353	99
Kiboga	1	14	231,718	95
Kisoro	1	14	219,427	95
Kitgum	2	13	286,122	85
Kotido	3	20	596,130	98
Kumi	3	16	388,015	98
Kyenjojo	2	13	380,362	96
Lira	6	28	757,763	88
Luwero	4	21	474,627	88
Masaka	6	23	767,759	90
Masindi	4	14	469,865	95
Mayuge	1	6	326,567	97
Mbale	4	31	720,925	90
Mbarara	8	47	1,089,051	92
Moroto	3	11	170,506	96
Moyo	3	14	199,912	94
Mpigi	3	17	414,757	98
Mubende	4	20	706,256	93
Mukono	4	28	807,923	82
Nakapiripirit	3	10	153,862	99
Nakasongola	1	7	125,297	95
Nebbi	3	19	433,466	85
Ntungamo	3	14	386,816	97
Pader	2	13	293,679	97
Pallisa	4	22	522,254	95
Rakai	4	26	471,806	95
Rukungiri	2	11	308,696	95
Sembabule	2	5	184,178	98
Sironko	2	17	291,906	96
Soroti	4	17	371,986	89
Tororo	4	20	559,528	92
Yumbe	1	7	253,325	94
Wakiso	3	16	957,280	92
Total	170	918	24,748,977	88

Source: Uganda Bureau of Statistics: National Census Office, Entebbe, Uganda 2002

There are five organisational tiers in rural and urban areas respectively (**Local Governments Act**, 1997:14-29). Rural areas consist of village councils also referred to as Local Council I, parish councils also referred to as Local Council II, sub-county councils also referred to as Local Council III, county councils or Local Council IV, and district councils or Local Council V.

Urban areas consist of village councils known as Local Council I, ward councils known as Local Council II, town, municipal division and city

Figure 8
The Legal Structure of the Local Government System



Source: The Simplified Version of the LGA 1997: IV

division councils known as Local Council III, municipal councils known as Local Council IV, and city council known as Local Council V. The village council is composed of all persons of eighteen years of age or above

residing in that village. The parish council is composed of all members of the village executive committees in that parish. The sub-county, town, municipal, municipal division, and city division council is composed of a chairperson directly elected through universal adult suffrage; one councillor directly elected to represent each parish/ward or part thereof in that council; two youth councillors representing the youth in that council, one of whom has to be a female youth; two councillors with disabilities representing persons with disabilities in that council, one of whom has to be a female; and women councillors forming one third of that council. The district/city council is composed of a chairperson directly elected through universal adult suffrage; one councillor directly elected to represent an electoral area in the district or city; two councillors one of whom is a female youth representing the youth in the district/city; two councillors with disabilities one of whom is a female representing persons with disabilities; and women councillors forming one third of the council. The districts and city council, of which there are 56 including Kampala, are the principal units of local government with lower level councils being delegated authority to from them. Only those classified as LC III and LC V plus thirteen municipal councils are considered local governments with legislative powers. Being administrative units, the village (LC I), parish/ward (LC II), and county (LC IV) are without legislative powers. However, they do have assemblies which deliberate budget priorities and have a consultative role in relation to the District Chairperson, Senior Administrative Officers at higher levels of local government and Members of Parliament. **Figure. 8** provides a diagrammatic representation of the legal structure of the local government system in Uganda.

3.5 Legal and Institutional Basis for Local Government

The springboard in respect of the legal framework for Uganda's decentralisation is the Resistance Councils and Committees Statute, 1987, drafted on the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the local government system that was set up that year. The Statute was aimed at raising the political profile of local councils in a bid to circumvent the centralising tendencies of the 1967 Constitution and the Local

Administrations Act that had transformed local governments into mere appendages of the Central Government. However, the Statute did not provide local councils with any significant authority or autonomy, particularly in the management of financial and human resources.

Following government's decision in late 1992 to devolve power to local governments, the Local Governments (Resistance Councils) Statute, 1993 was enacted. Among other things, the Statute provided for the principle of non-subordination to prevent higher local governments dominating lower ones. Its provisions were entrenched in the 1995 Constitution and subsequently expanded in the Local Governments Act, 1997 (LGA, 1997), the two authoritative legislative documents on Uganda's decentralisation policy and process. Local governance as a system of governance is entrenched within the National Constitution and what only remains to be seen is how the social forces at the local level can use the new structures to foster democratic practices and development. It also remains to be seen whether or not the agents and agencies of the Central Government will in the long-run respect the constitutional provisions that require minimal interference in matters of local concern. As **Hyden** (1996:95) observes, "*a constitution by itself, no matter how ingeniously designed, no matter what formal arrangements of checks and balances, will not limit authoritarian rule*".

Schedule Two of the **LGA** (Annexure C) sharply distinguishes between the roles played by the Central Government on the one hand, and local governments on the other. The main role of the Central Government is to set national policy and standards, and to inspect, supervise, monitor and coordinate activities of local governments in order to keep them in compliance with national policies and standards. Local governments on the other hand are responsible for implementing a broad range of devolved services listed in parts 2-5 of the same Schedule, in addition to any lawful others they may wish to undertake for the development of their respective areas. The division of responsibilities is sufficiently detailed to minimise confusion of roles, although in practice confusion sometimes still occurs.

Local government councils approve their own development plans and budgets without reference to those above them (the non-subordination principle) and oversee the implementation of their development plans, including those of the Central Government through several bodies they appoint themselves. These are the executive and sectoral committees appointed by all local governments, and the District Service Commissions, District Tender Boards and Local Government Public Accounts Committees, appointed only at district level (**Commonwealth Local Government Forum**, 2002:101). While local councils have approval and supervisory functions, implementation of their decisions and those of the Central Government is assigned to civil servants headed by the Chief Administrative Officer in each district or by the Town Clerk in each municipality, town council or city council. Most of the civil servants in local governments are former employees of the Central Government who were automatically transferred to local governments at the start of decentralisation, a development that generated morale and allegiance problems which have not been entirely eliminated to date.

3.5.1 The 1995 Constitution

The local government system in Uganda is established by Article 176 of the 1995 Constitution, which stipulates that the system of local government shall be based on the district as a unit under which there shall be such lower local governments and administrative units as Parliament may by law provide. Among the key principles stipulated by the Constitution to apply to the local government system are the following:

- The system shall be such as to ensure that functions, powers and responsibilities are devolved and transferred from the government to local government units in a coordinated manner;
- Decentralisation shall be a principle applying to all levels of local government and in particular, from higher to lower local government units to ensure peoples' participation and democratic control in decision making;

- Persons in the service of local government shall be employed by the local government; and
- The system of local government shall be based on democratically-elected councils on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

With such a constitutional framework, government expects the current decentralisation process to lead to massive improvements in public service production and allocation of resources, while at the same time strengthening local democracy.

3.5.2 The Local Governments Act of 1997

The Local Governments Act (1997) provides for harmonisation and constitutionalisation of all laws relating to local governments, decentralisation of functions, powers and services from the Central Government to local governments. The Local Governments Act gives powers to the district and lower local governments to enable them perform decentralised functions and ensure that services are taken to the people, within the framework of good governance, democratic participation, and control of decision-making by the people themselves. Within the framework of the need to comprehensively empower communities across the board, the Act establishes affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for purposes of addressing imbalances which exist against them.

The Act also establishes sources of revenue and procedures for financial accountability and provides for the election of local councils. Having outlined the legal framework on which local government is premised, what remains is to analyse the extent to which this enabling environment has helped to nurture and strengthen democratic local governance and empowerment of local people through the process of community participation, enhanced local decision-making and improvement in the quality of services delivered. This is a subject which forms a major focus of this study.

3.6 Local Government Elections and the Quest for Good Governance

The system of elections is "first-past-the-post" and candidates are barred from standing on political party tickets (**Commonwealth Local Government Forum**, 2002:44), (**LGA**, 1997:86). All voters must be over 18 years old. Sub-county councillors are elected by universal adult suffrage, while representatives of special interest groups, mainly the youth and people with disabilities, where one of each must be a woman, are elected by electoral colleges. Elections to the lower levels of the local government structure, village and parish, are conducted by open voting where individuals line up to show support for a particular candidate. All Ugandan citizens resident in a local government area for more than four months are eligible to vote (**LGA**, 1997:87). Political representation is primarily through single member wards. For district local councils, sub-county local council (LC III) boundaries serve as electoral constituencies and one third of the whole council represent women. Participatory democracy is considered the bedrock of the local government system in Uganda and is a stated requirement in the 1995 Constitution (**Bidandi-Ssali**, 2001:8). The multi-tiered local government system is designed to promote participation. Councils are not permitted to function without the full complement of women, while the youth and people with disabilities are assured of democratic input through special constituencies. Each year districts hold district budget conferences involving all stakeholders, to identify priorities for the forthcoming year (**LGA**, 1997:58). It is also the forum in which foreign NGOs, whose activities are also largely decentralised, indicate the money they intend to spend in the district. One question remains unanswered, however, and that is, to what extent can local government under a monolithic, all-embracing system characteristic of the NRM espouse even the most basic qualities of good governance? With the bureaucracy, both central and local, becoming increasingly fearful of the powerful political elite and the latter's efforts to politicise the former (as was seen in the 2001/2002 presidential, parliamentary and local council elections), the gap between policy formulation – a depiction of the politician's role and policy implementation – an application to the

administrative function – is becoming increasingly blurred (**Wallis**, 1989:25). A national administration, no less than a commercial enterprise, is only as good as its managers. Countries therefore flourish or flounder on the ability- or incompetence of their bureaucracies (**Asiaweek**, 1993:19). While it may be the function of politicians to supply inspiration, direction and vision-falling short, more often than not, of those lofty responsibilities – it is the Civil Service that determines in the end whether or not a country gains a reputation for good government, and for all the importance of legislative programmes, good government inevitably comes down to an efficient bureaucracy as political good intentions will not amount to much without the means to see policies through. Yet efficiency is certainly not the exercise of unquestioned authority, as indeed excessive power for civil servants can lead to the very situation that gives the bureaucracy a bad name: stifling rules and regulations, infuriatingly-delayed decisions, red tape and non-accountable men and women sitting behind the heartless desks of officialdom. The illumination by **Reddy** (1999:48) of the radical approach adopted in Uganda is understandable and even acceptable, given the country's political development which is largely characterised by autocracy and dictatorship. The removal of control by the Centre and its replacement with control by the local people; liquidation of the power of the Minister of Local Government to dissolve councils; the end of central control over local budgets, staff appointments and the level of taxes, rates, fees and charges; independent district service commissions, tender boards and district public accounts committees all exercising control over various aspects of staffing and financial affairs, are all fundamental manifestations of the existing political will by the Centre to empower the periphery through the buttressing of local initiative and control at the local level. However, in a society where, to a extent, the majority of the people appear to be suffering from what **Monga** (1995:33) calls the *civic deficit*, i.e. the failure of society to secure or promote virtues pertinent to the collective pursuits of the citizenry, the above attributes need to be underpinned by strong proactive dispensation that favours and encourages full participation of local communities in the decision-making process in a manner that safeguards the virtues of individual freedom.

3.7 Critical Issues in Local Government Management and Development in Uganda

Decentralisation in Uganda is currently a highly relevant public management issue, as it is in a number of developing countries within the region. It is both consonant with the stress on improved managerial capacity, as well as with political forces promising increased democratisation of the State through entrenchment of local governance and community participation as the basic mode of managing society. While the process of decentralisation has proceeded quite well and local government can now be described as constituting a key and fundamental tier of governance in the country, the **Nordic Consulting Group** (1999:10) in a report to the Ministry of Local Government on decentralisation of the development budget, observed that there were still a few sticking factors that militated against the management and further development of local government.

3.7.1 Political Will

In his paper on the political dimension of decentralisation, **Oscar Jose Monteiro** (1993:12) observes that political will or specifically, obtaining amongst the political authorities a positive consensus that decentralisation constitutes an effective means of increasing local participation and making government more representative is extremely essential for decentralisation to have far-reaching results. He however adds that, this consensus should not be a response to frustration caused by the complexity of problems, nor should it be based on a romantic view of the "Local" and the resources available to it, since this ignores the difficulties that local institutions will have to face for which they will require guidance, support and encouragement from the Centre. While President Museveni⁹ has been consistent and steadfast in this support for decentralisation, most line Ministries, with the exception of the Ministry of Local Government, have

⁹ In his speech at the Third Decentralisation Implementation Review Workshop in February 1996, he stressed that decentralisation was not only government policy but was a constitutional requirement that must be undertaken by central government officials. He added that the functions devolved to local government should not be centralized but that the local people should be helped and encouraged to plan and execute their own development projects.

tended to be aloof and disdainful in their approach towards the process. The negative attitude displayed by some bureaucrats, notably those in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development stem from their lack of confidence in the capacity of local governments to handle responsibly large amounts of public money and other key assignments. And this is not confined to Uganda alone; the experience of Morocco cited by **Rondinelli et al**¹⁰ (1981:73) is self-explanatory:

Certain obstacles linked to the implementation of new decentralised institutions continue to hinder the application of options taken by the government. These difficulties concern the reticence of a certain number of central services to cede prerogatives-implementation, launching of actions, recruitment and management of personnel-to their field units judged still too inexperienced and insufficiently endowed in human and physical terms. The functions of these services must be redefined in order to permit them to play fully the role which is assigned to them in the processes of decentralisation and deconcentration.

In Latin America, **Harris** (1998:198), noting the lack of trust central administrators have in officials from the regions, concluded that:

It is difficult to determine whether this is a product of what has been referred to as the centrist mentality of national officials or is a well-founded concern over the shortage of highly skilled and trained officials in the regions. But the result is a widespread reluctance on the part of central government officials to delegate power to regional and sub-regional levels. This has resulted in a “yo – yo” process of delegation and withdrawal of delegation, depending upon whether the central officials are satisfied or not with the decisions and actions taken by officials in the region.

¹⁰ Rondinelli.D.A, Nellis.J.R, and Cheema.G.S, (Undated) Decentralisation in Developing Countries: A review of Recent Experience, World Bank Staff Papers, No.581, Management and Development Series No.8, The World Bank, Washington D.C, pp 27-76.

In Sri Lanka, even civil service unions are known to have intervened to protect the prerogatives of central administrators during attempts to decentralize development planning and management. They are also said to have intervened actively in the political process to prevent a diffusion of administrative responsibility. **Wanasinghe** (1982:49-50) observes that:

The general thrust of these interventions has been toward maintaining individuality and autonomy of respective departmental cadres, strengthening the role of the bureaucracy in decision-making, enhancing career prospects through island-wide services. These thrusts have continuously run counter to attempts at implementation of local area-focused coordination, delegated decision-making by people's representatives, and creation of self-management organizations with their own personnel.

The **Nordic Consulting Group** (1999:9) also observe in their report that other Central Government servants, as well as some politicians at the Centre, loathe the thought of losing their former power and influence. Thus, many Parliamentarians pressed so hard to be made ex-officio members of the district councils in order to retain their powers of patronage and their ability to channel local development projects into areas that will benefit their constituents. Their persistence paid off with the amendment of the Local Governments Act (1997). In section 6 of the Local Governments (Amendment) Act 2001, section 11 of the principal Act was amended by adding a new clause (2), which says that; "A Member of Parliament may attend meetings of a local council in his or her constituency". It is an argument of this thesis that the amendment of the Local Governments' Act 1997 to make Members of Parliament ex-officio members of District Councils only serves to reinforce the already existing view in which most MPs see their role as the "boss" of their electorate, and not merely as the spokespersons, which has led to some tense confrontations with local government officials and politicians. The other impact of the amendment is the tendency to crowd-out local views and opinions from these councils and supplant them with a selfish and sometimes centrist agenda propagated by

the MPs. Ironically, through this amendment, the Local Government Act which is basically premised on the need to empower local people by ensuring democratic participation in, and control of decision-making, negates this principle by disempowering local people and impairing the effectiveness of local councils through the introduction of new actors whose constituencies are not basically local.¹¹

The situation in Uganda has similarities with the experience of Papua New Guinea a unitary state with quasi-federal features, which achieved independence from Australia in 1975 (**Standish, 1983:224-226**). Centrist attitudes in the wake of decentralisation were exhibited by national ministries and several designated departments, including finance. Worse still many MPs in Papua New Guinea felt that their role had been eroded with the achievement of provincial government and resented the political credit gained by provincial politicians through their control and allocation of local resources; they believed, perhaps correctly that their prospects of re-election were thereby jeopardised. In 1981 the national government yielded to the strong feelings of the MPs and allowed them to become ex-officio non-voting members of provincial assemblies and authorised two of their number in each province to serve on the Provincial Executive Committee (**Standish, 1983:224-226**). These retrogressive steps (retrogressive because the constituency of an MP is national, not local) were so strongly resented in the provinces that most MPs did not exercise their new rights. Instead, they settled for special funds made available to them by the national government to promote minor development projects and activities. These various concessions in the case of Papua New Guinea (as has been the case in Uganda, endorsed by the Local Government, (Amendment) Act 2001) reflected a weakening of political will in a State whose government is traditionally made up of a coalition of political parties with conflicting interests and varying degrees of commitment to decentralisation. This is against a backdrop of a strong recommendation by Papua New Guinea's Constitutional Planning

¹¹ Articles 78 and 79 of the Uganda Constitution, 1995 designate the operative platform of MPs as national and not local

Committee (CPC) which in 1974, on diagnosing widespread discontent with the then distribution of power in the country, and a deep yearning among the people for a greater say in the conduct of their affairs, urged that:

Power must be returned to the people. Government services should be accessible to them. Decisions should be made by people to whom the issues at stake are meaningful, easily understood and relevant. The existing system of government should therefore be restructured and power should be decentralised, so that the energies and aspirations of our people can play their full part in promoting our country's development. (PNG, 1974a, 1/10/8).¹²

The advice given by **Conyers** (1981:116) to political commentators and analysts to be careful while evaluating devolution in Papua New Guinea, arguing that it is still too early to make any realistic assessment of the impact of decentralisation or development, is pertinent to the case for Uganda. While the current leadership has given a clear unequivocal lead, and indeed stressed at the Third Decentralisation Review Workshop in February 1996 that decentralisation was not only government policy, but also a constitutional requirement that must be undertaken by central government officials, centrist attitudes still remain and their impact is discernable in the form of various degrees of intransigence and procrastination on the part of the latter to implement decisions viewed by them as leading to more empowerment of local governments.

3.7.2 Financial and Management Capacity

In their report to the Ministry of Local Government, the **Nordic Consulting Group** (1999:10) observe that decentralised governments must have the financial and management capacity to formulate integrated budgets with recurrent and development components. Since the capacity of these decentralised governments will vary widely, as they do in Uganda, the approach to decentralisation, they argue, should be phased and sufficiently

¹² Excerpted from PNG (Papua New Guinea) (1974a) Constitutional Planning Committee, Final Report, PNG Government printer, Port Moresby

flexible to respond to changing needs. In Uganda the problem of providing training to improve the financial and management capacity of local authorities was compounded by the far-reaching structural changes made as part of the decentralisation exercise (**Nsibambi**, 1998:47). The Decentralisation Secretariat (DS) within the Ministry of Local Government (MOLG) was divided into sections covering training, publications and capacity-building, institutional and staff issues, and local finance and development planning. Despite its small staff and limited resources, the Secretariat made a significant contribution to training and capacity building, particularly of district staff and politicians, and to the introduction in districts of new budgeting procedures. But both the distribution and scope of the exercise was uneven and lacked penetration as far as the 860 sub-counties are concerned. While the Decentralisation Secretariat made good use of mobile training teams, it might have achieved a wider coverage by concentrating on training of trainers within each district where, that is, personnel capable of undertaking this role could be found. As a result, many districts local governments still lack their own training teams, and without them they have little hope of developing financial and management capacity both at district and sub-county level (**Nsibambi**, 1998:49). All in all, and in spite of a greater impact made at the grassroots level by external agencies such as UNDP and UNICEF, financial and management capacity in most districts generally remains rather weak, and bad roads make the links between their headquarters and the sub-counties rather tenuous.

In emphasising the relevance of training in improving manpower skills both at central and local government levels, the experience of Zambia is worth mentioning. In order to boost the financial and management capacity of Zambia's local government system, the government in the early 1990s instituted the Local Government Support Project (LOGOSP), a three year British-funded technical advice and training project based within Zambia's Ministry of Local Government and Housing (MLGH) (**Nordic Consulting Group**, 1999:10). Staff inputs in this project were at two levels, with one level consisting of seven advisers based at the Ministry itself, who included a Project Manager, three coordinators, one each in finance, planning and

human resource management and three senior advisors in finance. The second level was of 18 regional advisers with two based in each of Zambia's nine provinces, one as a Provincial Management Training Adviser (PMTA) and the other as a Provincial Finance Training Adviser (PFTA). These regional advisers who were all handpicked Zambians provided capacity-building for Provincial Local Government Officers (PLGOs) and their staff, conducted workshops, and provided on-the-job training for local authority staff (each province contains an average of six districts, each with its own district council; there are also city, municipal and township councils). The expectation was that by the close of the project, that is after 1997, local authorities would have developed enough capacity to manage their affairs competently, provide adequate services, and put in place sound financial management practices. While this expectation was not fully realised, according to the **Nordic Consulting Group** (1999:10), by the close of LOGOSP, its effect in improving substantially the financial and management capacity of Zambia's 61 local authorities was largely visible. The only snag, which in a way negates this success, is the fact that to-date 83 percent of government expenditure in Zambia is still controlled by Permanent Secretaries in Lusaka, the national Capital and yet much of this is spent in the country's nine provinces headed by Provincial Permanent Secretaries (**Reddy**, 1999:264). **Chikulo** (1996), cited by **Reddy** (1999:264), notes that the situation at district level is much worse because recurrent expenditure under general grants and all specific-purpose transfers are controlled at the provincial level. In the final analysis, the relevance of Zambia's experience to the Uganda situation is not in the area of devolved decision-making as a way of enhancing local government, but rather, it is based on the view that relevant and comprehensive training is quite critical to the improvement of existing manpower skills, which is itself fundamental to improved service delivery levels and these are vital if people's welfare is to be enhanced.

3.7.3 Financial Resources

Under decentralisation local governments in Uganda have assumed a wide range of functions, including most of the services and responsibilities

previously undertaken by health, education and other line ministries (Nsibambi, 1998:59). Yet as noted in the Decentralisation Secretariat status report on the implementation of the decentralisation programme for the period 1st July-31st December 2000, appendix 109, only a relatively small proportion of government expenditure (some 20 percent of recurrent expenditure or 2 percent of GDP) has so far been placed under the control of local governments. The latter are handicapped in that, while the wage bill of decentralised staff is covered, non-wage bill costs are not adequately met. Reddy (1999:44) observes that right from the time of Independence there are few cases in Africa where local authorities have had adequate sources of finance, whether from local revenues or central grants and loans, and were able to maintain financial viability. The recurrent funds available to most decentralised governments in Africa, from whatever source, are barely enough to meet the wage bills, pay councillors and other allowances and maintain vital equipment (Nordic Consulting group, 1999:43). Consequently, many authorities have to seek donor funding for their capital development projects; the effect is to increase the recipient country's burden of debt and to saddle the local authority with often-unknown recurrent costs. There is therefore no doubt that the decentralisation process will be seriously handicapped, unless local governments have sufficient financial resources at their disposal to supplement their development budgets and meet the attendant recurrent costs. Local governments in Uganda have at times suffered as a result of the Centre withholding and/or delaying the release of funds, or remitting lesser amounts than anticipated. Lack of an assured revenue base has made development planning and especially long-term planning extremely difficult.

In a study carried out in Uganda by the Crown Agents Institutional Development Group (ODA, 1996:45) on behalf of the Overseas Development Agency, Graduated Personal Tax (a personal tax, varying with assessed income, levied on males over 18 and on women either salaried or in business) despite being the main district revenue raising instrument, was found to conflict with two central principles of good

taxation, those of equity and administrative simplicity. In relation to other tax instruments, GPT is regressive, while also exhibiting its own internal regressivity. The complex administrative requirements of GPT in relation to both assessment and collection result in unacceptably high administrative costs, particularly in the districts and collection data indicate significant arbitrary elements in the income assessment process.

Consequently, one can argue that in order to boost the current levels of financial resources available to local governments, further synergy between Uganda's national and local taxation systems is required and this can be achieved through a closer integration of institutions responsible for the administration of national and local taxes, the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and district local governments respectively. Specific informational links are required between the URA, staff at district level and district local governments, if relationships of trust are to be developed and co-operative arrangements are to evolve based on sharing of intelligence/knowledge of local economies and the diffusion of standards of good administrative practice. Since there are few obvious meaningful sources of additional local revenue that district local governments can tap, besides Graduated Personal Tax, except the introduction of increased or new user charges, their dependence on the Centre and external donors will continue and could worsen, unless administrative and structural bottlenecks, that at the moment appear to impede the expansion of local revenue bases, are identified and addressed.

3.7.4 Control of Staffing

According to **Lubanga** (1998:69) personnel decentralisation may be manifested in two classic typologies, the separate personnel system, and the unified personnel system. In the separate personnel system, local governments become the ultimate employer, they have powers to hire and fire their employees. The process and initiatives with regard to recruitment, promotion and discipline becomes the exclusive domain of each local government. They therefore bear the responsibility to establish or abolish offices in their local public services. In a unified personnel system the local

government service runs parallel to that of central government (**Lubanga**, 1998:69). Local government officers are appointed, promoted and disciplined by a national or local government service commission. Local governments remain the employers; but staff are organised on a national basis under one local government service commission or board. **Reddy** (1999:43) adds another typology and raises to three the systems of staffing for local government that are operational worldwide. In the integrated system, local government draws its staff from a national service that covers both central and local government and staff is transferable between the two.

Lubanga (1998:70), however, observes that many developing countries do not operate pure systems. They tend to blend them, hence the emergence of a new typology; the hybrid system. Uganda took the bold step of moving from a mixed integrated and unified system of the 1980s to the separate personnel system in 1993 (**Reddy**, 1999:43), (**Nordic Consulting Group**, 1999:130). Clause 56 (1) of the Local Governments Act, 1997 vests the power to appoint, discipline and remove district and urban council officers in the District Service Commission (DSC). Clause 59 (2) of the same Act requires the DSC to submit a report to the District Council and the Public Service Commission (PSC) on the performance of its functions after every four months and at such other times as is required. It is noteworthy that, while the PSC is required under Article 166 (d) of the 1995 Uganda Constitution to guide and coordinate District Service Commissions, it has no power to direct or control them, indeed clause 59 (1) of the LGA, 1997 stresses the independence of the DSC and says specifically that it “shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority”. Local government staff is however cushioned from any possible arbitrary actions of District Service Commissions by clause 60 (2 and 3) of the LGA, which empowers the Public Service Commission to hear and uphold the appeal of an aggrieved officer against the decision of the District Service Commission.

In Botswana, in the pre-1974 period, all staff responsibilities were delegated to the local authorities. (**Nordic Consulting Group**, 1999:13). This arrangement was abandoned in 1974 on the ground that it was open to nepotism and other abuses and worked to the detriment of the smaller councils. The recruitment, posting, transfer, promotion and discipline of local authority staff, other than the industrial-class employees then became the responsibility of the centrally-directed Unified Local Government Service (ULGS), headed by a civil service establishment secretary of undersecretary rank. There is also a Local Government Service Commission (LGSC) responsible for overall policy, as distinct from personnel management. District councils in Botswana have criticized the ULGS headquarters staff for not being sufficiently responsive to their problems or sufficiently aware of their needs. They argue that there are instances where officers are transferred from one council to another without adequate consultation with the councils concerned. But the Botswana Government has refused to accede to district councillors' requests that they should themselves resume full responsibility for appointing, promoting and disciplining council staff. In essence, the unified local government system in Botswana has been retained and is intact.

In Zambia, under the Local Government Act of 1991, a unified and transferable local government service was re-introduced, having been abolished by the 1980 Local Administration Act. It was centrally-controlled by a Local Government Service Commission, albeit with powers that were reduced both then and subsequently (**Nordic Consulting Group**, 1999:14). The election of new councils in November 1992 brought to the fore the issue of the relative powers of the local authorities - notably the extent of their autonomy over both personnel and other resources, and functions - and the Local Government Service Commission. The latter body was somewhat distant and was not particularly effective; its confirmatory powers fell into abeyance, leaving it only with the power to review cases on appeal. In the post-1993 period the locus of responsibility for the appointment, promotion and discipline of staff was unclear and ambiguities in the law remained. Despite this, councils exercised an

unrestricted power to “hire and fire”, while the Minister of Local Government and Housing transferred staff arbitrarily from one council to another, often without the agreement of the councils affected. By mid-1995 a unified local government service had virtually disappeared; the projected Provincial Service Boards had not been created and little had been done in the way of performance appraisal.

In Ghana the 1967 Mills-Odoi Report recommended that the local government and civil service should be merged (**Nordic Consulting Group**, 1999:13). However, renewed military intervention in 1972 held this up and delayed other structural reforms. In the late 1980s Rawlings¹³ quasi-military government introduced a non-partisan system of local government based on district assemblies; the latter were small units, 110 in number, raising the question of whether they would have an adequate resource base in staffing and finance to be viable and effective. The democratic 1992 Constitution re-affirmed the non-partisan nature of these elected assemblies, thereby taking no account of the difficulties likely to arise from the creation of a partisan central government formed by Rawlings, following the holding of competitive multi-party elections. In the meantime under the revised arrangements, Ghana has completed the process of recreating a unified local government service, separate from the civil service but, as **Reddy** (1999:43) observes, some staff members of central departments have been reluctant to transfer to the local government service and surrender their prospects in central government.

Zimbabwe’s separate personnel system in urban authorities, while not without shortages of key technical staff, seems to have been successful and to have contributed to the relative strength and autonomy of the system (**Reddy**, 1999:44).

¹³ Flight Lt Jerry Rawlings became Ghana’s Head of State 1979 following a military coup that ousted the military Junta led by General Akuffo. He latter handed over power to a civilian government but re-took it in yet an military coup in 1981 and ruled up 1992 when democratic multi-party elections(which his party won) were held.

In view of the above analysis, this thesis concurs with **Reddy** (1999:44) in respect of the suggestions he makes regarding the management of staff under decentralisation; that the management of the unified systems requires considerable sensitivity to the needs, priorities and preferences of local authorities and that the success of the separate personnel system can be promoted by building up the image of local government and increasing confidence in its future. It also supports the view advanced by **Lubanga** (1998:70) that since decentralisation is conceived as a continuum, with de-concentration being minimal and devolution being maximal, and assuming that it is most desirable for purposes of empowerment and good governance to let local governments have control over and responsibility for their decisions, then the separate personnel system would be the most appropriate form to promote good governance and provide an organic interface with civil society. It also offers more opportunities to councils and civil society to monitor, evaluate, reward, censure and sanction local government officials. Developing countries which have adopted a separate personnel system often take systematic precautions against irregular practices by local recruiting agencies and victimisation of appointed staff by introducing statutory or constitutional provisions for appeal to a national body that is also often granted a regulatory and quasi-Judicial role (**Lubanga**, 1998:70). The experience of Uganda shows that the separate personnel system is capable of offering positive results and to paraphrase **Reddy** (1999:44), if the future lies in devolution, perhaps the days of the unified and integrated systems are over. The separate system could flourish in a context of adequately-resourced councils that are supported strongly by the Centre and gain in confidence with success.

3.8 Local Government Financing in Uganda

For local government to perform a developmental role in addressing socio-economic and infrastructural backlogs and inequalities in a viable and sustainable manner, innovative and transformative financing and financial management strategies, processes and procedures have to be instituted (**Sing**, 2003:54). There are three types of fiscal transfers made from the Central to local governments in Uganda, and these are: unconditional,

conditional and equilisation grants. Revenue from these sources is supplemented by locally raised revenue. Unconditional grants, determined on the basis of population (85 percent) and area (15 percent) are the minimum grants that are paid by government to local governments to run decentralised services (**LGA**, 1997:84). They are intended to permit considerable discretion to local governments in resource allocation in pursuit of their developmental objectives. But local governments are however required to give priority in allocation to the five national Priority Programme Areas (PPAs) of primary education, primary health care, agricultural extension, rural feeder roads and water and sanitation (**PEAP**, 2001:147)¹⁴. Conditional grants on the other hand are directed at pre-determined programmes within the Priority Programme Areas and are supposed to be based on agreement between the Central Government and the relevant local governments regarding their access and utilisation (**LGA**, 1997:84). Equilisation grants are a subsidy or special provision disbursed from the Central Government to the least developed local governments to enable them meet the minimum standards of social services delivery. These sources of revenue are supplemented by local revenue generated from a host of taxes of which the most significant are graduated personal and property taxes, market dues, fees and fines, rates, cess, rents and any other legal revenue sources (**LGA**, 1997:145-156). Local governments are also permitted to borrow by way of bonds, debentures or directly from commercial banks up to 25 percent of locally-raised revenue, but the Minister of Local Government must approve any borrowing exceeding 10 percent of what a local government may legally borrow **LGA**, (1997:155).

¹⁴ The purpose of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) is to set the overall framework and principles for government planning and budgeting. The priorities articulated in the PEAP are implemented through sectoral plans and financed through the annual budget. The level of detail of these plans varies among sectors, but in all cases sectors have moved towards fully costed programmes with well-defined targets. The implementation of the PEAP is therefore not a separate exercise but primarily operates through the actions of each sector and the annual budgeting exercise.

TABLE 3: FISCAL TRANSFERS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN UGANDA (Fys 1993/94 - 2000/2001) (MILLIONS OF UGANDA SHILLINGS)

Type of Grant	Local Govts	1993/94		1994/95		1995/96		1996/97		1997/98		1998/99		1999/2000		2000/01	
		Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Unconditional Grants	District	7,990	25%	20,896	29.70%	38,544	33%	45,317	26%	48,111	24%	60,427	21%	62,659	18.90%	74,978	14.90%
	Urban			322	0.50%	2,076	2%	3,400	2%	3,672	2%	3,960	1%	3,960	1.20%	4,160	0.80%
Conditional Grants	District	23,580	75%	49,042	69.80%	75,988	65%	127,797	72%	144,634	74%	217,942	77%	263,002	79.40%	308,211	61.40%
	Urban															1,048	0.20%
Development Grants	District															101,167	20.20%
	Urban															8,373	1.70%
	District												1,500	0.50%	3,537	0.70%	

Equalisation Grants	Urban																462	0.10%
TOTAL TRANSFERS		31,570	100%	70,260	100%	116,608	100%	176,514	100%	196,417	100%	282,329	100%	331,122	100%	501,926	100%	
GDP Current Factor Cost (bn)				4,922		5,565		6,023		7,104		7,963		8,656		9,695		
Total Fiscal Transfer as % of GDP				1.4		2.1		2.90%		2.80%		3.50%		3.80%		5.20%		
National Recurrent Budget (a*)				403,335		473,617		597,169		655,291		826,190		908,760		1,012,821		
National Development Budget (b*)				524,270		537,363		684,804		749,523		811,869		1,175,897		1,300,283		
Total National Budget (c*)				927,603		1,011,000		1,282,000		1,404,815		1,638,060		2,084,658		2,313,104		
Total Fiscal Transfer as % of (a*)				17%		25%		30%		30%		34%		36%		50%		
Total Fiscal Transfer as % of (c*)				8%		12%		14%		14%		17%		17%		22%		

Source: Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, Kampala, Uganda: Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 1993/94-2000/2001. Figures rounded up to nearest thousands

TABLE 4: PROPORTION OF DIFFERENT GRANTS TRANSFERRED TO DISTRICTS SINCE Fys 1993/94-2000/2001 (%)

Grant	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/2001
District Unconditional Grants	25%	29.70%	33%	26%	24%	21%	18.90%	14.90%
Urban Unconditional Grants		0.50%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1.20%	0.80%
District conditional Grants	75%	69.80%	65%	72%	74%	77%	79.40%	61.40%
Urban conditional Grants								0.20%
District Equilisation Grants								20.20%
Urban Equilisation Grants								1.70%
District Development Grants								0.70%
Urban Development Grants								0.10%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development, Kampala, Uganda: Approved Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for Fiscal Years 1993/94-2000/2001.

Table 3 shows total fiscal transfers from the Centre to local governments in Uganda for the period 1993/94-2000/2001, both as a percentage of the gross domestic product and the national budget, while **Table 4** shows the proportion of different grants transferred to Districts over the same period. As regards local revenue, the Local Governments Act provides for the sharing of locally-raised revenue among local governments. Sub-counties, not districts, collect revenue, retain 65 percent of their collections and are required to remit the balance to districts. Sub-counties in turn are required to remit 25 percent of what they have retained to village councils, 5 percent to parish councils and 5 percent to their respective county councils (**LGA, 1997:151-153**). Municipal divisions are required to remit 50 percent of their collections to their respective Municipalities, while Kampala City divisions must also remit 50 percent of their collections to the City Council.

In 1987, the Commission of Inquiry into the Local Government System that had been appointed by the Central Government in 1986, reported that revenues of local authorities, under a highly-centralised national system, were inadequate to perform the mandatory and non-mandatory functions assigned to those authorities (**Nsibambi, 1998:48**). Given the fact that the Central Government itself did not have adequate funds to meet its financial obligations, it is hardly surprising that local authorities were financially deprived because even the meagre resources available were spent at the Centre rather than the districts. Grants from the Centre were neither predictable, nor pre-determined, while local revenue generation was not assured. The icing on the cake however remained the widespread tax evasion coupled with lack of proper involvement of the district councils in the budgeting process. In a nutshell, local authorities neither received the requisite financing for their functions nor were they authorised to raise the necessary revenue through taxation (**Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Local Government System in Uganda, 1987:88**). While the socio-political landscape may have drastically metamorphosed in view of decentralisation, the problems hitherto envisaged with local government financing remain largely unchanged.

The first persistent problem is that, in revenue-sharing between the Centre and local governments, no systematic attempt has been made to match the assigned functions to local governments with the requisite financing, despite a clear division of functions and powers between the Centre and lower levels of government. In order to consolidate this argument of unfair distribution of revenue further, **Shah** (1994:4) highlights two categories of service delivery as are divisible between the Centre and local governments. One category is of services delivered by local governments which include the following: services for which economies of scale are not a major consideration; services for which political proximity is essential; services for which no significant cost-benefit spillovers are anticipated, and those for which distributional considerations are not important (**Shah**, 1994:4). Such functions would ordinarily include primary education, public health, rural feeder roads, street lighting, markets, recreational facilities, etc. The second category, which is of services taken care of by the Centre, encompasses heavier functions which have serious international implications for the country such as defence and internal security, international trade, immigration, regional cooperation, etc. Regarding the basis on which finances should be shared between the Central Government and local governments, **Nkurumah** (1995:11) argues that:

All local authorities combined handle up to fifty per centum (50%) of total governmental responsibilities and therefore are correspondingly entitled to fifty per centum (50%) of all public revenues.

While this formulation has the advantage of matching functions with requisite financing, it is too general to apply universally to the situation in Uganda especially given that implementation of some peculiar national priorities may militate against the principle of matching functions with revenue.

The second persistent financial problem is that the Central Government has tended to monopolise the sources of revenue, like value-added tax,

while leaving the non-elastic sources like market fees to local governments. It suffices to go on record that, whether "own" resources or intergovernmental grants are considered, the basic conclusion that emerges from reviewing the structure of intergovernmental finance in Uganda, as in almost any developing country, seems invariably to be the same: local governments need to be given access to adequate resources to do the job with which they are entrusted. At the same time, however, they must also be held responsible to those who provide these resources for what they do with them, through independent scrutiny institutions such as the Local Government Public Accounts Committees, the Auditor General and the Inspector General of Government.

3.8.1 Graduated Personal Tax

Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) is levied on all males aged 18 and above excluding those specifically exempt on grounds of ill-health, those registered as full-time students and those in the Army or Police (LGA, 1997:145). Females aged 18 and above who are in full-time employment or engaged in business are also included. The tax originated in the colonial period as a straight-forward poll tax, when it was thought, though erroneously, that it would be a good means of inducing peasant farmers to move into the cash economy¹⁵. Its unpopularity and regressive nature led to its abandonment after Independence in Kenya and Tanzania. In Uganda it was modified to become a graduated personal tax in 1963 (ODA, 1996:46)¹⁶. Following its review an attempt was made to introduce a stronger element of progressivity and equity into the tax by incorporating a large number of tax bands, 37 in number, combined with a comprehensive,

¹⁵ This argument continues to be put forward in favour of the GPT. In fact rural and urban households in Uganda already have plenty of incentives to seek cash, for example to pay school fees for their children, and to generally fit in the Market Economy. ¹⁵ Graduated personal tax was a source of heated debate and tension during the 2001 Uganda presidential elections.

¹⁶ GPT was a source of heated debate and tension during the 2001 Uganda Presidential Elections. Dr Kiiza-Besigye, a key opponent of President Yoweri Museveni in the race took advantage of the tax's unpopularity and promised to scrap it altogether. Museveni had to make compromises that included reduction of the tax to Shs 3000/= (US\$ 1.5), an act which has rendered its collection by district local governments economically unviable.

detailed and intrusive assessment of taxpayers' income, both monetary and non-monetary (Muwanga-Zake, 1983:33).

Despite the above reforms, the tax still conflicts with two fundamental canons of taxation: that of equity and that of administrative simplicity. As already mentioned in 3.7.3, GPT as a constituent part of central and local taxes constitutes an element which is regressive and this has deprived it of the flexibility that would be essential for the tax to be easily managed in the country side. **Table 5** compares the frequency distribution for rural tax payers in the districts with that for monthly per capita incomes among rural households. It can be noted that 72 percent of GPT payers fall within the lowest six tax grades, implying (except to the extent that they have been under-assessed for tax) that they fall within the bottom Income class of the monthly income distribution. Thus Graduated Personal Tax (GPT) is essentially paid by low-income households (ODA, 1996:46).

Table 5
Distribution Of Rural Graduated Taxpayers in Uganda Compared
With Distribution of Rural Households by Per Capita Household
Income, 1992-3

Monthly per capita income class (U. Sh. 000) 1992-3	Distribution of households, (%) 1992-3	Graduated tax grade (U.Sh.000) 1992-3		Distribution of tax payers (%) 1992-3	
0-	63.6	2	15	1.2	1.2
10-	26.6	3	16	4.5	0.9
20-	6.3	4	17	9.3	0.9
30-	1.9	5	18	22.8	1.0
40-	1.0	6	19	21.6	1.0
60-	0.3	7	20	12.6	1.1
80-	0.2	8	21	9.2	0.1
100-	0.1	9	23	4.4	0.1
200 or over	0.1	10	25	3.5	0.2
		11	27	1.2	0.1
		12	30	1.7	0.2
		13	35	1.2	0.1
		14	40	1.0	0.2

Source: National Integrated Household Survey 1992-93

A similar comparison is made in **Table 6** for Kampala City Council. Here 70% of taxpayers fall in the bottom two grades only. The two frequency distributions contrast even more markedly and this confirms that GPT impinges right at the very bottom of the income distribution. The implication in this case is that when incorporated into the tax system as a whole, the tax is directed towards the mass of income earners, rural and urban pegged at the lowest end of the income distribution. Indeed as **Davey** (1974:30-32)¹⁷ notes, were it to be incorporated into the income tax scale, the majority of graduated personal tax payers would be exempt, falling below the minimum threshold.

Table 6
Distribution of graduated taxpayers in Kampala City Council compared with distribution of households by per capita household income, 1992-3

Monthly per capita income class (Ush.000) 1992-3	Distribution households(%) 1992-3	Graduated tax grade (Ush.000) 1992-3		Distribution of payers (%) 1992-3	
0-	6.9	6	17	44.5	0.6
10-	24.9	7	18	25.2	0.5
20-	24.2	8	19	7.0	0.3
30-	14.1	9	20	3.1	0.8
40-	11.5	10	21	3.2	0.4
60-	6.8	11	23	1.6	0.3
80-	5.2	12	25	1.1	0.4
100-	3.2	13	27	1.2	0.5
120-	1.8	14	30	0.9	0.5
200-	2.2	15	35	1.0	0.5
300 or over	0.1	16	40	0.5	4.6

Source: National Integrated Household Survey

The equity aspect of a tax directed towards the bottom of the income distribution is even more evident if we consider it against a welfare measure comprising the ratio of household expenditure per adult equivalent to an estimated poverty line, as shown in **Table 7**. Judging from the table, the bottom 61 percent of the Uganda population are classified as poor. Indeed the expenditure of the bottom quarter, who comprise the bulk of

¹⁷ Davey Kenneth, 1974. *Taxing a Peasant Society: The example of Graduated Taxes in East Africa*, London, Charles Knight.

GPT taxpayers, amounts to just over half the poverty level. On the administrative side, it is noted that the use of 37 narrow bands or divisions within what is a relatively narrow range of income, means that very detailed data on household incomes are required (ODA, 1996:48). This includes data on all farm output, marketed and non-marketed, as well as on non-farm activities in the rural-informal sector. Proper assessment, given major year to year variations in income, requires that this be collected annually in every sub-county in Uganda for all households. The amount of information called for if this is to be carried out accurately is as detailed as would be involved in a comprehensive national farm survey of the type contemplated only at periodic intervals, if at all (ODA, 1996:48).

Table 7
The Distribution of Economic Welfare in Uganda

Distribution percentiles	Welfare measure (highest value in each percentile)
99	4.643
95	2.510
90	1.916
75	1.289
61	1.000
50	0.850
25	0.559
10	0.381
5	0.300
1-	0.193

Source: *World Bank (1996), calculated from the 1992/93 Integrated Household Survey*

In view of the above-mentioned discrepancies, the reality of assessment is very different. There is arbitrary assessment, up or down, which is unrelated to actual incomes. There are also cases of widespread forgery of tax certificates in both rural and urban authorities, leading to the need for expensive counter-measures, including, like the case of Kampala City Council, the most extreme of remedies: the printing of GPT certificates in the United Kingdom. The features described above mean that GPT also scores poorly for elasticity, since the bulk of revenue is secured from a

limited number of bands at the lower end. Consequently, it is an argument of this thesis that Graduated Personal Tax does not provide a good basis for a district development budget and currently constitutes a key bottleneck in the efforts to develop and enhance the local government financial resource base under devolution.

3.8.2 Business Licences and Fees

Given Uganda's open and, relatively unregulated economy, and its rather small industrial sector, incomes derived from trade, transport and construction activities are comparatively important, but for a variety of reasons, generally under-taxed (Zake, 1994:90). As shown in **Table 8** the top quarter of Uganda's households obtain more than a quarter of their income from business and within this substantial group business income is 70 percent of the value obtained from agriculture.

Table 8
Business Income earned in Uganda 1992-3 by Quartile of the population

Business income obtained	Bottom 25%	Distribution of households by income level		
		Lower middle	Upper middle	Top 25%
Uganda – total				
As % of agriculture	15.2	18.4	26.6	70.5
As % of earned income	11.7	13.2	17.7	31.2
As % of all income	8.1	10.3	14.2	27.0
Uganda – urban				
As % of earned income	27.6	36.1	39.0	49.7
As % of all income	19.3	27.9	29.4	42.8
Uganda – rural				
As % of agriculture	12.0	12.0	17.8	29.4
As % of earned income	9.9	9.6	13.7	19.8
As % of all income	6.9	7.5	11.1	17.2

Source: 1992-3 Integrated Household Survey, derived from figures in World Bank (1996)

Among urban households all income groups obtain a substantial part of earned income from business, 50 percent in the case of the top quartile of households. There is thus a significant business class in Uganda based especially in the urban areas but operating also throughout the rural areas. **Table 9** shows that, as in the case of other sources of revenue, revenue secured by urban and district authorities from licensing was lightly variable

across authorities, suggesting under-exploitation in certain cases and hence some scope for improvement in collections.

Table 9
Distribution of Actual Council Revenue by Source 1993-4 (%)

SOURCE COUNCIL	GRADUATED TAX	MARKETS	TAXI PARKS	BUS	TRADE, OTHER LICENCES & FEES	PROPERTY	HOUSING	OTHER ¹
Municipalities								
Kampala	40.2	11.3		6.9	11.9	16.4	7.2	6.1
Jinja	14.0	13.1		7.8	4.7	28.0	11.4	21.0
Mbale ²	21.5	52.3			5.5	20.0		0.7
Fort Portal ²	27.1	34.8			18.4	15.5		4.3
Gulu	19.0	36.5		6.4	3.6	2.1	18.8	13.6
Bushenyi	40.7	13.3		20.4	5.3		2.7	17.7
Mukono	36.0	18.0		14.9	11.2	8.1		11.8
Tororo	22.1	40.7		14.7	8.8	13.2		0.5
Njeru	32.1	8.8			5.0	5.0	15.7	33.3
Kitgum	18.3	29.0			4.3		14.0	34.4
Districts								
Mbale	61.7	13.4			14.6		0.1	10.3 ³
Kabarole	57.6	13.6			8.4		0.2	20.2 ^{3,4}
Gulu	73.6	22.4			3.0		0.3	0.7
Bushenyi	73.5				13.0		0.3	13.3
Luweero	71.0	26.2			2.6			0.5
Mukono	73.1	22.7						4.5
Mubende	66.2	8.5					0.3	25.0
Tororo	88.9	4.9						6.3
Igana	74.4	6.4						10.2
Masaka	84.9	11.3					0.1	3.7

1. Exclude transfers from central government
2. Percentages based on estimates, not actual values
3. Includes education tax
4. Includes kibanja fees

Source: Ministry of Local Government, Kampala, Uganda, 1995

When one looks at the municipalities, one observes that proportions raised from different sources of revenue vary widely from Council to Council. Part of the explanation may be in varying economic circumstances and, Therefore, in variability in the tax bases and taxable opportunities between districts. It would also appear that the differences also reflect to some extent the pursuit of different revenue-raising priorities and strategies. But for **Zake** (1994:90), the major cause of variation appears to reflect

differences in the effectiveness of implementation, management and administration of the chosen revenue-raising instruments.

This study also notes that in many cases traditional patterns of revenue assessment and collection tend to focus on the same old sources of local revenue at the expense of vibrant, progressive-new ones. For instance in Mbale, Kasese and Bundibugyo Districts (these are border districts), trading in coffee has been a major source of income since the deregulation of coffee marketing, yet no form of tax on coffee trade exists in these districts. **Zake** (1994:93) proposes adoption of the principle of discriminatory licence-fee setting on businesses such as coffee trade which are confined to just a number of districts, in a way that enables the fee to take account of three major aspects namely:

- the earnings in the activity, whether high or low, as determined by the nature of the activity;
- the size of the establishment; and
- its regional location within Uganda, whether urban or rural, or in richer or poorer districts.

It is noteworthy that in districts across Uganda, the number of rural business establishments and the level of earnings secured varies primarily with the level of incomes and purchasing power generated in agriculture, and will differ significantly, for instance, between the central and northern regions. This thesis argues that caution must be exercised when levying licence fees because, since most district local governments operate in a rural setting, the low levels of licensing will normally reflect low levels of real activity and earnings. Efforts to extract licence fees from poor groups in marginal rural business occupations need to be relaxed as they are likely to be unsuccessful. It is also likely to be costly in relation to the revenues obtained, to have a negative impact on the pursuit of survival activities, and to increase the unpopularity of local administrators at a time when it is important to put forward a positive image. An example of a particularly

futile tax is in form of licence fees for "Boda Boda" Bicycles (Bicycles for hire) in Hoima District and a number of other districts and municipalities. The registration plates for these bicycles cost more than the licences themselves.

3.8.3 Property Tax

Up to 1971 a relatively effective system of property rating was in place in Uganda before it broke down (ODA, 1996:58). Following the Local Government Rating Decree, number 3 of 1979, a uniform annual value rating system was put in place based on the annual rental value of properties. Uganda now boasts of a substantial indigenous business class, and since it is unlikely that income tax not set at high levels is able to capture what might have been considered an appropriate level of revenue from the incomes derived from business, and these revenues are also not captured by indirect taxes, inheritance or other capital taxes, then there is a strong case for focusing on and improving property tax. The major problem however appears to be the absence of sufficient institutional mechanisms to collect the tax despite the existence of an enabling legal framework. For example, property valuations particularly in urban authorities, take extremely long to update, and in some cases are never updated at all, despite a statutory legal requirement for five-year revaluations (ODA, 1996:59). At the same time the capacity of the property tax department of the Ministry of Water, Lands and Environmental Protection has effectively collapsed, such valuers as it had, in many cases having left for the private sector. **Table 10** portraying the situation in Kampala City Council, demonstrates the intensity of the deterioration between the periods 1990/1 and 1994/5. The table shows a marked decline in the share of revenue from property taxes by KCC in the short period of four years, a decline in the share from 39 to 16 percent, matched by an almost exactly opposite movement in the share of graduated tax from 17 to 42 percent.

Table 10
Kampala City Council change in revenue sources 1990-1 & 1994-5

Source	Share of incoming revenue (%)	
	1990/1	1994/5
Property taxes	39.2	16.6
Graduated tax	17.6	42.1
Markets	10.9	9.1
Taxi/bus parks	9.6	8.7
Licences and fees	14.3	10.9
Housing and rent	2.8	7.0
Other	5.6	5.5

Source: Local Government Finance Commission, Kampala, Uganda 1996

The overall effect was a shift in the burden of tax from higher to lower income earners, whose effect in the long run has been the creation of fatigue and despondency on the part of the local population leading to general apathy and withdrawal from community development initiatives.

3.8.4 Market Dues Under Privatisation: The Case of Kampala City Council

In their study on enhancing district revenue generation and administration, the ODA (1996:54) undertook a detailed analysis of the privatisation experience of Kampala City Council. They found out that KCC at that time owned 31 markets situated on both public and private land. The Council commenced a programme of privatisation of market management in June 1994. Nine markets, including the largest and accounting for three-quarters of the total stall capacity, were privatised. The procedure was to offer management contracts through open bidding, selecting the successful bidder on the basis of both the level of bid offered and the assessed reliability of the individual concerned. KCC retained an advisory and controlling role: fee levels continued to be determined by the Council, physical structures could not be altered without council consent, while stall holders could not be evicted, except in the case of failure to pay. Contracts were for six months only, renewable on satisfactory performance. The success of the scheme is put down to management motivation (ODA, 1996:54), following the profit motive; better-paid and thus better-motivated

employees; elimination of incentives to divert revenues; and reduction of evasion of dues through arrivals ahead of opening times and through monitoring of previously-unmanned entrances, and exits. As a result of the reform, it is noted that revenue accruing to Kampala City Council increased in the year following privatisation by about 23 percent from shillings 50.8 million to shillings 61.75 million a month. At the same time costs incurred by the same Council fell by half from shillings 173.8 million in FY1993/4 to shillings 88.2 million in FY1994/5. Of the savings made, 26 percent were in wages and allowances, 34 percent in water and electricity charges, 26 percent in rents paid by private landlords, and 14 percent in stationery. The number of market masters employed in collecting revenue reduced from 215 in 1992 to just 35 in 1995/6. Since it can be assumed that these savings are associated with the privatisation arrangements made, the net annual gain to KCC from privatisation can be calculated to equal the income received from the contractors, less revenue previously obtained from the markets plus savings in the costs of running the markets, totalling to shillings 217 million per annum, about US\$220,000, according to foreign currency 1995/6 exchange rates (ODA: 1995:55). It is also noted that a further inducement towards efficient operation by private management arises out of competition from the large number of unplanned or illegal markets in the Kampala area. These may have developed spontaneously due to market forces, such as an advantage in proximity to consumers, or alternatively as means of avoiding market dues. In the latter case there will still be a preference among vendors for a planned market so long as the location, physical facilities and selling opportunities there are significantly better, and there is therefore an incentive to the private operator to provide improved facilities. On the basis of Kampala City Council's experience, it is argued in this thesis that privatisation of urban (city, municipal, town) and district markets does indeed offer prospects for some enhancement of revenues from market dues and should be pursued with that objective and along the lines followed by Kampala City Council. Judging from the trend at KCC, this policy does not preclude an important role for local authorities in the planning and development of markets. On the contrary the evidence

is of serious deficiencies in this regard which need to be corrected as a matter of priority.

3.8.5 Inter-District Variation in Taxable Capacity

Zake (1994:98) observes that changes in national policy, particularly in relation to taxation of the agricultural sector, could alter considerably the revenue situation of the districts. He argues that more immediately, changes in organisational effectiveness within the existing system of taxes could enhance revenues, even without fundamental changes. At the same time, he emphasises that not all districts are blessed with the same potential tax base and could expect on their own to secure a similar level of revenue per capita and thus to offer their citizens the same standards of service provision, except with some compensatory funding. Apart from the system of unconditional and conditional grants that form part of decentralised government financing, existing disparities in districts' taxable capacity underscore the need for substantial compensating finance in both recurrent and development budgets of endemic districts, if unacceptable divergences are not to occur. It is in this relation that the Government of Uganda introduced equalisation grants as per section 84 clause 4 of the Local Governments Act 1997. **Table 11** illustrates the magnitude of the problem. As shown in the Table, the ratio of rural adult male population to the number of GPT payers varies from just over one to more than two. In other words, some districts are able to secure payment from no more than half or less the proportion secured by others and perhaps no more than half of those technically liable to pay the tax. Hence more relevant to the potential tax revenue in general terms is the overall taxable capacity of the district economy. **Table 12** highlights some of the major regional differences that were revealed by the 1992/93 Integrated Household Survey. The table shows that within the rural areas, the average annual per capita income in the Northern region of Uganda is only 59 percent of that of the Central Region.

Table 11
Ratio of Rural Adult Male Population to the Number of Graduated Tax Payers by District, 1993-4

District	Region	No. of payers	Rural male population age 20-59 ²	Ratio of population to payers	GT revenue per payer (U.sh)	Per head of male pop. (U.sh)
Mpigi	C	132,255.00	138,275	1.05	10,300	9,842
Nebbi	N	43,704.00	49,880	1.14	7,610	6,670
Mukono	C	111,940.00	129,969	1.16	9,010	7,764
Iganga	E	126,806.00	156,947	1.24	7,160	5,782
Kiboga	C	18,812.00	24,931	1.33	15,370	11,592
Kapchorwa	E	15,000	20,087	1.34	5,330	3,983
Kasese	W	39,100	52,909	1.35	11,060	8,174
Luwero	C	53,818	73,603	1.37	12,770	9,340
M asaka	C	96,247	134,698	1.40	11,600	8,270
Moyo	N	20,256	49,880	1.42	9,390	6,606
Mbarara	W	107,696	155,404	1.44	13,100	9,105
Bundibugyo	W	12,966	19,009	1.47	6,990	4,764
Hoima	W	23,296	34,709	1.49	13,060	8,767
Kisoro	W	19,721	29,610	1.50	7,320	4,874
Kabarole	W	80,000	125,492	1.57	7,500	4,781
Lira	N	42,195	83,531	1.98	13,510	6,824
Apac	N	39,266	78,547	2.00	11,700	5,854
Pallisa	E	30,390	61,552	2.03	7,280	3,598
Mbale	E	56,464	116,249	2.03	6,810	3,311
Tororo	E	40,791	86,364	2.12	11,130	5,256
Arua	N	38,490	105,242	2.73	8,420	3,081
Rakai	C	18,812	64,885	3.45	15,370	4,454
Soroti	E	6,056	66,760	11.02	8,280	750
Kitgum	N	2,140	58,988	27.56	7,720	280

C= Central N=Northern E=Eastern W= Western

Calculated from 1991 census figures, applying national age ratios to District totals.

Table 12
Average Annual per Capita Income by Region, Rural and Urban, 1992-3

Region	Rural U. Sh (%)	Urban U. Sh (%)
Central	139,971(100)	356,150(100)
Eastern	103,266(74)	220,685(62)
Western	108,007(77)	235,766(66)
Northern	82,226(59)	169,466(48)

Source: Integrated Household Surgery, 1992-93

In its report, **ODA** (1996:63) also notes that, in terms of taxable land, an indicator of the taxable capacity of a district rural population can be taken as the ratio of taxable acres (where all acreage over and above one acre per holding constitutes taxable land) to the numbers of the population, measured in turn by the number of holdings in existence. As shown in

Table 13, this ratio ranges quite radically from 2.47 in Kabarole, 2.01 in Hoima to 0.16 and 0.19 in Kapchorwa and Mbale. ¹⁸

Table 13
Potentially Taxable Land per District, 1991: Rankings by Taxable Land- to- Holdings Ratio

District	No. of taxable acres ¹⁸	No. of holdings in district	Taxable land to holdings ratio
Kabarole	169066	68519	2.47
Apac	130436	54245	2.40
Mbarara	249498	108572	2.30
Kamuli	160267	70628	2.27
Mubende	191457	85807	2.23
Bushenyi	172956	78091	2.21
Hoima	121639	60530	2.01
Iganga	200139	110395	1.81
Rakai	66633	45174	1.48
Masindi	33746	23169	1.46
Lira	111347	79835	1.39
Rukungiri	53735	39622	1.36
Masaka	90753	73776	1.23
Tororo	167988	137468	1.22
Mpigi	99894	82609	1.21
Mukono	147612	127642	1.16
Luwero	505779	44593	1.13
Kabale	72183	81944	0.88
Jinja	190000	22828	0.83
Moyo	13603	20166	0.67
Bundibugyo	8247	13012	0.63
Kasese	8777	20749	0.42
Nebbi	16727	43448	0.38
Arua	33630	92103	0.37
Mbale	20036	103897	0.19
Kapchorwa	2493	15899	0.16

Source: Integrated Households Survey, 1992/93

The position of the last two districts reflects the situation of acute scarcity of land, which could be expected in turn to mean a low proportion of taxable households, given the general dependence of the population on agriculture.

¹⁸ The productivity of land in different agro-ecological zones will of course differ so that acres cannot be considered uniform across all districts. The differences which exist however, are much greater than could be explained by differences in land quality and in any case are not related in any systematic way to regional location.

The table indicates very wide disparities in land holdings between districts and thus the existence of a major taxation problem if, balanced development across districts is to be achieved within the framework of devolution.

3.8.6 The Role of the Farm Sector in Local Government revenue

Generation

Uganda is primarily an agricultural country and has a relatively rich agricultural sector. However, agricultural incomes are exempt from income tax, and there are no taxes on land. Ironically though, it should be noted that local rural economies are taxed through different indirect taxes on expenditure, levied by Central Government, but not accruing to district authorities .

The importance of indirect taxes in Uganda can be seen from **Table 14** which shows that in FY 1993/94 taxes on goods and services accounted for almost 80 percent of all recurrent revenue and 85 percent of tax revenue.

Table 14
The Composition of Central Government Revenue 1993-4

	Ush. Bn	%
Total recurrent revenue	388.451	100
Tax revenue	363.101	93.5
Income tax	52.953	13.6
Goods and services	101.796	26.2
Excise duty	40.505	10.4
Sales tax (local)	46.000	11.8
CTL	15.291	3.9
International trade	206.165	53.1
Export taxes	0.000	0.0
Customs duty	152.575	39.3
Sales tax on imports	53.590	13.8
Other tax revenue	2.187	0.6
Non -tax revenue	25.351	6.5

Source: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Background to the budget, 1994-1995, June 1994

¹ Includes unallocated tax receipts and excise duty on imports

² Fees and licenses, and any other tax revenue

Table 15 shows the distribution of farm areas by size of landholding in Uganda. It can be seen from the table that land ownership is unequal with the mean size of holding in the largest stratum nearly 40 times that in the smallest size category. Notable as well are the following facts: larger farms are not a small minority from which little tax yield could be expected: some 60,000 farms are 10 or more acres in size and altogether nearly 160,000 are of 5 acres or more. The former account for as much as 30 percent of arable land areas while the two upper categories together account for 48 percent. As shown in **Table 15**, a large proportion of holdings (half) are less than one acre in size. Suppose for example a proportional land tax was levied as so much per acre, with the first acre exempt, half of the farm population currently paying graduated tax would be exempt.

Table 15
Distribution of farm areas by size of farm holding in Uganda, 1991 (%)
(Size distribution of number of farm holdings % in Brackets)

District	Size of holding (acres)				
	1	1-	2-	5-	10 & over
Apac	4.9(27.1)	10.8 (25.6)	28.5(29.4)	22.6(11.1)	33.1(6.7)
Arua	32.9(70.3)	30.9 (21.5)	20.4(6.6)	3.6 (0.6)	12.3(0.9)
Hoima	5.2(27.4)	13.3 (26.6)	32.8(30.3)	30.8(12.5)	18.0(3.2)
Lira	10.7(43.9)	16.4(25.3)	31.9 (21.9)	19.8 (6.7)	21.3 (2.4)
Masindi	10.2 (44.3)	15.9 (25.3)	28.7 (21.1)	20.5 (6.5)	24.7(2.8)
Moyo	21.0 (54.1)	29.1 (28.7)	27.8 (14.6)	7.6 (1.6)	14.5 (1.0)
Nebbi	28.4 (62.7)	35.1(26.9)	26.8 (9.4)	4.6 (0.7)	5.2 (0.3)
Kapchorwa	43.8 (74.8)	27.2 (17.4)	21.9 (6.7)	7.1 (1.0)	-
Mbale	43.6 (80.1)	26.6(13.6)	22.6 (5.5)	7.2 (0.8)	-
Tororo	12.5 (44.5)	18.5 (26.1)	32.1 (21.2)	20.6 (6.2)	16.3 (2.1)
Iganga	8.6 (45.0)	13.1 (24.1)	22.1 (18.7)	18.8 (6.9)	37.4 (5.3)
Jinja	16.3 (49.2)	22.7 (26.0)	35.4 (19.3)	21.7 (5.2)	4.0 (0.4)
Kamuli	4.1 (24.7)	13.5 (27.6)	32.5 (31.1)	25.4 (11.3)	24.5 (5.3)
Bundibugyo	19.3 (52.3)	26.3 (25.6)	44.6 (20.4)	6.3 (1.5)	3.5 (0.3)
Bushenyi	8.2 (53.2)	8.6 (18.2)	14.9 (14.5)	18.2 (7.2)	50.1 (6.9)
Kabale	21.0(84.6)	6.7 (6.5)	5.0 (2.0)	16.7 (3.2)	50.7 (3.7)
Kabarole	6.2 (42.7)	9.7 (22.3)	18.0(17.9)	18.8 (8.9)	47.3 (8.3)
Kasese	30.0 (68.4)	22.5 (20.2)	20.6 (9.2)	4.8 (0.8)	22.0 (1.3)
Mbarara	7.4 (47.2)	11.5(25.1)	15.9 (15.5)	11.5 (4.8)	53.7 (7.4)
Rukungiri	11.7 (46.7)	18.5(27.4)	22.2 (15.6)	18.8 (5.9)	28.8 (4.3)
Luweero	8.8 (33.8)	22.6 (31.5)	42.0 (28.1)	18.4 (5.3)	82 (1.2)
Masaka	13.0 (49.2)	19.8(28.2)	23.4 (15.8)	14.4 (4.2)	29.4 (2.5)
Mpigi	14.1(50.0)	21.3(30.4)	17.9(12.5)	15.5 (4.3)	31.3 (2.7)
Mubende	4.9 (27.0)	12.4 27.0	29.6 (29.8)	22.0 (10.4)	31.1 (5.8)
Mukono	10.9 (45.5)	21.3 (29.4)	28.6 (17.5)	21.4 (5.6)	17.8 (1.9)
Rakai	11.4 (45.9)	17.3 (27.6)	24.7 (19.0)	11.1 (3.4)	35.5 (4.0)
Total	11.0 49.2	15.8 24.2	24.8 17.4	18.2 5.7	30.2 3.5
Mean size of holding (acres)	0.48	1.41	3.08	6.92	18.6
Ratio	1	2.9	6.4	14.3	38.4

Source: National Integrated Household Survey, 1992-93

The number of taxable acres would be distributed as in **Table 16** and these would equal some 2.4 million or 67 percent among holdings of 5 acres and above and 43 percent among holding of 10 acres and above. The above trend suggests the need for bringing incomes from commercial farms, defined as holdings exceeding 5 acres, within the ambit of income tax, thus generating revenue for local governments in the same way as other sectors. In the absence of, or alternative to the above, it is recommended that a contribution be made to local authority revenues in the form of a rural development charge. Quite a small unit charge could yield very useful revenue and relieve pressure on districts to raise graduated tax.

Table 16
Distribution of Taxable Land by Size of Holding

Size of holding Acres	No of taxable acres	% of taxable acres
+ 1	-	0.0
1 and under 2	169,798	7.0
2 and under 5	616,593	25.5
5 and under 10	574,018	23.8
10 an over	1,052,918	43.6
Total	2,413,327	100

Source: Derived from Table 17

Comparing districts' revenue receipts for 1992-3 shown in **Table 17**, it can be seen that a rural development charge on land equal to just Uganda Shs 1200/= (about half a USD) an acre would be sufficient to fully replace Graduated Personal Tax as a source of local revenue, while a charge of Shs 2500/= (about USD1.2) would more than double it.

Table 17
Receipts From Graduated Personal Tax Under Alternative Illustrative
Band System, All Districts Authorities, 1992-3

Actual rates	No of payers	1992-3 receipts U shs'000	13band rates Ush 000	Receipts U sh 000	9 band rates (U.shs'000	receipts(U.shs'000	5band rates U.shs'000	Receipts (u shs'000
2	25688	51376	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	99951	299853	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	207423	829692	3	622269	-	-	-	-
5	507038	2535190	4	2028152	5	2535190	5	2535190
6	480655	2883930	5	2403275	5	2403275	5	243295
7	280614	1964298	6	1683684	5	1403070	5	1403070
8	203619	1628952	8	1628952	10	2036190	5	1018095
9	97278	875502	10	97280	10	97280	5	486390
10	76999	769990	10	769990	10	769990	15	1154985
11	26537	291907	10	265370	10	265370	15	398055
12	37113	445356	15	445356	15	556695	15	556695
13	27014	351182	15	405210	15	405210	15	405210
14	22394	313516	15	335910	15	335910	25	559850
15	27520	412800	20	550400	15	412800	25	688000
16	20745	331920	20	414900	15	311175	25	518625
17	20811	353787	20	416220	30	624330	25	520275
18	21747	391446	30	652410	30	652410	25	543675
19	21308	404852	30	639240	30	639240	40	852320
20	24580	491600	30	737400	30	737400	40	983200
21	1592	33432	40	63680	45	71640	40	63680
23	1007	23161	40	40280	45	45315	40	40280
25	5380	134500	40	215200	45	242100	55	295900
27	1535	41445	50	76750	45	69075	55	84425
30	3881	116430	50	194050	60	232860	55	213455
35	1504	52640	60	90240	60	90240	55	82720
40*	3886	155440	60	155460	80	207280	80	207280
		-	80	103600	80	103600	80	103600
Total(% of accrual 1992-3 receipts	122478	16183927		15,910,778		16,123,145		161,1182
		(100.0)		(98.3)		(99.6)		(99.6)

Source: Ministry of local Government, Kampala Uganda

*** it is assumed that payers in this group would divide 2:1 (ie2595:1295) into this and higher tax group**

3.8.7 Taxation and Decentralised Expenditure: Theoretical Issues

Having endeavoured to establish and analyse the key role played by locally-generated taxes, such as GPT, Property Tax, Licence Fees and market dues, in the implementation and sustainability of local government services, it is equally important to highlight some of the theoretical perspectives and issues that underpin the linkage between taxation in general and local government expenditure, since, according to **Davey** (1993:216), money is the heart of intergovernmental matters in all

countries. Moreover, the general nature of intergovernmental fiscal relations is also surprisingly similar across a wide range of countries. As **Bird** (1990:278) observes, almost invariably, countries assign more expenditure functions to sub-national governments than can be financed from the revenue sources allocated to those governments. The result of this mismatching of functions and finances, sometimes referred to as "vertical imbalance", is that sub-national governments are generally dependent upon transfers from higher levels of government, and the more so, the more significant the expenditures with which they are charged¹⁹. In his article, "Decentralisation of Expenditures or Taxes: The Case of France", **Remy Prud'homme** (1990:116) wonders why those discussing the optimal level of decentralisation, i.e. the ideal allocation of responsibilities and resources amongst levels of government, do so in terms of cost-effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness (to demand or need), democratisation, and equity. He cautions that such alignment usually takes for granted that taxes are or should be decentralised together with responsibilities and expenditures. In this scenario, it is further assumed that, first, the taxes raised by a given sub-national level of government are borne by the people living within the boundaries of this government, and second, that these taxes together with user fees and loans raised by this government are its main source of income. In Prud'homme's view, while both these assumptions might make sense to a certain extent, like in the case of USA, they are not realistic for many other countries. For example, depending upon the type of taxes raised locally, and the economic characteristics of the local economy, part of the taxes raised in a given sub-national government will be transferred or 'exported' to the people living in other sub-national governments. For Prud'homme therefore, the normal assumptions must be dropped, and the issue of decentralisation re-

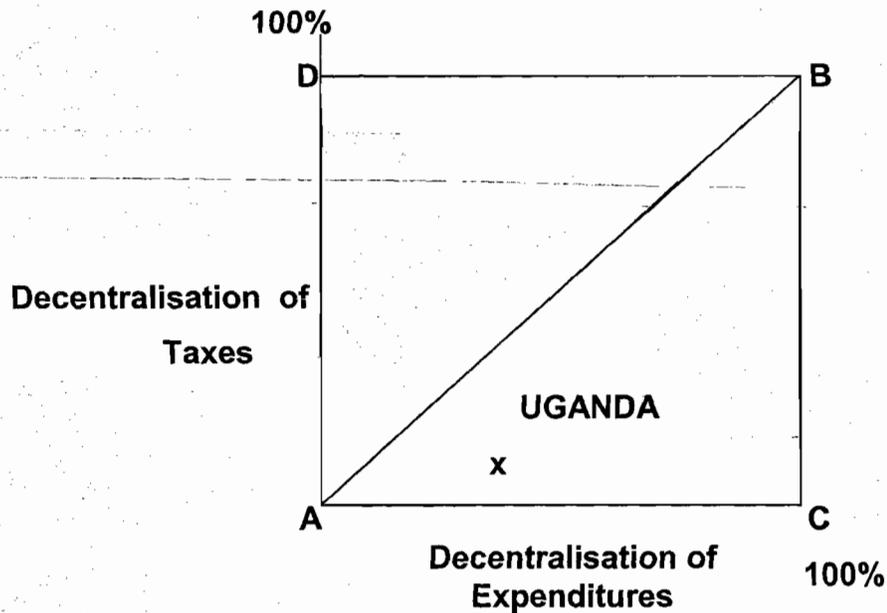
¹⁹ The observed complexity of intergovernmental structure is not likely to parallel what theory suggests. State and local governments exist in the form they do and with the finances and functions they have, neither to maximise democratic access to government nor to provide public services as efficiently as possible, but rather as a result of many complex historical and institutional factors. While generalisations are particularly treacherous in this field, in many countries the role played in public finances by local governments is less a matter of local autonomy than of the extent to which central governments have chosen, for reasons of administrative efficiency or political choice (**Macmanus** 1990:162).

examined in the light of the spatial incidence of regional and local taxes, and of the impact of grants and subsidies from central to regional and local governments. At this point, it suffices to make a simple extension of Prud'home's centralisation/decentralisation paradigm by treating taxes and expenditures separately, thus producing four distinct models. By comparing and contrasting the four models, their characteristics and impact on their environment is weighed, and the findings of this general analysis are then utilised to assess the trend in Uganda.

If the assumption that taxes and expenditures are jointly centralised or decentralised is dropped, the four models of centralisation and decentralisation can be identified as:

- *Model A* defined by complete centralisation of taxes and expenditures; in this model, there are hardly any local governments, and there are, of course no intergovernmental transfers.
- *Model B* defined by complete decentralisation of taxes and expenditures; in this case, there are also no intergovernmental transfers and practically no Central Government.
- *Model C* defined by centralisation of taxes and decentralisation of expenditures; in this model, all taxes are raised by the Central Government, given to the local governments in form of grants, and spent by local governments.
- *Model D* defined by decentralisation of taxes and centralisation of expenditures; in this case, taxes are raised by local governments, given to the Central Government in form of grants and spent by it.

Figure 9
Four models of centralisation/decentralisation



These four models are represented in **figure 9**. It goes without saying that these polar cases are nowhere to be found. All existing countries or systems lie somewhere in between. The interesting point is that they do not lie only on the **AB** line, as is conventionally assumed, but in the entire **ABCD** area. The Ugandan system, for instance, which is indicated by point **x** is characterised by a much larger degree of decentralisation of expenditures than of decentralisation of taxes, and consequently by the importance of grants in the fulfilment of devolved services. **Table 18** on page 141 shows that in FY 1999/2000 total local revenue collections constituted only 12 per cent of total funds spent by the 45 district local governments in Uganda then. The situation is practically similar to that of Papua New Guinea where, as shown by **Table 18a**, the provinces are almost totally dependent on the Central Government for their revenues. **Table 18a** for example shows that between 1978 and 1981, revenues from the provinces accounted for between 6 and 8.5 percent of all provincial expenditures (Kina 36,415,000)²⁰, while Unconditional grants to the provinces increased by 65 percent over the same period and totalled to Kina 516,699,000. This thesis concurs with the view advanced by **Bird**

²⁰ The Kina is the national currency for Papua New Guinea.

(1990:284) that unless local governments are given some degree of freedom, including the freedom to make mistakes for which they are accountable to their paymasters- local taxpayers or the Central Government, as the case may be-empowerment of the people through the development of responsible and responsive local government will remain an unattainable mirage.

There are of course dangers in permitting local authorities even limited freedom to levy taxes unchecked. One such danger is that they will attempt to extract revenue from sources for which they are not accountable, thus obviating the basic efficiency argument for their existence. To counter this inevitable tendency, **Bird** (1990:284) argues that Central Government should deny or limit access to taxes that fall mainly on non-residents: examples are most natural resource revenues, corporate income taxes, value-added tax, and to some extent, non-residential real property taxes. The possible over-exploitation of such politically less painful revenue sources may, somewhat paradoxically, at times be offset by economically-motivated under-exploitation, as localities competing for mobile tax bases enter into rate-reducing competition (**McLure**, 1983:130). On this point **Bird** (1990:285) concludes that the panacea to both problems in the context of most countries is probably the establishment of a uniform set of tax bases for local governments (perhaps with different sets for different categories such as big cities, small towns, and rural areas), with a limited amount of rate flexibility being permitted in order to provide room for local effort while restraining unproductive competition and unwarranted exploitation. On the basis of this argument, it is quite important to provide adequate flexibility to exploit good tax bases to avoid the pattern seen in so many countries, where the only degree of flexibility available to cope with budgetary pressure is to exploit such economically-undesirable, but available and largely unregulated taxes like the graduated personal tax. Moreover over dependence on GPT itself entails a trade-off in that other key sources of revenue tend to be neglected as a result.

Table 18
Total Expenditure In 45 District Local Governments In Uganda
For Financial Year 1999/2000 Disaggregated Into Total Local
Revenue And Total Fiscal Transfers. Figures Are In Uganda Shillings.

District	Total Local Revenue	Total Central Transfers
Adjumani	58,179,526	1,932,392,000
Apac	467,315,816	9,665,137,000
Arua	1,229,101,511	15,150,212,000
Bugiri	312,825,228	4,395,626,000
Bundibugyo	122,463,260	2,955,800,000
Bushenyi	1,240,063,873	11,746,694,000
Busia	141,167,972	3,288,242,000
Gulu	262,649,430	8,236,842,000
Hoima	694,816,675	5,004,582,000
Iganga	528,365,849	12,163,457,000
Jinja	447,379,820	8,649,827,000
Kabale	424,579,406	8,872,912,000
Kabarole	2,689,665,845	11,730,262,000
Kalangala	189,061,562	1,080,835,000
Kampala	15,809,558,889	9,115,518,000
Kamuli	352,581,286	7,826,916,000
Kapchorwa	203,626,975	3,312,197,000
Kasese	288,345,369	6,888,429,000
Katakwi	300,070,471	3,725,061,000
Kibaale	490,825,015	4,690,327,000
Kiboga	167,715,639	3,110,481,000
Kisoro	174,907,310	3,404,912,000
Kitgum	202,879,040	8,173,191,000
Kotido	139,039,000	3,447,012,000
Kumi	209,907,652	5,533,527,000
Lira	669,735,110	10,992,534,000
Luwero	1,356,998,199	7,581,166,000
Masaka	695,430,582	11,793,344,000
Masindi	1,553,489,224	5,837,419,000
Mbale	880,349,088	16,510,185,000
Mbarara	2,075,542,743	15,817,041,000
Moroto	124,267,450	3,044,010,000
Moyo	60,498,919	2,452,239,000
Mpigi	1,051,800,000	16,396,836,000
Mubende	656,287,117	8,787,721,000
Mukono	1,749,236,892	14,298,508,000
Nakasongola	549,972,751	2,002,558,000
Nebbi	312,413,843	6,153,679,000
Ntungamo	1,028,678,599	4,986,486,000
Pallisa	429,977,358	6,489,110,000
Rakai	622,759,691	7,352,197,000
Soroti	349,013,627	8,239,080,000
Ssembabule	418,747,289	2,123,630,000
Tororo	774,489,016	8,631,980,000
TOTAL	43,044,046,953	331,122,417,000

Source: Local Government Finance Commission, Kampala, Uganda 2001

The answer to such a situation is not to replace the undesirable graduated personal tax with a grant which then fails to expand over time but rather to redesign the tax base to provide the needed flexibility in a more tolerable fashion (**Schroeder, 1987:30**).

3.8.8 Redistribute Effects of Centralised Taxes and Expenditures

In a centralised system of taxes and expenditures, each locality, area or region (i) pays a certain amount of taxes (T_i) to the Central Government and gets a benefit (B_i) for all (i) (**Prud'homme, 1990:119**). For some areas, $T_i < B_i$; for other areas $T_i > B_i$. Some areas therefore gain in the budget game, others lose. The national budget therefore redistributes income over space. According to **Prud'homme (1990:119)**, there is every reason to believe that this redistribution is normally from the richer to the poorer areas. He argues that on a per capita basis, the amount of taxes paid by each area is a linear or a slightly exponential function of the average income of the area, as shown in **Figure 10**. Going by his argument one would say that in a centralised system of expenditures, the benefits of public expenditures are similar in every area and benefits accruing from services ranging from foreign service, education to health, uniform to all citizens.

Table 18(a)
Provincial Government Revenues in Papua New Guinea, 1978-1981 (K'000)

Type of Revenue	1978	1979	1980	1981a/
Unconditional Grants				
Provincial minimum grants	20,216	49,446	38,579	45,946
Office of Implementation b/	51,359	64,446	67,448	75,331
Provincial salaries c/	3,007	8,031	14,215	.....
Sub-total	75,582	111,056	127,609	124,777
Provincially Based Revenue				
Provincial derivation grants	421	3,377	2,191	2,849
Betting tax/licence grant	96	101	277	230
Liquor licenses	553	...	...	...
Tobacco and cigarette sales tax	...	...	1,109	1,250
Mining royalties	1,904	3,827	4,026	3,875
Timber royalties	1,046	1,423	1,415	1,680
Motor registration and licences	701	1,128	136	2,800
Sub-total	4,721	9,856	9,154	12,684
Establishment grants d/	422	....	....	....
Operational grants	97	....	....	....
Provincial development corporations	490	1,973	....	....
Provincial capital works	....	685	877	943
Provincial maintenance (roads)	....	....	1,589	1,600
Staffing grants	98	1,454	....	340
National fiscal commission	1,365	5,000	7,000	5,000
National public expenditure plan projects e/	5,394	1,963	1,372	334
State works and maintenance	....	....	....	2,763
Kerema Kwatiba road	....	....	....	400
Sub-total	7,866	11,075	10,838	11,380
Total	88,169	132,088	147,601	148,841

a/ Budget estimate

b/ Branch of Department of Decentralisation responsible for provinces which donot have full financial autonomy. Includes 15 provinces in 1980, 16 in 1979 and 18 in 1978.

c/ Includes 1 province in 1978; 3 in 1979; 4 in 1980 and 1981

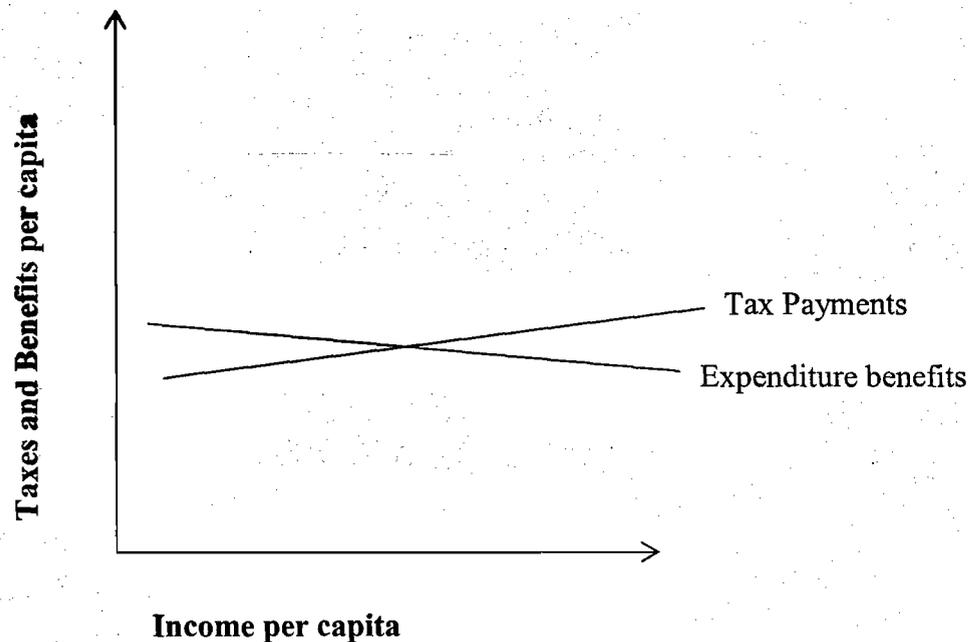
d/ A one-time grant for each province

e/ Excludes sectoral programs. They are included in the central government budget.

Source: The World Bank, 1982: 87

Figure 10

Spatial redistribution Induced by the National Budget



Source: Prud'homme : 119

While even in a country like France where these services are provided by the Centre, with national norms and unified wages, it is difficult to sustain the argument that the quality of social services (education, health, roads etc) does not vary much over space, in the case of a developing economy like that of Uganda, it is impossible to contemplate such a situation. For the latter, structural and systemic defects within the economy will always inhibit government's efforts to evenly and equitably spread our key social services over space. For example well-qualified teachers prefer working in Kampala City Council or other municipalities, to up country rural schools because in the former they easily make ends meet by teaching in many schools, an opportunity which is generally non-existent in the rural areas. Similarly in the health sector, there are few doctors and health workers willing to forego the opportunity of operating lucrative health clinics in towns in preference to the countryside. At times the problem can be so acute that a special measure like the Karamoja allowance²¹ has to be put in place to

²¹ In Uganda, Karamoja is the most backward, under-developed region with the most hostile climate in the country. The colonial government introduced a special Karamoja allowance which was payable to civil

ameliorate the situation. In effect therefore, while centralised taxation and expenditure could in a developed economy like that of France go a long way in redistributing income over space, the Ugandan situation shows that in many under-developed economies such a policy will only serve to deepen the disparities in spatial distribution of social services for which a possible remedy could be decentralisation.

In sum therefore, Prud'homme's centrist approach to local government ought to be examined with a lot of caution. As **Smith** (1985:198) has observed, in developing countries, the funding of both Central and local government can not be separated from the general system of public funding and that system's usual dependence on raw export commodities in the absence of alternative revenue capacity. He argues further that this is not just a question of whether there is a political will on the part of the centre to create alternatives, it is a question of whether the structure of the economy, inhibiting diversification and the development of indigenous enterprises, can allow the development of alternative sources of wealth, which can be taxed by the State at any level other than the national. When rural incomes in a predominantly agricultural society are under pressure from falling export crop prices, as has been the case with coffee and cotton in Uganda, it becomes politically difficult to increase taxes on incomes and still maintain law and order.

In the final analysis, while it does not preclude Prud'homme's discussion on the importance of national government in the redistribution process of income and thus development, this thesis finds the argument of **Smith** (1985:199) more palatable, that an explanation of centralisation in underdeveloped countries in terms of the administrative competence of local authorities compared with central agencies will almost inevitably overlook important features of underdevelopment which impinge upon intergovernmental relations in Third World States. In his view, underdevelopment may mean, among other things, that it is structurally

servants posted to work in the area, as an extra incentive to encourage them to work in such a hostile environment.

difficult to organise sources of revenue, which would strengthen financial independence at the local level. But in the same vein an underdeveloped economy will find it increasingly difficult to generate adequate resources to execute its entire development process from the Centre. It will therefore be argued in this thesis that the best way forward would be to opt for a middle ground one where, given the fact that intergovernmental relations are dominated by persistent and overwhelming dependence on resources allocated by higher levels of government, centralised taxation is undertaken within the general policy framework of decentralised expenditure (Nellis, 1983:136). In the Ugandan situation characterised by huge regional disparities in natural resource endowment a completely decentralised system of taxes and expenditures would be a setback to overall improved service delivery and negate the whole essence of the empowerment process. Since taxes collected in a given area would be spent in that area, richer areas like Kampala and Central Region would remain rich, while poorer areas like Karamoja and the Northern Region would remain poor. Rich areas would even get richer because higher expenditures would attract more people and activities, enlarge the tax base, and make it possible to raise even more taxes to provide even more services. In essence, total decentralisation of taxes and expenditures would inevitably create and increase regional disparities, while centralised taxation and decentralised expenditure would minimise those disparities by taxing richer areas and transferring those resources to poor ones through fiscal transfers, such as the equalisation grants.

3.8.9 Redistributive Impact of Decentralised Taxes

The argument in support of a redistributive impact of decentralised taxes is advanced by Prud'homme (1990:120) who, while despising income taxes as a relatively unimportant form of local taxation, identifies property taxes as some of the most viable taxes capable of redistributing income across local governments. The traditional view of property taxes is that they are borne by the users of the property; the owner of the house in case of owner-occupied houses and the tenant in case of rented houses

(Prud'homme, 1990:121). In such a view, property taxes are not transferred geographically. However, in a more modern, general equilibrium view, property taxes on any given property are borne by the owners of the property, irrespective of where they are located for both housing and industrial property. According to this view part of the taxes paid on rented housing is borne by the owner of the house, who might be located in a distant city (Prud'homme, 1990:121). Part of the taxes paid on business or industrial properties will be borne by the owners of the capital, who are not necessarily located in the same area. There is every reason then to believe that property taxes levied in any community are in part exported out of that community, resulting in some form of redistribution over space. Interestingly, this conceptual discourse is not borne out of the Ugandan experience because here, since a propertied/industrial class is literally absent from the countryside, there are virtually no property taxes levied in the rural areas, despite the existence of an enabling law. Even in Kampala City Council and other urban centres where the tax exists in theory, it has largely remained uncollected because of institutional weaknesses on the part of local authorities and a general degree of indifference towards the tax by the small propertied urban population. This has left only graduated personal tax and market fees or dues (a crude form of local income tax) as the mainstay of decentralised taxation and because these are regressive taxes, they are mainly borne where they are levied and so far there has not been any evidence of their shifting spatially.

In conclusion therefore, one can argue that while the potential exists, so far the redistributive impact of decentralised taxation beyond the geographical limits of district local governments remains minimal. The situation is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future until local enterprises develop and become taxable to magnitudes that are sufficient enough to create spill-overs beyond the geographical limits of the taxing authorities.

3.9 Local Government Service Delivery: The Principal Agent Problem

Rondinelli and **Nellis** (1986:4) have observed that in some countries, many functions performed by central ministries and agencies are poorly implemented because of the difficulty of extending central services to local communities. Maintenance of roads (especially feeder ones), water and sanitation, irrigation canals and equipment and other basic physical infrastructure tasks are sometimes done better by local governments or administrative units when they are given adequate funds and technical assistance than by central agencies, which cannot easily monitor deterioration or breakdowns. Looked at from this perspective, devolution is seen as fundamental in increasing the efficiency of the Centre by relieving its managers of routine, repetitive tasks and allowing it more time to plan and monitor programmes that absolutely require central direction and control. Local government, it is argued, can be a more effective level at which to coordinate action requiring participation by many agencies. In short **Rondinelli** and **Nellis** see devolution as a key *sine qua non* for better service delivery. **Burki** et. al. (1999:76) however extend this argument further, and argue that no government is required to become directly involved in the delivery of service; and that even in the realm of public goods, it may choose to contract for such services as disease surveillance or feeder road maintenance, and its choice will probably depend on the relative quality and efficiency of contracting for services or providing them directly. The reasoning being that, as benefits of various services become increasingly confined to individual consumers, the case for government participation in their production diminishes. In such circumstances, while the public sector's role in regulating remains strong, its comparative advantage in provision is less so. A number of decentralised departments in Uganda provide practical examples and in a way help to reinforce this view. While the trade development services, commercial inspectorate and cooperative development are decentralised departments as per **LGA**, 1997:117 with staff and operational budgets, their roles have long since been diminished by market forces as a result of deregulation and

liberalisation policies of the 1990s. Such departments should have by now been abolished and their staff either re-designated or retired, but this has not been the case. The failure of both the Centre and local governments to observe the distinction between public and private goods on the one hand, and impersonal versus personal services on the other, has resulted in their financing and delivering all kinds of services even though many could be delivered as well or better in a competitive market. **Burki et. al.** (1999:6) attribute this to a dichotomous role played by local governments in service delivery in which they act as agents of the Centre (itself the principal) on one hand, and as principals of their constituents, on the other. In the case of Uganda, the principal agent problem has in turn created two main problems for local governments.

First has been the assumption on the part of the central government that decentralising of key functions will automatically result in effective service delivery, when in fact lower levels of government lack any advantage in skills, incentives, motives or negotiating power to improve the management of such services.

Secondly, local governments have not been availed with sufficient financial resources commensurate with their dual role manifested through the principal-agent relationship. As a result, and contrary to what **Rondinelli & Nellis** (1986:4) have claimed, devolution may, in as far as the principal-agent problem remains unresolved, not lead to any improved service delivery among the local communities or even enhance any efficiency on the part of the Centre. The problem could even be exacerbated if there continues to be failure on part of the local government service delivery approach to recognise that women are currently the majority in Uganda, not only population wise, but also in terms of the poor, marginalized sections of society, and that any empowerment strategies which focus on women are likely to be the most effective and inclusive as long as they do not restrict themselves only on aspects of poverty and deprivation. This is because an anti-poverty approach of empowerment does not necessarily improve

women's position in society, and if women's marginalisation is only seen as a result of poverty, then issues of power and inequality are ignored. A gender-sensitive approach to an effective local service delivery and empowerment process should therefore not feed into a welfarist orientation where women and other marginalized sections of society are portrayed as beneficiaries of state support, and not as social agents of their own development.

3.10 Local Government and Gender: The Case for Affirmative Action

The definition of gender in this thesis draws heavily on what has been proposed by **Kerenge** (1992:5) to the effect that gender should be considered as a social role in terms of what women and men in a given society do. Gender relates to social structures and relations in terms of hierarchical power relations, encompassing dominance and subordination in economic and political organisations as well as in every day life. There is also the aspect of practices in terms of what is actually done to maintain or change gender roles. According to **Kerenge** (1992:5) therefore, for devolution to be complete there is need to strengthen the position of women in society by:

- Integrating gender issues into national, local and sectoral development plans;
- Defining structures and processes which will ensure that gender concerns are addressed in all future developmental activities;
- Ensuring that sectoral development programmes address the multiple roles of women (productive, reproductive and community service) and putting in place measures to reduce women's work burden; and
- Fostering gender awareness among local politicians and staff in order to enable them address gender issues.

The South African White Paper on Local Government summarizes the importance of gender equity as one of the core principles of local government transformation in the following words:

'Communities' and 'Households' are not homogeneous categories in which everyone is the same. Different people have different starting points in life – determined by such factors as gender, class and race – and different opportunities to access resources and influence decision-making. Within communities and households, power dynamics can develop which see some people gain access to resources and power, and others marginalized or excluded. Local government is uniquely placed to analyse and understand power dynamics within a community, and ensure that those who tend to be excluded and marginalized can become active and equal participants in community processes and the transformation of the settlements where they live (Republic of South Africa, 1998a:14, White Paper on Local Government).

The World Bank Poverty Assessment Survey in Uganda (**World Bank**, 1993a:50) identified a number of major constraints on the participation of women in the political, economic and social life of the country. These included issues relating to integration into the decision-making process, access to productive resources necessary to fully participate in agricultural production, un-equal burdens of house-hold management, excessive work loads (women on average worked 12.9 hours per day, compared to men's 8.2), unequal access to health and education, and isolation.

The World Bank survey proposed the following policies of gender-responsive growth:

- Promotion, through literacy and education and in conjunction with the vigorous pursuit of gender-responsive institutional reform efforts underway, the economic and political profile of women through control of economically productive resources, including

capital and land, and equal participation in community-level, district and national decision-making; and

- Realignment of the political structures, including the Resistance Committee system to ensure appropriate representation and articulation of women needs.²²

Despite existence of acute restrictions emanating both from the cultural systems and the natural law, there is evidence that many disempowering forms and values are gradually being overcome, not only through legislation but also other modes of affirmative action. The requirement by the Local Governments Act 1997 for example, that women councillors shall form 1/3 of every local government council and that at least one of the secretaries shall be a female, demonstrates the extent to which women are considered part and parcel of the devolution process. This empowerment approach, strongly propagated by the **World Bank** (1993:33) and apparently fully embraced by Uganda, questions the fundamental assumptions concerning the relationship between power and development. It argues in terms of the capacity of women to increase their internal strength and right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change by gaining control over crucial material and non-material resources, and asserts that for local governance to take root and blossom, long-term strategies are needed to break down the structures of inequality between genders, classes, and other divisions that characterise the socio-economic landscape.

UNICEF (1994:6)) agrees that the way forward lies with mainstreaming gender issues both at national and local government levels as this not only removes gender discrimination but also enables a cost-effective development process in the long run.

²² This was the system of local administration in operation before the coming into force of the local council system in 1993

Figures 11 and-12 encapsulate UNICEF's vision in ensuring women's participation at community level using the **Triple AAA** and **Women Empowerment Frameworks**. Both models emphasise the need to identify existing gender gaps followed by efforts to identify and analyse the discriminatory systems that produce and nurture these disparities and finally taking action to reduce or remove such gender discrimination. It is the argument of this thesis that for a strong system of local governance to be built, all stakeholders, men and women, must play their respective roles to their full ability and in a way that does not diminish the potential of either to contribute to national development. **Kerenge** (1992:8) estimates for example, that over 33 percent of house-holds in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are headed by women. In Malawi the proportion has been estimated at around 29 percent. In Kenya, around 40 percent of rural house-olds have a female head. While it is widely accepted that female-headed house-olds are on average poorer, ironically, one statistical survey-the Ghana living standards survey of 1987/88-estimated the income of female-headed households at about 7 percent higher than that of male-headed house holds (**Boateng** et. al. 1990:47). It is therefore quite obvious that a progressive local taxation policy would ensure that such income irrespective of the existing gender stereotypes is brought within the tax bracket.

Figure 11
Triple AAA Framework

Assessment Identify Gender Gaps	
Action Take actions to reduce/remove gender discrimination	Analysis Identify /analyse gender discriminatory systems causing the gender disparity

Source: *UNICEF Uganda: Report on Mainstreaming Gender Issues in UNICEF Supported Programmes in Uganda, 1994, P.12*

Figure 12
Women's Empowerment Framework

Gender Gaps	
Gaps in:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare (Material wellbeing) • Access to resources and services • Conscientisation about disparities • Participation in decision making process • Control of situations
Women Empowerment	Gender Discrimination
i.e interventions that increase women's ability, confidence and control of situations and thus reduce/remove gender disparity which causes their disempowerment.	i.e discriminatory systems in a given society/community that maintain gender gaps.

Source: UNICEF Uganda: Report on Mainstreaming Gender Issues in UNICEF Supported Programmes in Uganda, 1994, P.13

Das Gupta et. al. (1999:629) underscores the aspect of custom in reinforcing gender gaps through accentuation of existing discriminatory practices.²³ They argue that customary gender norms and values can lead to political, legal, economic, and educational inequalities that perpetuate women's lack to access to resources, control over decision-making, and participation in public life. If the rights of men and women are flagrantly unequal, it is very difficult to establish a democratic and participatory socio-political order and an environment of equal opportunity. Inevitably local government suffers more from such a skewed relationship since it is deprived of the synergy essential for collective community action and development.

This thesis agrees with **Wade** (1985:480) that social inequality in the villages undermines efforts to manage collective goods such as water, and while in the hands of village elites, control of these resources tend to be

²³ Some countries use the legal system to formalize customary rules that explicitly limit women's rights. In the Republic of Korea for example, customary laws restricting women's rights were formalized in the Civil Code of 1962, and women's rights have been slow to improve. After decades of struggle by women's organisations, key amendments in 1990 gave women the right to inherit their parents' and husband's property. Divorce laws were changed to allow women equal rights to property acquired during marriage, and child custody is no longer granted automatically to the father

used to further discriminate against marginalized groups, such as the women. This probably explains why in Uganda, very few women are allowed to sit on water source committees, and it is extremely rare to find a water source committee chaired by a woman.

Finally, it has to be stressed that, when social distinctions between groups are used to perpetuate inequalities in access to material resources, they generate rigid socio-political hierarchies, which constitute powerful social barriers explicitly aimed at preserving the status of the better-off (**Rhyme & Holt 1994:25**). Rigid stratification also creates obstacles to collective action; if the distribution of power in a community is too skewed, then prospects for trust and cooperation are low. Under these circumstances, it will be difficult for local government to blossom and grow because the above-mentioned paternalism places crippling constraints on individuals and deters them from exhaustively exploiting their potential in areas of local and community development. These observations do not imply that local government does not have a role to play in the process of gender transformation, nor that the provision of local services is insignificant in promoting social equity. Rather, the mere provision of basic services will not be sufficient to achieve gender equality, as other conditions will have to be met before communities become more equal places.

A critical requirement is that women are formally and equally represented in all sectors and at all levels of local government. This applies to both the political level, as councillors, members of the executive committee, chairpersons of council sectoral committees, and to the administration as managers, planners, technicians, engineers and financial administrators. The current reality shows that both in Hoima District Local Government and Uganda, women are under-represented at both levels and in all these positions. Informing and involving women in all stages of local decision-making is another requirement for making communities more equal places. This means that women have to be formally and equitably represented on community structures like, like village and ward committees and other

development forums. It also means that local government has to ensure that mechanisms to facilitate community participation are targeted and inclusive. Currently, preferred mechanisms of communicating with communities tend to have implicit biases which make it more difficult, if not impossible, for women to make meaning contributions to decision-making processes. **Van Donk** (1997:25) observe, for example, that using the written form as a means of informing the community is biased against people with lower levels of literacy or those who cannot prioritise their time to read relevant information. Since the majority of both groups are women, they will possibly be targeted by use of additional methods such as community radio or using a loud-hailer to disseminate information and facilitate the outreach to a larger group of people in the community. Similarly, local government tends to use public meetings as the preferred mechanism to consult with the community. Women may find that they lack the time or resources, transport especially, to attend these meetings. Even if they do attend, women may be constrained by social values to speak in public when men are part of the audience, or they may simply not be taken seriously. Alternative or additional activities, such as meetings with women organisations or individual meetings with councillors, are likely to be more appropriate ways to include women's voices in the decision-making process.

An additional prerequisite for gender transformation in communities is that local government representatives are sufficiently sensitised and skilled to ensure that local government, in all aspects of its work, is gender-sensitive (**Van Donk**,1997:25). In addition to gender awareness and a commitment to gender equality at a political level, expertise in gender analysis and gender planning as an area of technical competency is needed amongst local government officials.

The above requirements highlight the need for a mind-shift within local government. In other words, it is not sufficient merely to change the faces of councillors or officials, or to organise an additional meeting with a group

of women in the community. This thesis argues that simply 'adding women' is not going to transform the inherent patriarchal bias in local government, for two reasons. Women are not necessarily more gender-sensitive than men because they have been brought up to accept the same norms and values as men and may not experience the multiple constraints imposed on them as oppressive. Secondly, those women and men who do consider themselves as advocates for social change are likely to experience a whole range of institutional and attitudinal barriers, not the least of which is resistance to change, which may leave them more disempowered and disillusioned. Given that these gender advocates often find themselves in the minority, they are easily outnumbered by those who, overtly or tacitly, support the status-quo. Thus, for local government to realise its potential to promote gender equity requires a fundamental change of local government institutions in terms of their structures, their organisational culture, what they do and how they do it, and how they prioritise available resources.

3.10.1 Reforming Institutions

Herbst (1995:45-48) observes that in societies that are not deeply stratified, reform of state institutions can increase social equity and levels of community participation. He argues that a fairly simple reform is to ensure that delivery of public services does not neglect disadvantaged groups, while broader reforms should entail making legal systems equitable and ensuring that administrative and political institutions are accessible and responsive to all. Rather than create barriers, these systems should facilitate the full participation of the entire population (**Herbst**, 1999:61). Citizenship and family laws may also need reform to reduce social tensions and enable disadvantaged groups to participate in socio-economic and political life, which is important to their ability to organize on their behalf. In this argument for reform the bottom line remains simple and succinct: for local government to succeed as a spring board for development, all actors and stakeholders must play equal roles, fully engage their energies into the development process, and in the end be able to access available opportunities based on equity and egalitarianism.

3.10.2 Taking Affirmative Action

Coate & Loury (1993:1228) argue that in deeply-stratified societies, efforts in gender mainstreaming need to be supplemented by affirmative action programs to counter the disabilities from long-standing discrimination. To compete in the economic and political arenas, those discriminated against need special assistance in acquiring education, information and self-confidence. Affirmative action begins with legislation against discrimination in access to public and private goods and services as well as to public office.

In Uganda, legislation in the Local Governments Act (1997) which reserves a third of the seats in a local government council for women, and at least one position for a woman on a local government executive committee, is a manifestation of this policy.

Prominent in affirmative action are efforts to reduce the cumulative disadvantages of low access to education, employment and politics (**Herbst**, 1999:48). This typically involves helping members of groups discriminated against to acquire skills and access opportunities through financial support for education, preferential admission to higher education, and, where appropriate, job quotas. **Loury** (2000:19) identifies two types of policies in respect of affirmative action whose outcomes have made a big difference in terms of empowering disadvantaged groups, especially women.

- *Development Policies* seek to enhance the performance of members of disadvantaged groups. Examples are financial and other inputs to improve educational qualifications of women, or management assistance to women establishing their own businesses, or indeed seed money to enable local women start income-generation projects.
- *Preferential Policies* seek to reduce cumulative disadvantages more rapidly by giving members of disadvantaged groups opportunities even when they may be less qualified than others.

Although the quickest way to social, economic, and political mobility, these policies can backfire by reinforcing negative stereotypes about lower abilities of the disadvantaged (**Coate & Loury** 1993:1233, **Steele**,1999: 48).

In conclusion, this thesis postulates that constructing high quality public institutions is essential for ensuring that diverse identities become a developmental asset, not a source of political division and confrontation. Civil society organizations and the State can and should do much to lay the institutional foundation for local groups to cooperate for the common good. In order for local government to play a meaningful role, institutions need to be participatory, credible and accountable so that people can see the benefits of cooperation. Underpinning these institutions need to be constitutional and legal systems and representative political systems, which allow groups to work out their interests through mechanisms other than confrontation.

3.11 Problems Faced by Local Government in Uganda.

In May 1972, the **Simmance Committee** in Zambia stated that,

*...an essential feature of decentralised administration must be the preparation by the province of its own capital and recurrent estimates for all the activities of sectoral ministries and departments which will now come under provincial rather than Lusaka – based control. This is one of the most important- perhaps the most important - measure by which true decentralisation can be achieved. It is not enough for the province to become a self-contained accounting authority alone. It must be functionally responsible and this will mean nothing without financial responsibility for estimating its developmental and recurrent needs.*²⁴

Zambia is still a long way from realising this objective, and while Uganda can display some bold and exciting initiatives of decentralisation, it too

²⁴ Excerpted from the Simmance Committee Report, a report of the working party appointed to review the system of decentralised administration (Lusaka: Cabinet office: May 1972) pp. 65-66, para. 5.15

does not fully satisfy the conditions, laid down in the **Simmance Committee** Report since its district local governments are yet to prepare and approve their own development budgets. It is this condition which gives rise to the first major problem encountered by local government in Uganda. In a report to the Ministry of Local Government by the **Nordic consulting group** (1996:11), it is noted that local governments have assumed a wide range of functions, including most of the service responsibilities previously undertaken by health, education, water and other line ministries. Yet only a relatively small portion of government expenditure (some 20 percent of recurrent expenditure or 2 percent GDP) had by 1997 been placed under the control of local governments. As a result, the latter are generally handicapped in that while the wage bills of decentralised staff are covered, non-wage bill costs are not adequately met.

Nsibambi (1998:49) observes that accountability at all the three levels of financial, administrative and political, is another area where local government is still experiencing problems.

Financial accountability has to do with holding individuals and organisations responsible for their actions and performance in the financial sphere (**Nsibambi** 1998:49). In the interest of the people whom they represent it is essential that the money which local authorities spend is used for a good purpose and is fully accounted for.

Administrative accountability refers to accountability by public managers to the political leadership and the population (**Nsibambi** 1998:50), while political accountability is a measure of the extent to which governors are responsible to the governed.

It is a fundamental aspect of democracy that those who rule should pursue the public interest rather than their own selfish interest. This is an obligation placed on local government councillors no less than on central politicians. Yet this is an area which is still deficient to such an extent that local councillors are most of the time preoccupied with private interests (business ventures, tenders) at the expense of the public good.

Nsibambi (1998:53) also identifies auditing of local authority accounts as another area of tremendous weakness. It is normal local government practice to make legal provision for the auditing of accounts. This is a duty which falls upon a local authority's internal auditors and usually, though not universally, on the Auditor General's Department, but for a variety of reasons, often including poor internal accounting and a very heavy workload placed on an under-staffed Auditing department or AG's office, audit reports tend to fall behind schedule; and when reports are more than two years overdue, they have little corrective value.

3.12 Summary

As already stated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the extent to which Uganda has developed its local government is impressive, but despite this fundamental achievement, it would be foolhardy to deny that the process is still beset with problems. The experience of other countries in Common wealth Africa, notably Ghana, South Africa and Botswana, may shed some light on alternative strategies that might be pursued and/or the dangers and pitfalls to be avoided. Viability and sustainability are fundamental factors in district and sub-county service delivery if local government is to address its developmental role effectively.

This chapter outlined the historical evolution of local government in Uganda, the system as it is currently, including the organisational, legal and institutional set-up and identified some of the critical aspects that characterise local government management and development.

The chapter reveals that although Uganda is deeply committed to strengthening of local governments, an underdeveloped and therefore inadequate local government financing continues to be a stumbling block to this initiative. Efficient collection of graduated personal tax- the major source of local revenue-is constrained by lack of a coherent taxation policy, poor assessment and other arbitrary decisions, some of which make the tax too costly to collect.

Finally the chapter identifies gender as a significant cross-cutting aspect of the empowerment process that needs to treat women the same way as it treats men, and in so doing be able to tap their vast potential and enhance the levels of community participation, development and consequently good governance.

3.13 Projections for the next chapter

The next chapter will outline the research methodology that was used to conduct the study. The details will include the research design, sampling mechanism, the sources of data and research instruments used. Other aspects to be covered will include the mode of data analysis, the ethical issues considered and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter dwells on the research methodology used in the study. It entails a broad explanation of the procedure followed in the collection, synthesis, and analysis of data, including details of where, when and how it was collected. It gives an outline of the objectives of the study, and provides a detailed overview of the study area, the population and sampling methods applied together with the data gathering methods used. The mode of pre-testing the interview guides and schedule is explained while problems encountered in the course of data collection, including ethical issues and limitations of the study are highlighted. The chapter concludes with a description of the non-quantifying procedures of qualitative data analysis used and shows how these have been helpful in synthesising the different themes and concepts from the research and forming them into new integrated patterns.

4.2 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are:

- To critically examine the historical development of the decentralisation process in Uganda in the context of empowerment and strong local governance characterised by a visible and buoyant community leadership.
- To evaluate the impact of the decentralisation policy and process within the broad frame-work of the need for improved service delivery, good governance and strong civil society, and using Hoima District Local Government as a reference point, assess the extent the policy has been able to strengthen the institutional capacities of local councils, and thereby enable them to meet

internal challenges and avert the failures of decentralisation. Also built within this broad objective included an attempt to establish the extent to which the policy had gone in promoting popular participation as a way of empowering the local people to make their own decisions and enhance accountability and responsibility.

- To identify the shortcomings of the decentralisation process using Hoima District Local Government as a case study and propose a viable political and managerial discourse for sustainable local governance.
- To generally draw on the lessons of decentralisation in order to address the challenges facing local governments in Uganda and more particularly, Hoima District Local Government.

4.3 Research Design

Selltiz et. al. (1976:90) have defined a research design as the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. It follows therefore that research designs will differ depending on the purpose of the research. In this study, emphasis was put partly on the discovery of new ideas and insights and partly on increasing the researcher's familiarity with the phenomena of devolution and empowerment that were being investigated. The research design was therefore advertently made flexible enough to permit the consideration of various aspects of these phenomena. It was based on a case study approach and broadly employed a phenomenological paradigm in its scope and breadth of analysis, including the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of data. It was also role-focused whereby key stakeholders cutting across gender, both in the local government system and the general decentralisation set up, were interviewed on the individual and institutional roles of the organs they represented.

The qualitative methods of data collection were generally used. In particular qualitative methods were used to investigate local councils' knowledge of

planning and budgeting, service delivery, community participation and involvement efforts, and levels of resource mobilisation.

Other themes investigated using qualitative methods included the principle of non-subordination and control over civil servants among the various levels of local government, knowledge on the operationalisation of the local government system and the visibility strength of the civil society.

As is common with most studies, not all data could be collected in a non-numerical form. Some quantitative data was collected, albeit at a small level, using the interview schedule that was administered to the civic and opinion leaders. Not all the thematic areas covered by the interview guide were covered by the schedule. The interview schedule covered only three areas namely; the levels of service delivery, community participation and involvement efforts, and knowledge of operationalisation of the local government system.

4.4 Study Area

The study was carried out in Hoima District which lies in mid-Western Uganda, bordering Kibaale District in the south, Kiboga District in the east, Masindi District in the north and Lake Albert and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the west. Annexure A provides more details regarding the study area.

Hoima District Local Government consists of 2 Counties, 11 Sub-counties, 2 Town Councils, 44 Parishes and 478 Villages. The District has a total population of 349,204 people²⁵ with a density of 97 people per square Km, well below the national average of 126 (2002 Uganda population and housing census). The annual population growth rate is 6.33 per cent which is above the national average of 4.03 per cent.

²⁵ The district population figure quoted is per November 2002 Uganda population and housing census. Though the results are still provisional, they indicate a 76% increase in the population over a 12 year period from a total of 197,851 people in 1991 to 349,204 people in 2002.

Female-headed households represent 26 per cent of the total in the district. While life expectancy at birth is 52.7 years, the infant mortality rate is 92 per 1000, which is in line with the national average (2002 national population and housing census). While almost 90 percent of the population is rural, the adult literacy rate is 56 per cent. Homesteads are widely scattered and houses are mostly constructed using mud and wattle, with grass thatched roofing. As practically the whole population lives in rural areas, socio-economic welfare depends almost entirely on the effective and efficient use of its substantial agricultural resource base. However, agricultural productivity in the district is low, and has been declining over time (IFAD, 1998:2). Subsistence farming with minimal inputs is the main system practised, while market-oriented cultivation, other than of coffee, is negligible. An indication of poor food production level and food security is that only some 20 per cent of rural households in Hoima District are able to store adequate amounts of grain to last till the next harvesting season, and the district each year imports food from other parts of the country (IFAD, 1998:2).

The above pattern of agricultural practices is reflected in the very low average incomes in Hoima District. In 1995, the annual average income per capita was estimated to be USD 169, representing 75 per cent of the national average which is the lowest in the world (IFAD, 1998:3). In this situation, while the incidence of hunger is not common, 90 per cent of the rural population in Hoima District live below the poverty line (IFAD, 1998:3). The foregoing portrayal gives the background of the area where the study was conducted. It was carried out in all the 11 Sub-counties and 2 Town Councils as shown in **Table 19** below:

Table 19
Study Area: Hoima District Local Council

LOCAL COUNCIL IV	LOCAL COUNCIL III	LOCAL COUNCIL II	LOCAL COUNCIL I
COUNTY	SUB-COUNTY	PARISH	VILLAGE
BUHAGUZI	KYANGWALI	KYANGWALI	KYANGWALI
			TONTEMA
	KABWOYA	BUBOGO	KISONSONMYA
			NYAKABALE
	KIZIRANFUMBI	KIDOMA	NYAMIGOOGO
			RWAMUSAGA
	BUHIMBA	RUHUNGA	KITOOLE
			RWEMPARAKI
BUGAMBE	KATANGA	IBAMBIRO	
		KYAMULYANGA	
BUGAHYA	BUSIISI	KIHUKYA	KAYANJA
			KITOOMA
	BUSERUKA	NYAKABINGO	NYAKABINGO
			BUSERUKA
	BUHANIKA	KITOONYA	KYOHAIWE
			KITOONYA
	KYABIGAMBIRE	KISABAGWA	BUGANDALE
			NYAKABINGO
	KITOBA	KIRYANGOBE	KIRYANGOBE
			KIBURWA
	KIGOROBYA	KISUKUMA	HAIBALE I
			HAIBALE II
	KIGOROBYA T.C	NORTHERN WARD	KIKWANANA
KIJONGO			
HOIMA T.C	NORTHERN WARD	LUSAKA LOWER	
		LUSAKA UPPER	

4.5 Population and Sample

In any research, it is extremely important that the study findings based on a sample which is only part of the group about which statements are to be made and conclusions derived, be a reasonably accurate representation of the state of affairs in the total group, known as the population in research

terminology. This means that the sample should be selected in such a way that findings based on it are likely to correspond closely to those that would be obtained if the population itself were studied **Seltiz et. al. (1976:107)**. These two considerations were kept in the researcher's mind right from the onset of the research design up to the conclusion of the investigation for the simple reason that while the population being studied enjoyed more or less similar socio-political status in society and while 90 per cent held leadership positions at various levels, the tribal background of its members was as diverse and heterogeneous as their cultural beliefs, both of which had effects on the nature and quality of responses obtained.

4.5.1 Defining the Population

The population under this study was constituted by the entire political, technical and civic leadership of Hoima District who were residing within the bounds of the said district at the time the study was carried out. The unit of analysis was Hoima District Local Government, as this was the case study to which the phenomena of devolution and empowerment that were being investigated referred to.

4.5.2 Sampling Frame

Determination of the sampling frame was guided by the need to obtain a sample that was, as far as possible, representative of the population as a whole. The research was dependent on the goodwill and availability of the subjects-and there were plenty of both-to be properly undertaken. The scattered settlement pattern of the population imposed significant constraints on the available resources.

The following sampling units were core and formed the fundamental elements of the sampling frame:

- a) All members of the Village Executive Committees;
- b) All civic and opinion leaders in the sub-counties and urban areas;
- c) All Sub-County Chiefs and Town Clerks;

- d) All Sub-County Chairpersons also referred to in this study as Local Council III Chairmen;
- e) All members of top management of Hoima District Local Government; and
- f) All members of Hoima District Local Council Five.

Given that the study was conducted using a phenomenological approach, emphasis was put on quality and depth of data. In-depth interviewing was essential to capture the richness of detail and nuance of the circumstances being studied, and to realise the said detail necessitated the incorporation of a broad spectrum of political, technical, civic and key socio-economic players in the sampling frame as a way of limiting on the incidence of results currency and the limitations often posed by the generalisation of results. Other factors that determined the choice and breadth of the sampling frame were in respect of the unit of analysis itself and the status of the existent knowledge on the same. Devolution is still a relatively recent phenomenon on the Ugandan political landscape, and is even more recent in Hoima District, the latter having come on board two years after the inception of full-blown decentralisation in Uganda. In research terms this meant a generally deficient body of knowledge on which analytical and conceptual issues could be premised. It was thus thought that a relatively broad sampling frame, though still unable to fully cure the deficiency would help minimise the effects of the problem.

4.5.3 Sampling Size

As is common in most studies particularly those involving case studies, two questions will always arise when it comes to determining the sampling size. The first is a question of deciding how accurate you want your results to be, while the second, though less important, relates to the traditions in that particular research area regarding an appropriate sample size. Given the fact that there were no known studies in the area of devolution and empowerment in Uganda, the study could not make use of any established benchmarks in terms of an appropriate sample size. In any case it was felt

that a relatively large sample would be a critical factor in determining both the reliability and validity of the research findings. This is not to say however, that by picking as large a sample as possible the degree of uncertainty in the conclusions to be drawn would be completely eliminated, rather it was felt the act would go a long way in enhancing the level of data integrity of the research findings.

The research was conducted based on a sample of 666 respondents drawn from the sampling frame already described in sub-section 4.5.2.

4.5.4 Sampling Procedure

The cluster random sampling method was used to select the eleven rural sub-counties and two town councils as constituent units of Hoima District Local Government, as illustrated by **Table 19**. A multi-stage random sampling method was used to select one parish and one ward from each sub-county and town council respectively, care being undertaken to ensure a fair balance, in terms of inclusion into the sample of both peripheral and non-peripheral parishes. Proximity to the sub-county headquarters was the key parameter used in determining how peripheral a parish was.

A multi-stage random sampling method was further used to identify two villages or local council ones per selected parish whose executives would be covered by the survey.

Other sampling units selected using the same method included the Sub-county chiefs, Sub-county chairpersons, and top management of Hoima District Local Government. The researcher had no influence on the composition of these particular groups as they already operated in a delineated institutional setting, and automatically applied the natural sampling technique in determining these samples. Selection of the sample from the civic and opinion leaders was problematic. The group is itself diverse and in spite of the researcher's knowledge of the study area, it was difficult to pin-point with precision credible members of the community

meeting the set criteria for that particular group. Against the background of the foregoing challenge, a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods, coupled with the guidance of Sub-county Chiefs, Parish Chiefs and Village Chairpersons were collectively used to come up with the 325 respondents that were surveyed under this category.

4.5.5. Description of Sample

Tables 20 and **21**, and **Figure 13** summarise the nature of samples and the methods that were used to obtain the data. The tabular categorisation is based on the type of research instrument used. There was a trade-off in deciding to use the interview schedule rather than the in-depth interview guide to survey the civic and opinion leaders in that whereas it was possible through this method to handle as many respondents as possible, depth and richness of data, normally characteristic of the interview guide, were forfeited. A total of six hundred sixty six (666) respondents drawn from eleven sub-counties and two town councils were interviewed using both research instruments.

Table 20
Description of Sample: Structured Interviews

Research Instrument	Sampling Unit	Number of Respondents
Interview Schedule	Civic and Opinion Leaders-Rural	275
	Civic and Opinion Leaders-Urban	50
	TOTAL	325

Figure 13
Description of Sample: Structured Interviews

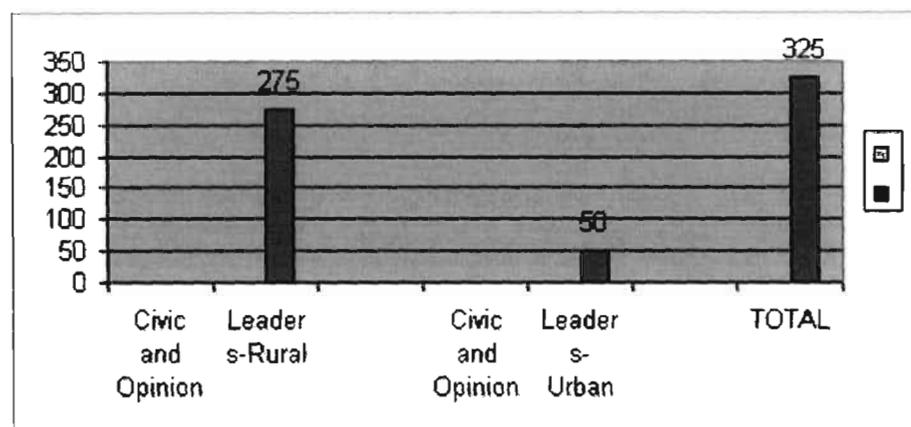


Table 21
Description of Sample: Unstructured Interviews

Research Instrument	Sampling Units	Number of Respondents
Interview Guide	LC I Chairperson	26
	LC I Vice Chairperson	26
	LC I Gen/Secretary	26
	LC I Secretary for Information	26
	LC I Secretary for Security	26
	LC I Secretary for Finance	26
	LC I Secretary for Production	26
	LC I Secretary for Youth	26
	LC I Secretary for Women	26
	LC I Secretary for people with disabilities	26
	Sub-County Chiefs Sub-County Chairpersons	11
	Town Clerks	2
	District Top Management	30
	District Councillors	27
	TOTAL	341

4.5.6 Composition of Sample

The study was conducted using two categories of research instruments, namely the interview schedule for structured interviews that were administered to civic and opinion leaders, and the interview guide for personal interviews conducted with Local Council I Executives, Sub-County

Chiefs and Chairpersons, Town clerks, top management of Hoima District and the District Local Council political leadership.

Tables 22 and **23** summarise the sample composition based on the two research instruments used in the study, and disaggregated by gender and domicile of respondents.

Table 22
Composition Of Sample: Civic And Opinion Leaders

Research Instrument	Gender of Respondents	Domicile of Respondents		No. of Respondents Interviewed
		Rural	Urban	
Interview Schedule	Male	257	40	297
	Female	18	10	28
	TOTAL	275	50	325

Table 23
Sample Composition: Unstructured Interviews

Sampling Units	Gender of Respondents		Domicile of Respondents		Number of Resp. Interviewed
	Male	Female	Rural	Urban	
Village Executive Committees	182	78	220	40	260
Sub-county Chiefs	10	1	11	0	11
Sub-county Chairpersons	11	0	11	0	11
Town Clerks	2	0	0	2	2
Hoima District Top Management	24	6	5	25	30
Hoima District Local Council Members	18	9	25	2	27
TOTAL	247	94	272	69	341

4.6 Data Collection Methods

Despite the largely phenomenological paradigm that was applied in terms of conceptualisation, design and general framework of the study, the research also applied the methodological triangulation approach, by bringing on board both the qualitative and quantitative approaches to

data collection. In choosing the methodology to use, consideration was made as to its appropriateness in eliciting reliable, valid, qualitative and in-depth data. The critical incident technique, given its fame and wide application in generating qualitative data, was used. Developed by **Flanagan** (1954: 327-330), the critical incident technique is a procedure for gathering certain important facts concerning behaviour and events in defined situations (**Flanagan**, 1954: 335). Although called a technique, it is not a set of rigid rules, but a flexible set of principles which can be modified and adapted according to circumstances. The technique proved to be of considerable value in generating data especially during personal in-depth interviews where, in some instances, interviewees had difficulty in expressing their opinions. The technique was particularly useful while interviewing the 260 Local Council One Executives and the 13 Sub-County Chairpersons. It was however not used to interview Sub-County Chiefs and the top District Management because their relatively-high literacy levels required less probing.

A positivistic approach using structured (closed) questions was used to interview the 325 Civic and Opinion Leaders. In this case respondents' answers were selected from a number of predetermined alternatives. The reductionist tendency²⁶ commonly associated with the positivist paradigm was greatly minimised by applying factual questions as much as possible.

4.6.1 Primary Data Sources

There were two main sources of primary data. The first and basic source was the research itself conducted in Hoima District, while the second source was derived from the result of the national service delivery survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Service.

²⁶ This tendency is common with quantitative methods of data collection that give a spurious objectivity to information in a manner that diminishes the richness of data and its contextual implications thus contributing to a narrower and less 'real' interpretation of phenomena.

4.6.1.1 *Data from the Hoima Research*

Data from the Hoima research was obtained from carefully conducted interviews (personal in-depth interviews) covering 341 respondents, and closed (structured) interviews covering 325 respondents.

4.6.1.2 *Data from the National Service Delivery Survey*

The National Service Delivery Survey was carried out by the Ministry of Public Service in August 2000 with the aim of collecting information on perceptions, as well as satisfaction of the people of Uganda with regard to the quantity and quality of services delivered by government. The Survey covered a wide range of services ranging from crime prevention, delivery of justice, water and sanitation, good governance, education, and health services to agricultural extension. It was based on a two-stage stratified district-wide independent and representative sample of households. For each of the 45 districts existing at the time of the survey a list of village LCs constituted the sampling frame for the first stage. At this stage a minimum of 30 villages were randomly selected using a simple random sampling method and from each of these selected villages, a random sample of 10 households was chosen. The realised sample size countrywide was 13,604 households.

The NSD survey used a structured household questionnaire as its survey instrument covering service sectors that included:

- Crime and Justice
- Good governance
- Water and Sanitation
- Health services
- Education, and
- Agricultural extension

Data was mainly processed through manual editing and coding and the main purpose here was to counter check the field-completed questionnaires for their completeness and to edit them for accuracy against

established value ranges, as well as carrying out consistency checks between one or more questions.

4.6.2 Secondary Data Sources

The study was characterised by a deep and detailed search to explore existing literature, ascertain what has been written or published on the research topic, and how this impacted on the research problem. Principally, secondary literature data was obtained from four basic sources, and these were; the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; the Local Government Finance Commission; The Uganda Bureau of Statistics; and bi-annual status reports from the Ministry of Local Government's Decentralisation Secretariat, on the implementation of the decentralisation programme for the period 1st January 1995 to 31st December 2001. Details of data obtained from the literature are provided in **Tables 1 to 18a** respectively of chapter three.

4.6.3 The Research Instruments

The research instruments were of two categories, namely the interview guide that was administered to key informants, namely the Local Council One Executives, the Sub-County Chiefs, the Sub-County Chairpersons, the Town Clerks, the top District Management and the District Political Leadership. The other category was of the interview schedule for structured interviews that were administered to Civic and Opinion Leaders. All interview guide questions were un-structured or open-ended and were administered individually to respondents in a face-to-face dialogue. That way, it was possible to secure each respondent's personal response or opinion in his or her own words.

All interview guides began with classification questions that set out to find more about the respondent, particularly his or her age, level of education, marital status, occupation etc., leading up to the sensitive questions progressively. This strategy was built into the research methodology right from the time of designing the Interview guide questions, which process

also saw the establishment of a checklist for eliminating inappropriate questions based on the principles espoused by **Czaja & Blair** (1996:61) as per **Figure 14** below.

Figure 14
Checklist for eliminating questions

1. Does the question measure some aspect of one of the research questions?
2. Does the question provide information needed in conjunction with some other variable?
(if NO to both 1 and 2, drop the question;
if YES to one or both, retain)
3. Will most respondents understand the question and in the same way?
(if NO, revise or drop; if YES, retain)
4. Will most respondents have the information to answer it?
(if NO, drop; if YES, retain)
5. Will most respondents be willing to answer it?
if NO, drop; if YES, retain)
6. Is other information needed to analyse this question?
(if NO, retain;
(if YES, retain only if the other information is available or
can be obtained)
7. Should this question be asked of all respondents or only a subset?
(if ALL, retain; if ONLY A SUBSET, retain only if the subset is
identifiable beforehand or through questions in the interview)

All interview schedule questions were structured (closed) and respondents had to select their answers from a number of predetermined alternatives. Each closed question had multiple choice answers from which respondents were required to pick their preferences. In determining the nomenclature both for the interview guide and the schedule, it was ensured as a general

principle that the terms used were understood by respondents to ensure they had confidence in their replies.

Maximum assurance on confidentiality was also given to all respondents through inclusion of a provision in both the Interview Schedule and Guide that informed the respondents that whatever information was shared with the researcher would be handled in confidence. This assurance coupled with the researcher's familiarity with some of the respondents enabled a quick establishment of rapport between both parties.

4.6.4 Pretesting the Interview Guide

The pretest was a try-out of the interview guide to see how it worked and whether changes were necessary before the start of the full scale study. The pretest provided a means of identifying and solving unforeseen problems in the administration of the interview guide, such as the phrasing and sequence of the questions, or their length. It also helped in identifying the need for additional questions or elimination of others.

Pre-testing the Interview Guides took two weeks. 7 Local Council One Executives were purposively selected from a village in a non-sample parish or ward from each sub-county and urban centre throughout the district. In all a total of 91 respondents were interviewed in respect of pre-testing the interview guide for Local Council One executives. It was felt necessary to conduct many interviews to make sure that people differing in education, temperament, opinion, and for Local Council One executives even, cultural background, understood the questions and gave complete and pertinent answers. Each village pre-test interview was followed by a discussion of the questions with respondents after answering them. Respondents were in each case asked what the questions meant to them, what difficulties they experienced in replying, what further ideas they had that were not brought out by the question, how they would ask the questions themselves, and what feelings they had about the questions they had answered.

Following this dialogue some imbalances and loopholes were observed in this particular interview guide and adjustments made accordingly.

On noticing, for example, a high proportion of reluctance or at times refusals to answer, a question on respondents' level of education was eliminated at this stage on the realisation that, given the high illiteracy rate in the villages, this could be a taboo subject that was embarrassing most respondents.

Secondly, it was noticed that there was lack of order in the answers attributed, not to the wording of the questions, but weak conceptualisation. This meant changing the patterning of the questions to deal with this discrepancy. A case in point was question no.3 of the pre-test interview which read, "Do you have any occupation? ", where many respondents appeared to wonder why this question was being asked since they considered their Local Council executive positions as occupations and yet in the real sense since these were not salaried portfolios, they could not be regarded as occupations. This question was therefore re-cast to read, "Besides being the Chairperson/Member of your village executive committee, do you have any other occupation?".

The pre-test also revealed that respondents preferred qualitative questions that inquired into the extent or degree of comparative improvement for example in service delivery as opposed to quantitative questions necessitating factual numerical data.

Consequently, questions were reorganised to provide for an acceptable balance between the two.

The Interview Guide for Sub-County Chiefs and Town Clerks was pre-tested for a much shorter period. The guide was administered to a member of the sub-county technical and planning committee in each Sub-County and urban technical and planning committee in each Town Council. These

committees are chaired by the Sub-County Chiefs and Town Clerks respectively.

Assistant Community Development Officers were preferred in sub-counties in view of the cross-cutting nature of their mandate, while Clerks to Council were preferred in Town Councils. A total of 13 respondents were covered by the pre-test. Regarding the Interview Guide for Sub-County Chairpersons, the pre-testing exercise involved Sub-County Vice Chairpersons, 13 in number and drawn from each of the Sub-Counties and Town Councils.

Pretesting the interview guide for District Political Leaders and Managers involved five people. Two were technocrats at the level of Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in charge of a County and three were Councillors at the County. In all the three foregoing cases, alternative respondents were sought for the pre-test, as all the sampling units would be involved in the main survey. Nevertheless every effort was made to ensure that in all cases the people interviewed under the pretesting exercise were similar in characteristics to those who would be interviewed in the final study.

4.6.5 Pretesting the Interview Schedule

The interview schedule pre-test was conducted in all the 11 Sub-Counties and 2 Town Councils. Participants were handpicked through purposive sampling technique, taking care to ensure that those involved in the pre-test were typical of the population under study. A total of 39 respondents were interviewed during the pre-test. The Interview Schedule had multiple-choice answers to closed questions where a participant selected his or her answer from a set of predetermined responses.

During the pre-test it was noted that some questions did not have sufficient, unambiguous responses to allow respondents give unequivocal answers. The discrepancy was addressed by increasing the number of predetermined responses to some questions from 4 to a number ranging

between 5 and 8, including a provision for “Do not know/not sure” in respect of circumstances where there was uncertainty that all possibilities had been covered. Another strategy employed was to include the “other” category in responses for some questions. The rationale here was to enable respondents specify answers in their own words where necessary.

After the pre-test, alternative responses to questions no. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, were increased from four to five, those to question 14 were increased from five to six, while those to question 18 were increased from six to eight. Increasing the responses to the highest number possible was done in an attempt to present respondents with a range of opinions from which they would select those which closely resembled their own. The trade-off however was that such type of interviewing would not capture respondents’ opinions in their own words, and as a result one could not ascertain how closely their choices matched their opinions.

Table 24 shows the gender, location and number of respondents selected for the Interview Schedule pre-test.

Table 24
Pretesting the Interview Schedule

Gender of Respondents	Domicile of Respondents		Number of Respondents Interviewed
	Rural	Urban	
Male	24	4	28
Female	9	2	11
Sub-Total	33	6	39
TOTAL			39

4.6.6 Measures to Avoid Bias

Some discomfort arose from the fact that the researcher was known to a large number of respondents involved in the final study, having interacted with them in his day-to-day duties as an administrator. It was feared that

the "response effect" syndrome could emerge at some stage. **Borg** (1981:87) has defined "response effect" as the eagerness of a respondent to please the interviewer, or a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent, or a tendency for the interviewer to seek out answers that support his preconceived notions. In order to address the foregoing fears, it was decided to acknowledge right from the onset the notion that bias could creep in, other than eliminate it altogether. That made it easier to exercise constant restraint and self-control.

There are four other strategies that were also used to minimise bias.

- Each respondent was interviewed privately to avoid his/her opinions being affected or adulterated by the presence of some third person. In addition, interviews were themselves conducted in an informal, conversational manner in an effort to harness and achieve the best possible rapport.
- Particular attention was paid to the dress code. All rural based interviewing was characterised by inconspicuous dressing to avoid a situation where the researcher's clothes and appearance would otherwise influence lower-class respondents who predominated among the Local Council One Executive Committee members.
- Some deliberate effort was made to ensure that the question content was not biased or loaded in one direction because, for unstructured/open-ended questions, this would mean that answers obtained would unduly favour one side of the issue, but where such loaded questions could not be avoided, accompanying questions were added to balance the emphasis.
- Regarding the Interview Schedule, biasing factors, though impossible to overcome completely, were greatly reduced by standardising the interviews so that the interviewer had as little free choice as possible. This, coupled with the fact that all interviews were physically conducted by the researcher meant that any emerging bias might be consistent and could therefore go unnoticed.

4.7 Ethical Issues

As **Coolican** (1992:249) observes, it is easy to think of ethics being important in natural sciences, such as medicine, but even in the social sciences, it is difficult to conduct research without running into ethical arguments.

Given this reality a number of different ethical issues had to be considered and rules to guide the research had to be established at the early stages of the study design to prevent the study running into problems in the early stages of its inception. It is well known in the study area for example, that the maxim "Government is always right" is deeply rooted and all-pervasive especially within the lower echelons of society, yet it was government performance in terms of good governance, service delivery and empowerment that was at the centre of every interview conducted. Therefore, to forestall some of these stereotypes from affecting the quality of the research output, a comprehensive, concise code of practice was established with the aim, among others, of ensuring that all participants were made fully aware of the purpose of the research and understood their rights. To this end both the Interview Schedule and Guide contained a brief protocol designed to be read out at the start of the interviews explaining that participation was voluntary and that participants were free not to answer any questions they felt unable to. The purpose was to get the informed consent of those to be interviewed.

Finally and most important was the promise of confidentiality and anonymity. This encouraged respondents to give more open and honest responses than would otherwise be the case. Some questions to Local Council One executives and civic and opinion leaders for example, touched on performance and service delivery at sub-county and district levels of governance, where some respondents had acquaintances whom they would not feel free to talk about negatively. In such cases prejudiced views were greatly minimised by strictly avoiding mentioning of names and conducting interviews in a generic way.

4.8 Limitations of the study

Although the study generally applied a methodological triangulation approach, the phenomenological paradigm dominated the process of data collection and analysis. This meant that some key shortcomings of this paradigm were automatically incorporated into the study. Given that the location of the study was a natural setting i.e, the study was taking place in the field, various socio-cultural stereotypes that would naturally impinge on the attitudes of respondents could not be avoided. The negative impact arising out of such stereotypes could have been reasonably neutralised through use of a relatively large sample but this was not possible due to a narrow sampling frame.

Another limitation related to the phenomena under study. Decentralisation and good governance being fairly recent phenomena on the Ugandan political landscape meant that most of the responses from respondents were heavily subjective in the sense that they depended on individualistic experiences and perspectives which, besides spanning over a shorter period, could be different from the real situation on the ground. Consequently the level of reliability of the research findings might have been negatively affected by this scenario.

Another key aspect was that of generalisation of the research findings premised on the assumption that it is possible to generalise from a few cases if your analysis has captured the interactions and characteristics of the phenomena you are studying. Given the recent nature of the decentralisation policy in Uganda, and the insufficiency of literature available, generalisation of the findings had to be undertaken cautiously.

It is also important to point out that it would never have been possible to guarantee the attendance of participants without an undertaking by the researcher to compensate them for their time and resources spent in order to be available for the interviews. The need for funds therefore, to pay out

transport and lunch refund to respondents meant that the sample size had to be kept at the minimum.

4.9 Data analysis

A qualitative approach was applied. Analysis of data was based on the principle of classification and coding. Responses to unstructured questions were grouped into main categories and coded. The 666 responses obtained during data collection were reduced into a limited number of categories based on the research questions and themes that had been formulated earlier in the study. Classification led to establishment of category sets based on explicit references to the various themes highlighted by the research questions. Each category set met the following basic rules:

- The set of categories was derived from a single classificatory principle.
- The set of categories was exhaustive, that is, it was possible to place every response in one of the categories of the set.
- The categories within the set were mutually exclusive, in other words, it was not possible to place a given response in more than one category within the set.

Frequencies were applied to determine the prominence of various themes and concepts. Frequencies are numerical values which represent the total number of observations in respect of variables or phenomena under study. Although a preserve for univariate and bivariate analysis of quantitative data, they were incorporated in this research methodology because of their usefulness in enabling data to be presented in a more compact form to aid full comprehension. Tabulations were made to determine the number of responses that belonged to the various categories and in some circumstances cross-tabulation was applied to establish the relationship

between the responses obtained and the gender of respondents. Percentages were then used to summarise the data by describing the portion or part of the frequencies in every 100.

Data from the interview guides was transcribed in English in the course of every interview, while key concepts and themes gathered from the data were coded.

Finally, as the entire data had been collected in extended text which was not the most suitable form in which it could be analysed, it had to be detextualised by converting the text into diagrams, tables, and other illustrations for presentation and analysis.

4.10 Summary

This chapter specifically dealt with the research methodology applied, the research paradigm adopted, and the general paraphernalia that underpinned the entire research process. It gave a detailed description of the study area and highlighted the key features of the research design. It defined the nature and size of the population and sample under consideration and factors that were considered in determining the sampling frame and size prior to the commencement of data collection.

The chapter also outlined the different data collection methods used and outlines several concepts related to data collection, such as the research instruments applied and how they were pretested. Also highlighted are data from the literature, their sources and relevance in understanding the importance of the research problem. The main methods used to collect and record data were examined, some ethical issues highlighted, and limitations identified and mentioned.

Finally, in readiness for the next stage that dwelt with data analysis, the chapter besides looking at how data was classified and coded also emphasised the importance of categorisation in understanding the thematic

patterns arising out of the 666 responses obtained. The chapter concludes with a mention on the purpose of detextualisation and establishment of frequencies in the course of data analysis, and how these proved vital in determining the prominence and recurrence of certain themes and concepts.

4.11 Projections for the Next Chapter

Chapter five will outline the research results based on eleven thematic areas highlighted in section 1.9. The narrative and tabular modes of presentation will be concurrently used to elucidate on comprehension of the findings. The chapter will also outline data from the National Service Delivery Survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Service in the year 2000. The survey was aimed at collecting information on perceptions of the population on the quality and quantity of services delivered by government in the areas of crime prevention, justice, transport , education, water and sanitation, health and agricultural extension.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of the results of the study. The results arise out of research undertaken in Hoima District, and constitute a point of departure to a deeper comprehension and understanding of the critical themes and concepts that formed the basis of the study. Section 5.3 outlines data from the National Service Delivery Survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Service to establish the extent, quality and sustainability of public services delivered in Uganda. Its relevance to this study is borne out of the need to compare Hoima case study findings with the national situation.

5.2 Results of the Study

The results are presented under 11 different thematic categories, with each category representing a major theme within the broad framework of the research questions. The categories are divided into two to form a set of those responses that were in the affirmative to a group of questions relating to a particular theme and those that were in the negative regarding that same theme. The eleven thematic categories are:

- a) Understanding of stakeholders' responsibilities under devolution;
- b) Understanding of Central Government roles;
- c) Understanding of Local Government (District, Sub-County) roles;
- d) Attitudes towards the effectiveness of service delivery;
- e) Attitudes towards community participation;
- f) Knowledge of effective planning and budgeting skills;
- g) Attitudes towards adequacy of local financial resources;
- h) Visibility and strength of the civil society;
- i) Awareness of democratic methods of work;
- j) Presence of Non-Governmental Organisations; and
- k) Knowledge of existing devolution obstacles.

All the 666 responses that came out of the questions in both the Interview Guide and Schedule were fitted in the above 11 categories as already explained in **section 4.9**

5.2.1 Understanding Stakeholder Responsibilities Under Devolution

In order to assess the levels of awareness and appreciation of the devolution process, questions were built in both the Interview Guides and Schedule to probe the respondents' extent of understanding the various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution. It was important to get more information on this issue because role conflict had in the past often been cited as one of the key stumbling blocks against decentralisation. The study however revealed that in general terms there were relatively high levels of understanding of various stakeholders' responsibilities under devolution with a higher understanding level among political leaders and civil servants than the civic and opinion leaders.

Tables 25 and 26 summarise these findings.

Table 25

Understanding Of Stakeholder Responsibilities

Understanding of stakeholder responsibilities under devolution	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents understood various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution	232	68%
Respondents did not understand various stakeholder responsibility under devolution	109	32%
TOTAL	341	100%

Table 26

Responses of the Civic and Opinion Leaders on the Understanding of Stakeholder Responsibilities Under Devolution

Understanding of stakeholder responsibilities under devolution	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents understood various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution	193	59%
Respondents didn't understand various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution	132	41%
TOTAL	325	100%

It can be seen from **Table 25** that only 68 percent of the people interviewed through personal in-depth interviewing understood the various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution. They were able to point out clearly some of the key roles of Central Government as opposed to those of the District and Sub-County Local Governments on one hand and those of the communities, on the other. 109 or 32 percent of the respondents did not understand the various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution. In all these cases the responses obtained indicated that respondents did not know what devolution meant and were not aware that, besides the Central Government in Kampala, there were Local Governments in Hoima District.

Regarding responses obtained from civic and opinion leaders on the same theme, **Table 26** shows that 193 respondents or 59 percent of all interviewees in this category understood the various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution, while 132 or 41 percent did not. The findings further indicated some unique variations within the responses obtained based on gender as **Table 27** demonstrates. For example, while the general level of understanding stakeholder responsibilities under devolution was 68 percent among personal in-depth interviewees, gender-oriented cross-tabulation put the percentage at 72 for men and 28 for women. A similar trend occurred for the structured Schedule interviewees with cross-tabulation showing a marked increase in male understanding of stakeholder responsibilities to 85 percent up from 59, while female understanding level fell to 15. In both groups, male understanding of various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution was much higher than that of the females.

Table 27**Cross-Tabulation: Gender-related Findings on Respondents' Understanding of Various Stakeholder Responsibilities Under Devolution**

Research Instrument	Gender of respondents	No of respondents	Frequency of understanding	Percentage
Interview Guide	Male	247	167	72
	Female	94	65	28
Interview Schedule	Male	275	234	85
	Female	50	8	15

5.2.2 Understanding of Central Government Role

Devolution and empowerment imply a high degree of dispersal of authority and responsibilities from the Centre to the Periphery. In order to assess their knowledge on this view, respondents were probed on their understanding of the role of the Central Government as distinguished from the roles performed by the district, sub-counties and the community.

The findings indicate that respondents were generally well informed on the key roles of central government, with lack of understanding concentrated more among the civic and opinion leaders than among civil servants and politicians.

Tables 28 and **29** encapsulate these findings. From **Table 28** it can be seen that 198 or 58 percent of the people interviewed using personal in-depth Interview Guides understood the key responsibilities of Central Government in detail.

Table 28**Responses From Personal Indepth Interviews on Understanding Central Government Role**

Understanding of central government role	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents understood central government role	198	58%
Respondents did not understand central government role	143	42%
TOTAL	341	100%

This was 10 percent less than the number shown in **Table 25** to have understood the role of Central Government.

143 respondents or 42 percent of the people interviewed by Interview Guide on this theme showed lack of knowledge of the key role of Central Government.

Table 29
Responses of the Civic and Opinion Leaders on the Understanding of Central Government Role

Understanding of central government Role	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents understood central government role	176	54%
Respondents did not understand central government role	149	46%
TOTAL	325	100%

They either exhibited total ignorance or were hesitant when probed on the matter. As regards the Interview Schedule responses from civic and opinion leaders, a similar trend was observed, as shown in **Table 29**. 176 respondents or 54 percent of the interviewees had knowledge on the key role of Central Government. This was 5 percent less than the number seen to be generally knowledgeable on stakeholder responsibilities under devolution in **Table 26** above. 149 people or 46 percent of the respondents in this group did not understand or had no knowledge of the key role of Central Government.

5.2.3 Understanding of Local Government (District, Sub-County) and Community Roles

The results revealed a much higher level of understanding of roles performed by the district, sub-county and community in comparison with the level of understanding of the roles performed by the Central Government. The results further showed the level of understanding to be much more skewed towards the district than towards the sub-county and

community. The responses obtained indicated a much higher level of awareness of district roles, followed by the sub-county with the community coming last. **Tables 30, 31 and 32** illustrate these findings further. Judging from **Table 30**, it can be seen that 282 or 82.7 percent of respondents interviewed using personal in-depth Interview Guides understood the key roles performed by local governments, while 59 or 17.3 percent of the respondents did not. Even for the 82.7 percent who understood, there was a tendency to assign most roles to the district and fewer to the sub-county and community. It was also noted from the findings that some critical roles, especially at the community level were still unknown to some stakeholders. Question 29 of the Interview Guide for Local Council One executives for example, sought to establish from respondents what normally dominated the agendas of their village council meetings and multiple alternatives were given to this effect.

Table 30
Responses From Personal Indepth Interviews on the Understanding Local Government Roles (District, Sub-County and Community)

understanding of local government roles (district, sub-county, community)	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents understood local government roles (district, sub-county, community)	282	82.70%
Respondents did not understand local government roles.	59	17.30%
TOTAL	341	100%

Interestingly, out of the 260 respondents interviewed, only 8 or 3.1 percent mentioned the expenditure of 25 % local revenue from the sub-county as a key item on their agenda, yet one would have expected this matter to take centre stage in an era where accountability for public resources is high on the agenda. **Table 31** illustrates these findings.

Table 31
Responses of 260 Local Council One Executives on Expenditure of 25 % Local Revenue From Sub-County

Expenditure of 25% local revenue from sub-county	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents mentioned it as a key item on the agenda of their village council meetings	8	3.10%
Respondents did not mention it at all.	252	96.90%
TOTAL	260	100%

Turning to structured interviews administered to civic and opinion leaders, the results revealed a much lower level of understanding of the roles of local governments than in the earlier group. This can be seen from **Table 32** below. Only 209 or 64.3 percent of the people interviewed knew the roles performed by local governments at various levels, while 116 or 35.7 percent did not. This group also found it difficult to separate roles performed by the district from those of the sub-county, but ably identified those performed by the community. Like other respondents, civic and opinion leaders also exhibited an immense lack of awareness of some critical roles supposed to be performed by the community. This could be told from their responses to questions 24 and 25 of the Interview Schedule.

Table 32
Responses of the Civic and Opinion Leaders on the Understanding Local Government Role (District, Sub-County and Community)

Understanding of local government role (District, Sub-County and Community)	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents understood local government role	209	64.30%
Respondents did not understand local government role	116	35.70%
TOTAL	325	100%

On being asked for example, whether their communities were satisfied with the way the 25% local revenue remitted to their villages by sub-counties was spent, 263 or 81 percent of the respondents said they were not satisfied. Asked further, whether they, as members of their respective village councils, had ever rebuked their Local Council executives over

misuse of their hard-earned resources, still 250 or 76.9 percent said they had never, an indication yet again of how unconscious they were of their key obligations under devolution.

5.2.4 Attitudes Towards the Effectiveness of Services Delivered

Analysis of responses regarding attitudes towards the effectiveness of services delivered was also categorised to separately depict views projected out of the in-depth personal interviews and structured interviews on the other. Five key thematic areas were identified to aid the analysis. They were: water provision, health, community/access roads, agricultural extension, and universal primary education (UPE). As **Table 33** shows, the results reveal a depressing picture regarding the general level of service delivery in Hoima District. This is exemplified by the fact that 214 or 62.8 percent of the 341 respondents said they had no access to clean drinking water, while only 127 or 37.2 percent confirmed having access to clean water. To avoid being frivolous, the study construed clean water simply as water from one of the following sources: Bore-hole, Protected Spring Well, Piped Water, Rain-harvesting Tank, or Hand-augured Well. Deeper probing of the 37.2 percent who said they had no access to clean drinking water revealed their major source of water as local wells, rivers and swamps and these were also the places where herdsmen watered their animals. 241 or 70.6 percent of the respondents said they had no adequate health facilities, with the percentage rising among Local Council One executives, where out of 260 people interviewed, 244 or 93.8 percent said they never see any health workers in their villages. Only 100 or 29.4 percent of the respondents said they had adequate health facilities.

Table 33
Responses From Personal Indepth Interviews on the Effectiveness of Services Delivered

Service	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Water provision	Respondents said they had enough clean water	127	37.20%
	Respondents said they had no clean water	214	62.80%
Health facilities	Respondents said they had adequate health facilities	100	29.40%
	Respondents said they had no adequate health facilities	241	70.60%
Status of access/ community roads	Respondents said their access roads were good	127	37.20%
	Respondents said their access roads were not good	214	62.80%
Provision of agricultural extension services	Respondents said they regularly received agric. extension officers	94	27.60%
	Respondents said they never received agric. extension officers	247	72.40%
Provision of Universal Primary Education (UPE)	Respondents said they were happy with UPE	208	61%
	Respondents said they were not happy with UPE	133	39%

Regarding the community or access roads, 214 or 62.8 percent of the respondents said their access roads were bad and needed urgent attention, while only 127 or 37.2 percent were satisfied with the condition of their access roads. It was of course ironical but interesting to see these answers coming from Local Council One executives whose responsibility it is to coordinate maintenance of community roads in their areas of jurisdiction.

On provision of agricultural extension services, 247 or 72.4 percent of the respondents said they had no access to extension services, while only 94 or 27.6 percent said they regularly received extension services. Many of them thought that lack of extension services was a major setback since

most of them were farmers who depended on agriculture for their livelihood. On provision of universal primary education (UPE), 208 or 61 percent of the respondents said they were happy with the programme while 133 or 39 percent were dissatisfied. Reasons for dissatisfaction ranged from lack of classrooms to lack of qualified teachers.

Similar trends were also reflected among the structured Interview Schedule respondents as **Table 34** shows.

Table 34
Responses of the Civic and Opinion Leaders on the Effectiveness of Services Delivered

Service	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Water provision	Respondents had access to a protected water source	117	36.00%
	Respondents had no access to a protected water source	208	64.00%
Health services Provision	Respondents attended Govt health units for good medication	101	31.00%
	Respondents attended private Clinics for good medication	224	69.00%
Agricultural Extension Services	Respondents regularly received agricultural extension officers	98	30.00%
	Respondents never received agricultural extension officers	227	70.00%
Universal Primary Education	Respondents said primary education was better with UPE	224	69.00%
	Respondents said primary education was worse than before UPE	94	29%
	Respondents said primary education was the same as before	7	2%

On analysing data from **Table 34** it can be seen that only 117 or 36 percent of the 325 respondents agreed having access to a protected water source, while 208 or 64 percent said they had no access to any form of clean

water. Further probing of the 36 percent who had access to clean water revealed that the authorities had not been solely responsible for its provision, but had worked hand-in-hand with the communities. **Table 34** further shows that many people in Hoima District do not depend on public health services for their survival. This is particularly true when one observes that 224 or 69 percent of the respondents said they did not attend government health care centres due to the perpetual lack of drugs in them and preferred instead to go to private clinics. Only 101 or 31 percent of the respondents said they attended government health centres and received proper medication.

Agricultural extension services were also characterised by the same trend. 227 or 70 percent of the respondents said they were never visited by agricultural extension officers, while only 30 percent or 98 respondents agreed having regularly hosted these officials in their homes. Regarding primary education, 224 respondents or 69 percent said the quality of primary education was better with the on-set of UPE, while 94 or 29 percent said it was worse. Only 2 percent of the respondents said they did not see any change.

5.2.5 Attitudes Towards Community Participation

Only Local Council One executive committee members, sub-county chiefs and chairpersons were interviewed on this theme. In all they were 282 respondents. Analysis of their responses produced the results shown in **Table 35**.

Table 35
Responses of 282 Sub-County and Local Council One Executives on
Attitudes Towards Community Participation

Community participation	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said community members willingly and actively participated in local development projects.	138	49.10%
Respondents said community members didn't willingly participate in local development projects and had to be coerced.	144	50.90%
Total	282	100%

As can be noted from **Table 35** it is evident that the majority of the respondents-50.9 percent acknowledged the fact that members of their communities did not willingly participate in development projects carried out in their own areas and had on several occasions to be coerced before they could participate. Only 138 or 49.1 percent of the respondents said their community members actively participated in local projects.

Of the 144 respondents who said their community members were not willing participants in local development projects, 60 could not give reasons for their views, but 84 attributed the trend to lack of motivation. They argued that many people would be willing to participate once they were assured of payment in return for their labour. This partly explains the bad state of most community roads in the study area where it is the responsibility of the local population to maintain their community roads.

5.2.6 Knowledge of Effective Planning and Budgeting Skills

A total of 57 respondents made up of 27 District level politicians (Councillors) and 30 District top management members were interviewed on this theme at district level, while at sub-county level, 24 respondents were interviewed composed of 11 Sub-County Chiefs, 11 Sub-County Chairpersons and 2 Town Clerks. **Table 36** captures the outcome of respondents' views on this theme.

Table 36
Personal Indepth Interviews With District Officials on Knowledge of Effective Planning and Budgeting Skills

Knowledge of effective planning and Budgeting skills.	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents knew how to plan and budget well.	42	73.70%
Respondents did not know how to plan and budget well.	15	26.30%
Total	57	100%

Out of 57 respondents interviewed, 42 or 73.7 percent had high levels of planning and budgeting skills compared to 15 or 26.3 percent who did not know how to plan or budget. Further-more, analysis based on role differentiation revealed that lack of planning and budgeting know-how was more skewed towards the politicians than towards the technocrats. Indeed out of 27 Hoima District Council members who were interviewed, 12 or 44.4 percent did not know how to plan and budget. This compared quite unfavourably with technocrats all of whom-30 or 100 percent, showed adequate knowledge of planning and budgeting skills. Both scenarios, i.e., of knowledge of budgeting and planning skills, and lack of it, were attributed to experience. All of the civil servants who were knowledgeable on the theme had worked for long in the District and were therefore quite familiar with the practice, while most of the un knowledgeable councillors were recent entrants in the political field.

As already pointed out, 24 respondents were interviewed at sub-county level and the results can be seen from **Table 37** below. Out of the 24 interviewed, 16 or 66.6 percent had moderate knowledge about planning and budgeting skills, while 8 or 33.4 percent had no knowledge on the theme at all.

Table 37
Personal Indepth Interviews With Sub-County and Town Council Officials on Knowledge of Effective Planning and Budgeting Skills

Knowledge of effective planning and budgeting skills.	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents knew how to plan and budget well.	16	66.60%
Respondents did not know how to plan and budget well.	8	33.40%
Total	24	100%

Findings further revealed that some core planning committees that were quite active at District level were perfunctory at the Sub-County. For example while the District Technical and Planning Committee was core to

Table 38
Level of Sub-County Technical and Planning Committee in Sub-Counties

Sub-County	Status of Sub-County Technical and Planning Committee			
Kyangwali	E		I	
Kabwoya	E		I	
Kiziranfumbi	E		I	
Bugambe		NE		
Buhimba	E		I	
Busiisi		NE		
Hoima Town	E			A
Buhanika		NE		
Kyabigambire	E		I	
Kitoba	E			A
Kigorobyia		NE		
Kigorobyia Town	E		I	
Buseruka	E		I	

Key: E = Existent NE = Non existent I = Idle A = Active

the planning and budgeting process at the district; it was found out during the study that its counterpart at the Sub-County-the Sub-County Technical Planning Committee-was idle in some Sub-Counties and non-existent in others. **Table 38** analyses the operational status of Sub-County Technical Planning Committees in Hoima District. Inadequate planning and budgeting skills at Sub-Counties could also be discerned from the time it took them to pass their annual budgets. **Table 39** shows that in FY 2002/2003 none of the 11 Sub-Counties and 2 Town Councils met the legal deadline of June 15th by which local governments are required by law to have their budgets passed by their respective councils.²⁷ Three Sub-County Councils had not passed their budgets even at the time of conducting this research (November 2002), and were therefore spending public funds in violation of the law.

Table 39
Hoima District: Date of Approval of Sub-County Budgets for 2002/2003 Financial Year

Sub-County	Date of Approval	Sub-County	Date of Approval
Kyangwali	Jul-02	Kyabigambire	Jul-02
Kabwoya	Jul-02	Kitoba	Not Approved by Nov-02
Kiziranfumbi	Aug-02	Kigorobyia	Aug-02
Bugambe	Aug-02	Kigorobyia Town	Jul-02
Buhanika	Not Approved by Nov-02	Hoima Town	Jul-02
Buhimba	Aug-02	Buseruka	Aug-02
Busiisi	Not Approved by Nov-02		

Among the key reasons advanced for delayed budget approval were late assessment of graduated personal tax, and lack of funds to meet councillors' allowances.

²⁷ Section 83(4) of the Local Governments Act (1997) says, "The Chairperson of a Local Government shall not later than the fifteenth day of June, cause to be prepared and laid before the Council estimates of revenue and expenditure of the Council for the next ensuing financial year.

5.2.7 Attitudes Towards Adequacy of Financial Resources Mobilised Locally

The survey covered all the sampling units with the exception of the Civic and Opinion Leaders. Views were sought from a total of 341 respondents. The results are laid out in **Table 40**.

Only 61 people representing 18 percent of all respondents interviewed thought local revenue collected was sufficient to cover the expenditure pertaining to service delivery. This contrasted sharply with 280 or 82 percent of the respondents who thought local revenue was too insufficient to cover all expenses of service delivery at local level. The acuteness of the problem however varied from level to level, but the effects were mostly felt at the sub-county level because here, unlike at the district, there was total dependency on local revenue.

Table 40
Attitudes Towards Adequacy of Local Revenue in Hoima District

Attitudes towards adequacy of local revenue	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said local revenue was sufficient to cover expenses on services	61	18%
Respondents said local revenue was not sufficient to cover expenses on services	280	82%
Total	341	100%

The findings further revealed a high degree of non-compliance with the Local Governments Act in terms of revenue-sharing. For example, of the 260 Local Council One executives interviewed, 203 or 78 percent said they had never received the 25% local revenue from the Sub-Counties in spite of being entitled to it. Only 57 respondents or 22 percent agreed receiving the money. Details are given in **Table 41** below.

Table 41**Hoima District: Remittance Of 25% Local Revenue to the Local Council One (Villages) By Sub-Counties**

Remittance of 25% local revenue to local council ones (villages)	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said they had never received 25% local revenue from the sub-counties.	203	78%
Respondents said they regularly received 25% local revenue from the sub-counties.	57	22%
Total	260	100%

Sub-County administrators instead spent the money at source and only sent reports to the bona fide beneficiaries. Data obtained from the District Treasury also indicated that 3 of the 11 Sub-Counties had diverted to their use 35% of local revenue meant for the District. Findings further revealed that at Sub-County level there were no alternative sources of revenue to fill the budgetary gaps, thus forcing Sub-Counties either to defer activities to subsequent years or to incur debts that would be settled later. This is confirmed by answers given by all the Sub-County Chiefs that in cases of insufficient revenue to cover expenditure, they left some activities undone or incurred debts and carried them forward. The findings also show a generally low level of revenue collection with estimated local revenue collected in Financial Year 2001/2002 of Uganda Shillings 347,816,533/= or 57% of total local revenue planned for under the budget.

Table 42 shows the key reasons attributed to the poor revenue collection by 54 respondents who were interviewed on this matter. The 54 included 11 Sub-County Chiefs, 11 Sub-County Chairpersons, 2 Town Clerks and 30 District Technocrats.

Table 42
Hoima District: Reasons Given For Poor Revenue Collection
By 54 Respondents

Reasons given for poor revenue collection in Hoima District	Frequency	Percentage
Poor assessment of graduated personal tax and other direct and indirect levies.	2	4%
Political interference in revenue collection programmes.	32	59%
Low taxable incomes resulting from a narrow tax base.	15	28%
Tax evasion	5	9%
Total	54	100%

It is evident from Table 38 that the majority of the respondents, 59 percent, felt that interference by politicians was a primary cause of poor revenue collection. Respondents explained that politicians did not want their voters harassed by tax collectors for fear of being denied votes in future elections. Another notable observation was the fact that 28 percent of the respondents attributed poor revenue collections to low taxable incomes as a result of a narrow tax base. Only 4 percent attributed poor revenue collection to poor assessment of graduated tax.

5.2.8 Visibility and Strength of the Civil Society

Assessment of the vibrancy and strength of the Civil Society was based on responses obtained from 325 Civic and Opinion Leaders. Three questions were asked aimed at establishing how influential Civic and Opinion Leaders were in shaping public opinion in societies where they lived. Question One was to do with the regularity of village council meetings and how people reacted when they were not regularly convened. The other two questions sought respondents' views on how satisfied they were with the expenditure of 25% of local revenue remitted to their villages by the Sub-Counties, and if not, whether they had ever rebuked their Local Council One Chairpersons over any misuse of the funds. The findings are summarised in **Tables 43, 44, 45** and **46** below:

Table 43
Responses From Civic and Opinion Leaders on the Regularity of Village Council Meetings

Regularity of Village Council meetings	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said meetings were held quite regularly.	118	36.40%
Respondents said meetings were not so regularly held (held bi-annually)	140	43.20%
Respondents said meetings were rarely held (once in two years)	52	15.90%
Respondents said meetings were not held at all.	15	4.50%
Total	325	100%

Table 44
Reactions of Civic and Opinion Leaders on the Irregularity of Village Council Meetings

Respondents' reaction when village council meetings weren't regularly held	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said they insisted on meetings being held.	103	31.90%
Respondents said they did not talk in fear of their Local Council One Chairpersons.	140	43.20%
Respondents said they usually complained to other authorities.	52	15.90%
Respondents said they did not know what to do	30	9.00%
Total	325	100%

All the four tables reveal quite interesting observations regarding the status of the Civil Society in Hoima District. It can be seen from **Table 43** for example that a total of 207 People or 63.6 percent of all the respondents interviewed were not satisfied with the regularity of Village Council meetings. This number was made up of the 140 respondents who said meetings were not regularly held, 52 respondents who said meetings were rarely held and the 15 respondents who said no meetings were held. But when asked what action they had taken to rectify the problem, **Table 44** shows that only 103 or 31.9 percent of them said they insisted on meetings

being held. On the other hand 140 or 43.2 percent of them said they did not talk, as doing so would antagonise their Village Chairpersons.

Table 45
Respondents Views on The Degree of Community Satisfaction
With Expenditure of 25% Local Revenue Remitted to Villages
By Sub-Counties

Respondents' views on community satisfaction with 25% expenditure	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said they were satisfied with the way 25% local revenue was spent.	118	36.40%
Respondents said they were not satisfied with the way their 25% revenue was spent.	199	61.30%
Respondents did not know what to say.	8	2.30%
Total	325	100%

Table 46
Responses of the Civic and Opinion Leaders on the Misuse of 25%
Local Revenue

Response to misuse of 25% local revenue by LC one Executives.	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said they rebuked their local council one executives over the matter.	62	31.10%
Respondents said they did not rebuke their Local Council Ones over the matter.	137	68.90%
Total	199	100%

52 respondents or 15.9 percent said they complained to other authorities, while 30 respondents or 9 percent did not know what to do. In other words, only 155 respondents (constituted by 103 respondents who insisted on meetings being held and 52 respondents who complained to other authorities) or 47.8 percent of the interviewees said they took action, while a whole 170 or 52.2 percent of the respondents looked on helplessly. The same trend was realised when analysing respondents' views on the degree of community satisfaction with expenditure of 25% local revenue remitted to Villages from Sub-Counties. **Table 45** shows that 118 respondents representing 36.4 percent of the people interviewed were satisfied with the expenditure, while 199 respondents representing 61.3 percent of the People interviewed said they were not. Only 8 respondents representing

2.3 percent of the interviewees did not know what to say. Interestingly the study further revealed that out of the 199 (61.3%) respondents who were dissatisfied with the expenditure of 25% local revenue, as **Table 46** shows only 62 of them (31.1%) admitted ever rebuking their Local Council One executives over the misuse. The remaining 137 or 68.9% did not bother, arguing that the money involved was after all very small. Others said they could not be aware of the misuse because it took them long to learn of the arrival of the funds from the Sub-Counties, which in itself was further evidence of lack of vigilance among members of the Community.

5.2.9 Awareness of Democratic Methods of Work

The two research instruments used included questions which were designed to provoke respondents' sentiments on local democracy and democratic methods of work generally. The questions were of a probing nature and specifically sought the views of respondents on the manner in which Community Leaders and Citizens conducted themselves on matters of public interest. A total of 609 respondents were interviewed on this theme. They included 260 Local Council One Executive Committee Members, 11 Sub-County Chiefs, 11 Sub-County Chairpersons, 2 Town Clerks and 325 Civic and Opinion Leaders. Regarding the Civic and Opinion Leaders the research instrument used was the interview schedule, and their views have already been captured by **Tables 43** and **44**. As far as the remaining sampling units are concerned, in-depth personal interviewing was applied, and **Tables 47** and **48** encapsulate the findings that accrued from interviewing these 284 respondents.

Table 47
Responses From 284 Indepth Personal Interviews on the Regularity of Holding Village Council Meetings

Regularity of Village Council meetings (how regular were they)	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said meetings were regularly Held	98	34.40%
Respondents said meetings were not regularly held.	173	61.10%
Respondents said meetings were not held at all.	13	4.50%
Total	284	100%

Given the nature of the study and the respondents' level of conceptualisation, it was felt that a simple parameter such as the convening of Village Council meetings was viable enough to form a basis on which participants' awareness of democratic methods of work could be tested, and from **Table 47** it can be seen that 173 People or 61.1 percent of the respondents felt Village Council general meetings were held irregularly, while 98 people or 34.4 percent felt they were held regularly. Only 13 people or 4.5 percent of the respondents said village council meetings were never held at all in their villages. A more depressing picture emerged when data on the irregularity of meetings was further disaggregated to allow for depiction of variations in the relative irregularity of Village meetings. The findings are shown in **Table 48** below:

Table 48
Responses from 186 Indepth Personal Interviews on the Variations in the Irregularity of Village Council General Meetings

Variations in the irregularity of Village Council meetings	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said meetings were held Quarterly	46	24.70%
Respondents said meetings were held bi-annually.	37	19.80%
Respondents said meetings were held once a year.	90	48.40%
Respondents said meetings were never held.	13	7.10%
Total	186	100%

It is clear from details shown in **Table 48** that village council meetings are rarely held, implying in general that members of the community are not part and parcel of the decision-making process and rarely participate in the discussion of issues affecting their lives. Analysis of responses from the interviews of Civic and Opinion Leaders also posted similar results as was reflected in **Tables 43** and **44**. Quite clearly, people are not consulted on matters affecting their daily lives and general well being. The Leaders do as they please. Indeed, 52 or 20 percent of the Local Council One Executives interviewed said they had never held any village council meeting since they were elected in November 2001. A similar number could not recall ever holding an executive committee meeting for the village. Both scenarios pointed to one conclusion, that village matters were most of the time singularly handled by the chairpersons.

5.2.10 Presence of Non-Governmental Organisations

Two groups were interviewed on this theme. One was of the Local Council One Executive Committees because, being closer to the ground than any other group within the sampling frame, it was easier for it to establish whether or not Non-Governmental Organisations were present and operational in the study area. The second group interviewed was that of Sub-County Chiefs because of its pivotal role in service delivery. In all 271 respondents were interviewed on this theme, and **Tables 49** and **50** below show the findings:

Table 49
Hoima District: Views of 260 Local Council One Executives on the Presence of Non-Governmental Organisations

Presence of Non-governmental organisations in their areas	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said NGOs were present and operational in their areas of abode.	74	28.30%
Respondents said NGOs were not present and operational in their areas of abode.	186	71.70%
Total	260	100%

Table 50
Hoima District: Responses from 11 Sub-County Chiefs on the Presence of Non-Governmental Organisations

Presence of Non-governmental Organisations in their areas of abode	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents said NGOs were present and operational in their areas of work	4	36.60%
Respondents said NGOs were not present in their areas of work	7	63.60%
Total	11	100.00%

Table 49 shows that of the 260 respondents interviewed only 74 or 28.3 percent admitted they had operational non-governmental organisations in their areas of abode, while 186 or 71.7 percent said they did not have them. The same trend is reflected in **Table 50** where out of 11 respondents only 4 or 36.4 percent accepted having fully-fledged NGOs operating in their Sub-Counties, while 7 or 63.6 percent of the respondents said they did not have NGOs in their Sub-Counties.

In general therefore, the situation depicted by the Survey is one characterised by a low level of Non-Governmental Organisations in Hoima District and heavy dependency on the State (Central and Local government) for the provision of most of the essential services. This is confirmed by the finding that the 74 Local Council One committee respondents and the 4 sub-county chiefs who admitted having NGOs operating in their areas of jurisdiction cited only one NGO, World Vision International. Study findings further show that indeed World Vision support is quite substantial in the education sector where the organisation has helped in the construction of primary school classrooms and supported many financially-handicapped orphans within the district.

5.2.11 Knowledge of Existing Devolution Obstacles

In-depth Interview Guide questions for District Councillors, District top management, Sub-County Chiefs and Chairpersons were designed to generate respondents' feelings on the Devolution policy, process and on

obstacles it was encountering since its inception. The findings, as **Table 51** will show, revealed that while some devolution obstacles were well-known, others were not.

Table 51
Perceptions of 54 Respondents On Revenue Collection

Perceptions on adequacy of locally raised revenue.	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents thought locally-raised revenue was sufficient.	0	0
Respondents thought locally-raised revenue was insufficient (extremely low).	54	100%
Total	54	100%

In **Table 51** the 54 respondents were of the view that locally- raised revenue was too little to satisfactorily fund decentralised services. Asked how they coped given such meagre local resources, most of the District level respondents (24 out of 30) said they depended on conditional grants from the Centre to offset budgetary deficits, while Sub-County Chiefs and Town Clerks said they deferred unfunded activities to subsequent financial years. The study also revealed excessive over dependency by the District on Central Government transfers to finance local expenditure, as can be seen from **Table 52**.

Asked if it was okay for the district to be so dependent on the Centre for its funding, only 7 People or 13 percent of the respondents could see it as a problem. The rest had no idea at all, confirming yet again the extent to which people were unaware of some of the major obstacles to devolution, despite being key stakeholders. The 7 People who saw over dependency on Central Government transfers as a problem argued that it suppressed the District initiative to plan, since most of the activities implemented through conditional grants were planned by the Centre.

Table 52
Hoima District Local Government: Sources of Revenue for Financial Year 2001/2002

Type of Revenue	Amount in Uganda Shillings	Percentage of Total Budget
Local Revenue	610,204,444/=	4.00%
Project Funds	4,409,074,574/=	30%
Central Government Transfers	9,656,975,422/=	66%
Total	14,676,254,440/=	100%

The study also established that there was a lot of defeatism among revenue collectors in respect of raising the level of local revenue collections. The bulk of the problem was attributed to political interference evenly spread out at all levels of District, Sub-County and Parish. Sub-County Chiefs openly confessed that past efforts to increase revenue, more often than not, ended up putting them on a collision path with their political masters.

The findings on community participation indicated on average that respondents had mixed feelings regarding the extent to which it could be considered a problem to devolution. Judging from **Table 35** we can see that 50.9 percent or 144 of the 282 respondents said community members did not willingly participate in development programmes in their areas, and only participated after being coerced. Participation and empowerment are two sides of the same coin. It is therefore difficult to see how a community that resented participating in its own development programmes could be empowered.

5.3 Data From the National Service Delivery Survey (NSDS)

5.3.1 Background

Besides data obtained from the Hoima case study, additional primary data, for comparative purposes, was obtained from the results of the Uganda

National Service Delivery Survey (NSDS). The NSDS was conducted in the year 2000 by the Ministry of Public Service with the aim of collecting information on perceptions as well as satisfaction of the population with regard to the quantity and quality of services delivered by government, ranging from crime prevention, delivery of justice, good governance, transport services, water and sanitation, education, health services to agricultural extension services.

The NSDS was carried out from July to August 2000 and the sample design was based on a two-stage stratified district-wide independent and representative sample of households. The total realised sample size was 13,604 households country-wide as shown in **Table 53**.

The majority of respondents were male, representing 79.7% of the total sample and married respondents constituted 75.6%, while the widowed made up 9.7%. Nearly 64% of households members were below 18 years of age.

Table 53
Marital Status of Respondents in the NSDS Sample

Marital Status	Number	% Weighted	% Unweighted
1. Married	10,410	75.6	76.5
2. Single	893	7.2	6.6
3. Divorced	414	3.2	3.0
4. Widowed	1,295	9.9	9.5
5. Separated	386	2.8	2.8
6. Other /Not stated	206	1.5	1.6
TOTAL	13,604	100.0	100.0

5.3.2 Objective of the NSDS

- The main objective of the National Service Delivery Survey was to supplement the District Resources Endowments Study (DREPS) with data on resource utilisation and aimed at documenting the extent of service delivery, access to identified services, their

utilisation and satisfaction of the people with reference to these services.

- The second objective was to generate data to enhance better planning at both Central and local government levels, resource allocation and monitoring of service delivery by government.

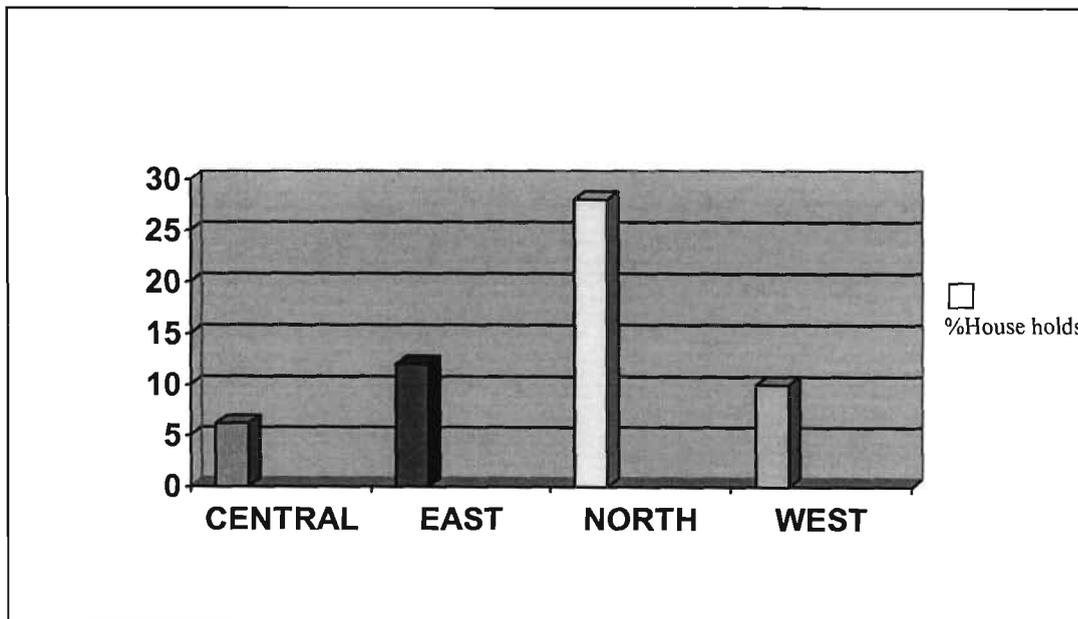
5.3.3 Findings of the NSDS

The results of the National Service Delivery Survey highlight the following findings in respect of the study:

Table 54
Uganda: General Feeling of Safety From Crime

65.5% of households on average felt generally safe from crime
14.3% of Households on average felt generally unsafe from crime
69.3% reported less crime than 5 years ago

Figure 15
Uganda: General Feeling of Unsafety Disaggregated into regions



5.3.3.1 *Crime, Justice and Good Governance*

- In general, households felt safe from crime and violence with 65.6% of the respondents country-wide saying they were safe. Nearly 64% of Ugandans reported that the level of crime had declined over the past five years. Confidence in government to protect the communities from crime and violence was high at the time of the Survey with 73% of the respondents stating that they had trust in government with regard to protection from crime and violence. Almost 70% felt that if they were wronged, formal institutions could offer opportunity for recourse and redress in their favour.
- However, with almost 30% of respondents feeling unsafe, the Northern Region of Uganda registered the largest degree of lack of confidence in government to protect them from crime. Its level of non-confidence contrasted sharply with the Central, Eastern and Western regions where the percentage of respondents feeling unsafe stood at 6%, 11% and 10% respectively. This is attributed to war in the northern Uganda where for the last 18 years rebels of the Lords's Resistance Army have been battling government troops.
- Access to courts of law was within 5km for over 50% of the respondents while only 22.2 % reported that they live within 5km of the nearest magistrates court. Most Ugandans (71.5%) stated that a hearing at the Magistrate's court is obtained in less than 6 months.
- The Local Council system (LC) received a very favourable rating among Ugandans. The majority of the National Services Delivery Survey (NSDS) respondents stated that the Local Council (LC) officials were more responsive at the time of the survey than five years earlier (89.6%). The LC courts were judged by 65.5% of the respondents to offer better prospects for a fair and transparent treatment ahead of the courts of law presided over by the Judge or Magistrate (18.4%). Many Ugandans still believe in the traditional

courts as 84.7% stated that a hearing by community elders is delivery of justice. Corruption in the Police, LCs and Magistrate Courts was perceived to be high by respondents.

Table 55
Uganda: Level of confidence in government protection against crime

72.6% of the respondents were confident of government protection from crime
27.4% of the respondents did not believe that government could protect them from crime.
68.9% of the respondents were confident of redress in case of being wronged.
31.1% of the respondents doubted government's ability to avail them redress in the event of being wronged

Table 56
Uganda: Accessibility to, and Quality of the Justice system

More than 50% of households live within 5km of formal court
71.5% said hearing in a formal court takes place quickly or 'not long' (<6 months)
67% of the respondents considered LC courts as the best institutions for fair and transparent treatment of offenders.
89.6% said LC officials were more responsive than 5 years ago

Figure 16
Uganda: Confidence in Fair and Transparent Treatment by the Justice System

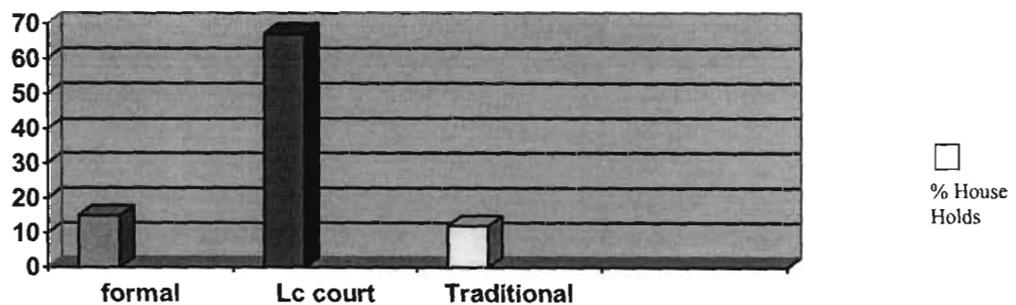


Table 57

Uganda: Relative Responsiveness of the LCI Central and Administration Police

67.4% of the respondents said LC1s were more responsive than 5 years ago
39.5 %said the central police was more responsive than five years ago
37% said the administration police more responsive than 5 years ago

- Many more Ugandans would rather see the Police stationed in their community (51.6%) than they would the Army (11.5%) and the areas which expressed the strongest need to have the army in their communities were those which have suffered from insurgency and mainly included the Districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Bundibugyo.
- Results from the NSDS also show that nearly 51.7% of Ugandans believe that the abuse of human rights has decreased over the past five years and that there has been improvement in the time for hearing a court case as compared to five years ago. In the latter case 45.3% of the respondents confirmed so. **Figures 15 and 16 and Tables 54, 55, 56 and 57** provide more details in respect of findings.

5.3.3.2 Water and Sanitation

The National Service Delivery Survey findings on water and sanitation are highlighted by **Figures 17 and 18 and Tables 58, 59, 60 and 61.**

- The Survey showed that mean distance to the water source increased from 1.16km in the time of the wet season to 1.47 km during the dry season and the time to collect water increased from 42 minutes in the wet season to 64.4 minutes during the dry season. Only one major explanation can be attributed to the increase in distance and duration to water sources during the dry season. Most water sources were of a temporary nature and tended to dry up during the hot season thus forcing the communities to walk longer distances in search of water sources. Up to 46% of Ugandans did not boil water before drinking it, while nearly 30% shared their main water source with animals. Many

respondents (56.5%) had received advice from government or NGO officials on the protection of water sources and nearly 62% on the construction of latrines. Nearly 63% of Ugandans were visited by a public or NGO official to enforce by-Laws for the construction of latrines.

Table 58
Uganda: Availability of Refuse Collection and Sewage Disposal Service

Data showed that majority of households (60.7%) had no refuse collection services of any type
Data showed 83% had no sewage system
Data showed that 90% had no cesspool emptying facilities
Data showed 70% of households nationally had no latrines (they used the bush)

Table 59
Uganda Water Coverage

Less than 10% of households had piped water inside the houses
However, more than 60% had access to protected water source
30% of Ugandan households shared their main water source with animals

- The Survey revealed majority opinion suggesting that latrine coverage has considerably improved in Uganda over the last five years (55% said yes). However, provision of clean water was perceived to have improved over the past five years by only 45.8% of the NSDS respondents.

Figure 17
Uganda: Percentage of Households Without
Latrines Disaggregated Into Regions

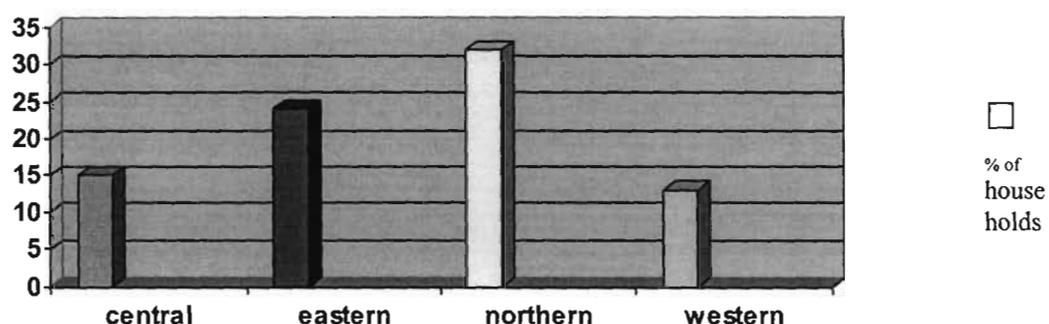


Table 60
Uganda: Mean Distance to Water Source and Mean time to Collect
Water

Mean distance to water source collect water		Mean time to
Wet season	1.17 km	Wet season
41.7 minutes		
Dry season	1.44 km	Dry season
64.6 minutes		

- Regarding other sanitation facilities, the Survey results indicate that facilities for garbage collection, cesspool emptying, and piped water inside houses were not available to the majority of respondents. Nearly 27.9% of Ugandans had a borehole within quick proximity; but only 22.1% had a protected spring/ well close by and worse still, only 8.7% of Ugandans had access to piped water either inside their houses or on taps within their vicinity.

Figure 18
Uganda: Percentage of Households That Boiled Drinking Water, Disaggregated Into National and Regional Average

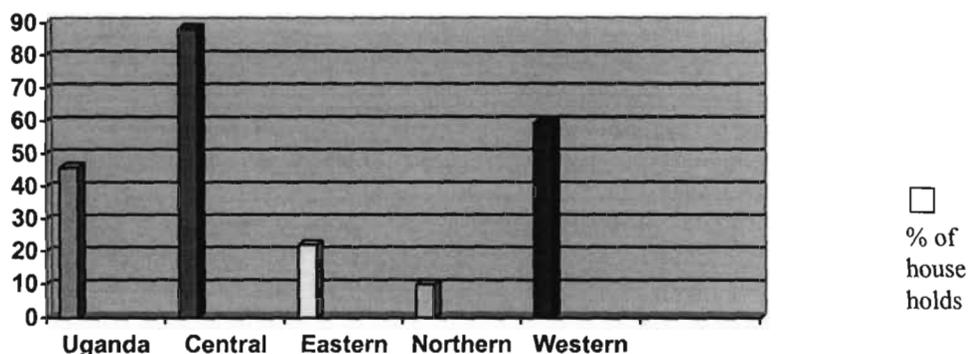


Table 61
Uganda: Advice Received From Government Officials and NGOs on Protection of Water Sources and Construction of Latrines.

Majority of respondents (56.5%) had received advice from government and NGO on protection of water sources
62% had received advice on construction of latrines
65% were of the view that latrine coverage had improved in the last five years

5.3.3.3 Health Services

- On health services, data generated by the NSD Survey indicated that nearly 42% of Ugandans were sick during a single month but failed to get treatment. Amongst the households which had a sick person, 41.8 percent failed to get the patient treated because of lack of money; and 32.4% used self medication. Those who failed to pay medical bills had been asked an average of Uganda Shillings.18.700/= per patient. HIV/AIDS awareness was fairly high in the communities in Uganda, as 78.5% said they understood how AIDS is spread. But less than 50 % of Ugandans believed that change of behaviour in response to the AIDS pandemic had taken place; only 48.2% reported that men tend to avoid widows and 46.1% reported that women avoid widowers.

Table 62**Uganda: What Happened When a Person Fell Sick and Could Not Get Treatment Due to Lack of Money**

42% of households had a person falling sick and not getting treatment due to lack of money	
What happened then?	
• Self medication	32.4%
• Traditional Medicine	17.9%
• Not treated at clinic	22.2%
• Sought no treatment	22.2%

Table 63**Uganda: Perception on Affordability of Medical Expenses**

Only 13.3 %of households have always been able to afford medical expenses.
82% of respondents cited the main reason for lack of affordability of medical expenses as poverty
69% cited the most common illness treated by self medication as malaria

- Findings also indicated that Ambulance services are extremely scarce in most communities in Uganda and traditional methods of carrying the sick to health units and hospitals still dominated.
- The most recent vaccination campaign at the time of the Survey was reported to have been very well attended although up to 40% of the NSDS respondents in Western region reported that some effort had been made by some people to discourage others from attending.
- The survey further revealed the cost of medical care as being beyond the reach of the majority of households as only 13.3% of the respondents said they were always able to afford.

Table 64**Uganda: Mode of Treatment**

• Modern health care	44%
• Self medication	39.9%
• No treatment	16%

Table 65
Uganda: Perceptions on HIV/AIDS

78% of respondents said people understood how HIV/AIDS was spread
64.7% said efforts had been made by authorities to warn people about HIV/AIDS
Only about 50% thought there had been behaviour change

- The Survey also found out that when some one is ill in the community, the most common method of treatment is modern health care, as reported by 44.4% of the respondents. 30.9% of the respondents reported dependency on self-treatment as a mode of dealing with disease in the community and this could have implications for disease-resistance to drugs in Uganda. The single most important illness that was treated through self-medication or by traditional herbs was reported to be malaria/fever (69.3%), followed by diarrhoea (11.0%).
Tables 62 to 67 encapsulate most of the key findings.

Table 66
Uganda: Perceptions on Ambulance Services and Vaccination Campaigns

Respondents said ambulance services were available to only 14% of households
82.5% said vaccination campaigns were well attended.
However 33.4% of said people discouraged other from going for immunization

Table 67
Uganda: Attitudes on health workers in government health units

50% said health workers in government health units levied extra charges.
62.4% said health workers in government health units sent patients to buy drugs from their own pharmacies and clinics.
66% said health workers in government health units were harsh to patients.

5.3.3.4 Education

- The most important reason for a child to drop out of school was given as lack of money (this was cited by 75.4% of respondents). Other factors which affect school attendance were ranked in this order: (a)

poor health (cited by 63.7% of respondents (b) failure to pay extra charges at school 51.7%, (c) lack of school uniform (41.6%) and (d) rainy season (26.9%).

Table 68
Uganda: Factors Negatively Affecting School Attendance

The main reason for children dropping out of school	
Factors negatively affecting school attendance	
Sickness	63%
Extra monetary charges	51.7%
Uniforms	41.6%
Rainy season	29.9%

Table 69
Uganda: Respondent's Attitudes Towards Sending a Child to School

80.6% of respondents believed sending children to school would help them in future
85% said they would still send a child to school even if they knew he/she would not find a job after school

- Data from the Survey indicate that the majority of Ugandans (85.8%) would still send a child to school even if they know that he /she would not find employment afterwards. Universal Primary Education (UPE) was highly appreciated all over the country because it increased opportunities for reducing illiteracy in Uganda. UPE was appreciated by 90.6% of the respondents. But many respondents thought that the quality of UPE could be improved. Almost half (47.8%) agreed that parents should contribute towards the cost of maintaining teachers so as to improve UPE.

Table 70
Uganda: Attitudes Towards UPE (Universal Primary Education)

• Is well appreciated	90.6%
• Should be improved with parental contribution	47.8%
• Cost still high	21.4%
• Classes too large	89.3%

Table 71
Uganda: Suggestions for Reducing Class Size

• Put up more classrooms	94%
• Hire more teachers	92.7%
• Introduce double shift	43.4%
• Charge for improving facilities	38.8%

- Suggestions to improve UPE in order of importance were: (a) put up more classrooms (this was suggested by 96.4%) of the respondents; (b) train and hire more primary school teachers (92.7%) and (c) introduce double shift (43.4%).
- The idea of automatic promotion in UPE was rejected by 78.4% of the respondents and that of employing unqualified teachers was rejected by 82.3%. The Survey found the cost of secondary education to be prohibitively high in Uganda, as 73.5% felt it was not affordable. Boarding secondary schools were the most preferred post-primary institutions in Uganda. Nearly 54.6% of Ugandans said secondary school education had improved over the past five years. Other key findings are encapsulated in **Tables 68 to 72**.

Table 72
Uganda: Views on Affordability of Secondary Education

• Post-primary education was considered expensive by 80% of the Respondents
• Overwhelming reason was school fees (95%)
• Preferred type of secondary school was boarding secondary School
• 54.6% said secondary school education had improved over the last 5 years.

5.3.3.5 Agricultural Extension Services

- As can be deduced from **Tables 73 to 76**, the findings of NSDS suggest that a lot of work should be put into the improvement of extension services in Uganda, in order to increase accessibility to knowledge of extension workers, to increase their dedication and to reduce corruption.

Table 73
Uganda: Coverage and Quality of Agricultural Extension Services

• Coverage was low with only 29.2 of households visited in the last 1 year
• Only 27.1 said quality had improved over the last 10 years
• Only 29% thought extension staff were dedicated to their work

- Responses from the NSDS suggested that the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) would be supported by the majority of households through adoption of improved seeds (88.7), payment for mechanisation (61.1%) and adaptation of new rules for land ownership (47.2%).
- The Survey revealed that post-harvest management in Uganda is not seriously considered as a means of improving food security. Communities would be willing to contribute to communal stores and warehouses for food storage.

Table 74
Uganda: Respondents' Views on PMA
(Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture)

PMA would be supported if it involved	
• New rules on land ownership	47.2%
• Application of improved seeds	88.7%
• Application of fertilizers	81%
• Paying for improved technology	61%

Table 75
Uganda: Views on Post-Harvest Loss

• 82% of the Respondents said post harvest loss affected food availability in households
• 66.4% said they grow crops subject to heavy post harvest management loss
• Only 19% said they received government advice on post harvest management loss
• Majority said they would like to see stores and granaries for minimizing post harvest losses

- Many farmers (41.4%) said they would be willing to pay for increased market outlets for their farm produce. They also observed that more investment needed to be made in finding markets for Ugandan agricultural produce abroad.

Table 76
Uganda: Respondents' Views on Market Outlets for Their Produce

•	26% of Households were not satisfied with market outlet for their produce
•	40% said they would be prepared to pay some money for getting more market outlets for their produce.
•	58% of respondents said their households always experience food shortages

5.4 Summary

This Chapter dealt with presentation of the results of the study. A dual-pronged mode of presentation was used with the results from each thematic analysis first represented in tabular form followed by an interpretation of the findings on each theme. The results provide findings on eleven themes identified earlier in the study and portray in a consistent way respondents' thinking pattern on the status of devolution and empowerment in Hoima District Local Government.

Cross-tabulation has been applied to a limited extent, and mainly under the theme of understanding various stakeholder responsibilities in devolution. The purpose here was to highlight the prominence and impact of some of the key variables such as gender in the answering pattern of respondents.

The last part of the chapter dwells on data from the National Service Delivery Survey. Consistency in the presentational format earlier used is maintained, save that the thematic areas outlined in this case related only to service delivery and good governance, leaving out other key ones such as community participation, planning and budgeting, Resource Mobilisation, depth of local democracy and visibility and strength of the civil society.

Generally, data from primary sources reveal some striking similarities between the status quo in Hoima regarding the levels and quality of service delivery and the national situation.

5.5 Projections for the Next Chapter

Chapter six will discuss the results of the study based on ten broad themes established in accordance with the research objectives. The results of the National Service Delivery Survey outlined in this chapter will be compared and contrasted with findings from the Hoima Study and similarities and differences if any, highlighted.

The outcome of the discussion will be used to draw conclusions, make recommendations and help in identifying areas of further research in the field that has been investigated.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study. The thematic pattern adopted in the previous chapter is largely maintained with minimal alterations on the nomenclature previously used.

A few themes are amalgamated and discussed concurrently particularly in situations where the analytical framework is closely linked. The results are discussed based on ten broad themes established in consonance with the research objectives and questions.

The discussion also incorporates an analysis of data and findings arising out of the National Service Delivery Survey and uses them to highlight the juxtaposition of the two situations (Hoima and National), particularly in the areas of service delivery.

6.2 Stakeholder Responsibilities Under Devolution

In the discussion of results, this thesis puts emphasis on role differentiation by examining how the key stakeholders, namely the State (central government), local governments and the communities undertake their complementary roles in support of devolution. As this chapter discusses, the State will deliver more effectively to all its citizens, but to local people in particular, if

- State institutions are made more accountable and responsive to local people in the communities; participation of local people in political processes and local decision-making is strengthened, and social barriers that result from distinctions of gender, ethnicity, religion and social status are removed;

- Central and local governments utilise the decentralised mechanisms for broad participation in the delivery of public services and minimise the scope for capture by local elites; and
- Political regimes honour the rule of law, allow the expression of political voice, and encourage the participation of local people in political processes.

This study acknowledges that actualising the above theoretical premise would entail intensive sensitisation of the people as a starting point to their deeper conceptualisation and appreciation of their role in the decentralisation set up. It is for this reason that the theme of understanding of stakeholder responsibilities under devolution was seen as an essential parameter for measuring the extent to which decentralisation had taken root and blossomed in Hoima, and by extension, in Uganda.

Data derived from the study indicates that the level of understanding of various stakeholder responsibilities under devolution was relatively high, with higher understanding among political leaders and local government staff than among civic and opinion leaders. At 59 percent, the level of understanding of stakeholder responsibilities by civic and opinion leaders was 9 percent less than that of political leaders and civil servants. This disparity in understanding of the decentralisation process among its stakeholders is attributed to deficiencies in the formulation and operationalisation of the policy.

Looking at the objectives of decentralisation, one sees much more focus being put on addressing institutional rigidities and limitations occasioned by centralised planning than enhancement of popular participation and empowerment of the local people. Because of this trend far more emphasis has over time been put on sensitisation and indoctrination of local government managers at the expense of the local population, and **Samoff** (1990: 523-524) warns that when decentralisation is not understood and

does not correspond with the interests of those who have to apply it, it is not well-effected.

Cross-tabulation of data on this theme to highlight some gender aspects of the findings had even more depressing results on the women's level of understanding of devolution. Within the civic population, only 15 percent of the women have heard about decentralisation and are aware of the various stakeholder roles under it. The rest, 85 percent, have no idea at all. The study found out that this disappointing but not completely unexpected scenario is caused by both cultural and socio-institutional factors. The cultural dimension is succinctly illustrated by **Wakabi & Kwesiga (1991:23)**:

A woman is bound to obey her husband in everything by virtue of the bride price that her husband's relatives paid to her family. The payment of bride price entitles a man to the woman's labour, her sexual services, and her full obedience.

The study established that the majority of women have not been able to benefit from decentralisation sensitisation seminars and workshops because they are not allowed to attend them by their husbands, and women in Hoima will rarely attend public meetings or other social gatherings without their husbands' consent. The socio-institutional factor manifests itself through the existing social structures that are heavily underpinned by patriarchal power relationships encompassing dominance and subordination of women in the institutional, economic and political arenas as well as in every day life. On the basis of analysed data the study found that this conceptual problem acknowledged by much feminist thinking as well as non-feminist approaches regarding the acceptance of a public/private dichotomy, whereby men inhabit a 'public,' more social sphere, while women are confined to a 'private' sphere more close to nature (**Stamp, 1989:19**), is a negation of the principle of empowerment as espoused under the decentralisation programme in Uganda.

In summary therefore, two key findings are noteworthy under this theme. First, it has been established that while knowledge and understanding of various stakeholder roles is substantial, it is concentrated among men, yet for devolution to take root and blossom, women who constitute more than 50 percent of the population must be brought on board.

Secondly, there is less knowledge on devolution among the civic population in Hoima District as compared to the local political leaders and managers. Again, such a situation is unhealthy and detrimental to a decentralisation process that seeks to empower local people by building their capacity to enable them effectively take charge of their own affairs in the future. Corrective action will need to be undertaken if devolution is to be effectively implemented.

6.3 Effectiveness of Service Delivery

Data derived from the study portrayed a largely gloomy picture regarding the general level of service delivery in Hoima District. This is exemplified by findings from personal in-depth interviews where 62.8 percent of respondents said they had no access to clean water, 70.6 percent had no adequate health facilities, 62.8 percent had bad access roads, while 72.4 percent of the respondents had no access to agricultural extension services. For civic and opinion leaders, 64 percent said they had no access to clean water, 69 percent said they did not attend government health units due to the perennial absence of drugs in those units and instead preferred private medical clinics, while 70 percent said they were rarely or never visited by agricultural extension officials. The only area where a positive trend was registered in terms of service delivery was education where findings from in-depth interviews showed 61 percent of the respondents happy with the Universal Primary Education Programme. In many cases respondents cited lack of funds for allowances and fuel as the reason given by local government officials for not delivering the required services. This reason was uniformly given by almost all respondents.

The argument of insufficient facilitation of civil servants greatly contributing to inadequate levels of service delivery would appear to be strongly vindicated by a key finding in the study to the effect that there has been a steady but consistent substitution of graduated tax collection with central Government transfers. The effect is the shortage of sufficient locally-generated financial resources on which Hoima District could depend to fund service delivery. Over dependency on Central Government transfers has not been without ramifications, and most prominent are the conditionalities attached to these funds that deprive districts of the discretion to allocate them according to local prioritisation. With locally-raised revenue in the district constituting only 4.2 percent of the total budget, it is indeed quite difficult to see how the district can effectively render services to the population in line with the mandate accorded by decentralisation. Indeed the fear of **Allen** (1990:10-12), cited in **Reddy** (1999:19), hold true for Hoima in particular, and Uganda in general.

Local authorities cannot command sufficient resources to provide adequate services. Their revenues are too small and too precarious to make them credit worthy and qualified personnel are attracted to more lucrative and secure positions in central government, parastatal institutions and the private sector.

It is therefore a key finding on this theme that the levels and quality of service delivery are still deplorably low in Hoima, with the only exception being the education sector. This means that the benefits of devolution are yet to accrue to the local population here. While the problem is largely attributed to lack of financial resources, there is also an institutional dimension that underscores the need to bring alignment, coherence and synergy to the existing implementation structures in ways that will minimise waste and enhance value for money from the available limited resources.

6.4 The National Service Delivery Survey: Comparison with Hoima Findings

Data derived from the National Service Delivery Survey reveals some striking similarities with some key findings of the research conducted in Hoima. In the discussion below, these similarities and other issues are analysed following the thematic categorisation adopted in section 5.3.

6.4.1 *Crime, Justice and Good Governance*

There wasn't much similarity between the National Service Delivery Survey data on crime, justice and good governance and Hoima research findings on the same theme. While the Local Council (LC) received a very favourable rating among Ugandans, and the majority of NSDS respondents stated that the Local Council Officials were more responsive today than five years ago (89.6%), findings in Hoima showed Local Councils there as generally non-responsive, lethargic and, at times, inundated with incompetent officials who could not properly plan for their areas. Such trends were discernable from the holding of Local Council meetings, where 63.6% of respondents in Hoima confirmed that LC meetings in their areas were rare and only 36.4% reported regular Local Council meetings. The fact that over 60% of respondents in Hoima were not satisfied with the way their local revenue was spent also cast a shadow of doubt not only on the integrity of LC officials, but also on their potential as agents of social change and good governance. The high rating on good governance and responsiveness of local councils registered by the National Service Delivery Survey could be attributable to the indicators used. It is noted for example that the number of "crimes reported in the last 12 months" was used as a determinant of the level of crime and good governance, yet such a quantitative and generally subjective criteria may not be a suitable parameter to use when analysing a largely qualitative concept such as good governance.

6.4.2 Water and Sanitation

Data derived from the National Services Delivery Survey depicts an equally gruesome picture and to a large extent confirms the findings accruing from the Hoima case study. The data shows a very pathetic situation nationally regarding availability of clean water for domestic consumption, in spite of evidence of gradual improvement over the past five years. The difficulties encountered in the search for water (which is even not clean) can be discerned from the average time it takes Ugandans to collect water from the nearest source. Judging from data provided by the national survey, it can be noted that the mean distance to the water source increased from 1.16 kilometres during the wet season to 1.47 kilometres during the dry season, while the time spent to collect water also increased from 42 minutes in the wet season to over one hour during the dry season. The implication here is that most water sources (local wells, rivers and swamps) are seasonal and their sustainability is highly influenced by the weather pattern. The National Survey also shows nearly 30% of the population sharing their main water source with animals. There is a similar finding on this issue in respect of the survey done in Hoima, where 37.2% of the respondents who said they had no access to clean drinking water revealed their major source of water as local wells, rivers and swamps, the same places used by herdsmen to water their animals. With 37.2% of respondents in Hoima having no access to clean water against the national average of 30%, one clearly sees an urgent need to tackle the water problem both in Hoima and nationally. The need for action becomes even more acute in view of data from the National Service Delivery Survey, which at some point indicate that up to 46% of the Ugandan population did not boil their water before drinking it, and although people periodically received advice from government and NGO officials, it was mainly to do with protection of water sources (56.5%) and construction of latrines (63%), and hardly any on boiling of drinking water.

6.4.3 Health Services Provision

As in the case of water and sanitation, there are striking similarities between the National Services Delivery Survey data on provision of health services and research findings in Hoima District regarding this area. Nationally amongst all households which had a sick person for example, 41.8% failed to get the patient treated due to lack of money, while another 32.4% used self-medication. In other words, at a total of 74.2% of Ugandans nationally were found by the Survey not to have access to publicly-provided medication in the event of falling sick, which compares evenly with findings derived from the Hoima district research where 70.6% of the respondents said they had no adequate health facilities. The NSDS findings that taking an under-dose is a common practice (53.5% of the respondents said so) underscores another key dimension of the qualitative aspect of service delivery and highlights the need for expansion of the analytical framework for empowerment to include aspects such as education and community mobilisation as vital ingredients of the empowerment process. Data obtained both at micro-level (Hoima study) and macro-level (NSDS) point to an even graver problem, namely that of implementation.

Berman (1978:164), poses an interesting question of why authoritative decisions (laws, policies, and plans) do...or, more likely, do not ... lead to expected results. In his view, the reasons go beyond the aspirations of the policy goal per-se because, to paraphrase a biblical admonition, a goal ("faith") without action ("works") is dead. Policy exists only as it is implemented and, therefore, the "goodness" of most ideas cannot be tested apart from their implementation. Thus, the two relationships, a policy's technical validity and its implementational effectiveness, cannot be divorced. Taken together, they constitute the domain of implementation analysis. The health sector, more than any other sector, is afflicted by the implementation problem because it seems to be the only sector characterised by a diverse implementation framework with national and regional referral hospitals under direct control of the Centre while district

hospitals and local health care centres are under local government jurisdiction, relatively independent of Central control. Whereas the diversity in the implementation structure may in itself not be a serious problem, it creates the need for clarity and conciseness in terms of tracing and locating the paths of decision points all the way from the national-policy making level down to the level of district, sub county and ultimately community service managers. The duality of the situation means that local governments are at some stage unable to take corrective measures to ameliorate shortcomings within the implementation process, without agreement from the Centre.

6.4.4 Education

The result of the National Service Delivery Survey on education concurs with what was established by research done in Hoima. Analysis of available data shows while the National Survey found out that UPE was highly appreciated all over the country because it increased opportunities for reducing illiteracy in Uganda (UPE was appreciated by 90.6% of respondents), in Hoima 61% of the respondents said they were happy with UPE, while 69% agreed that Primary Education was much better with UPE. Interestingly, both the National Survey and the Hoima research found out that Ugandans would still send their children to school in spite of the knowledge that those children would not find employment afterwards. The citing of poor health as a major factor affecting school attendance (63.7%) highlights the central position occupied by health service provision within the decentralisation process.

While the situation regarding UPE is generally seen to be impressive, there is still room for improvement, especially in respect of the qualitative aspect of service delivery in this sector, and one way to improve on the quality of output from UPE classrooms is to address the issue of leadership in schools, among others. **Burki et. al. (1999:60)** observe that strong leaders have the capacity to effectively develop and communicate a school-wide and a community-wide commitment to a common mission and vision for the

school, and to manage the implementation of the Schools Improvement Plan. The common mission and vision fosters teamwork inside and outside the school and, most importantly, the process of developing them makes teachers and parents the owners of efforts to improve learning. They add that leadership is especially important in a service industry like education, where the contribution of individual teachers is difficult to measure, and thus difficult to directly reward. They argue that in the absence of strong individual incentives, leaders must motivate teachers to improve and these characteristics can be stimulated through decentralisation, as summarised in Table 77.

Table 77
Characteristics of Effective Schools That Can Be Stimulated Through Decentralisation

Characteristic of effective schools	Decentralisation variables that can contribute to specific characteristics of effective schools
Leadership	School directors are selected by the community using transparent criteria. School improvement plans are developed locally. Resources are transferred to schools for the implementation of school plans.
Skilled and committed teachers	Schools are given the authority to make curriculum and pedagogic changes. Teachers have significant responsibility for developing school improvement plans. Directors are given the authority to provide a substantive evaluation of teachers performance. Schools are given the authority (and resources) to make their own decisions about the type of training to be given to teachers.
Focus on learning results	The school improvement plan emphasises goals of improving learning (and associated results, such as reducing dropout and repetition). Information on learning at the level of the school is transparent.
Responsibility for results	Directors have fixed-term appointments that may not be renewed if improved learning goals are not met.

Source: Burki et al. 1999: 61

In essence, while decentralisation cannot, and will not convert school directors who are used to passively following ministerial orders into dynamic leaders overnight, it can and often does provide a transparent, competitive selection process for school directors, with the overall effect of improving the quality of leadership in schools.

6.4.5 Agricultural Extension Services

Like the education and health sectors, there are also similarities between the national and Hoima trends in respect of agricultural extension. Data from the NSDS succinctly shows that agricultural extension coverage is low, with only 29.1% of households visited by extension workers. In the same vein only 27.2% of the respondents said the quality of services had improved over the last 10 years, while only 29% thought extension staff were dedicated to their work. Research in Hoima show that 72.4% of the respondents never received agricultural extension officers to advise them on farming practices.. Other key issues identified in the Hoima study that also feature prominently in the National Service Delivery Survey include post-harvest loss, with 82.6% of Ugandans saying it affects food availability in households, 66.4% saying they grow crops subject to heavy post harvest loss, and the majority saying they would like to see stores and granaries built for minimising post-harvest losses.

Ironically, failure to minimise post-harvest losses by an effective agricultural extension system indirectly triggers off a multiplier effect that grossly affects the levels of household income and consequently the levels of revenue collection.

The limited level of discrepancy between the national and Hoima trends, particularly in the field of service delivery, is a clear reflection of the existing dichotomy and confirmation of the extent to which the latter is a microcosm of the general situation countrywide.

6.5 Community Participation

Data derived from the study shows more than half (50.9 percent) of the respondents acknowledging the fact that members of their communities did not willingly participate in development projects of their areas and on many occasions had to be coerced. Only 49.1 percent said their community members actively participated in local development programmes. Respondents attributed this trend of affairs to lack of motivation. They explained that local people were not willing to participate in activities that had no monetary gain. **Kellerman** (1997:52) asserts that participation fuelled and driven by monetary gain and where participants have no say over project activities is not participation. He contends that community participation is a complex and ongoing process through which people are enabled to exercise varying degrees of influence over development activities that affect their lives. Therefore, insisting on being paid before engaging in any community activity or having to be coerced into participation as revealed in the study is a negation of the principle and spirit of community participation. This also explains the bad state of most community roads in Hoima District, despite the fact that their maintenance is a function devolved to local communities by the District Council under part 4(20) of the Second Schedule of the Local Governments Act, 1997.

According to **Wallis** (1995:35), the objectives of community participation in relation to development should be viewed as empowerment, beneficiary capacity- building, and increasing project effectiveness. The general view is that community participation can contribute to local development depending on the measure of influence people exercise over development activities affecting their lives. But this will only happen in situations where the people themselves are willing participants in local development initiatives and are not coerced into participating in activities not of their interest.

The study established that the level of community participation in the context espoused by **Kellerman** (1997:52) is still lacking in Hoima District. If devolution is to be effective, this problem will have to be rectified. In order

to participate meaningfully community members need both to be fully informed but also sufficiently mobilised for inclusive local decision-making.

6.6 Planning and Budgeting

Overall, data obtained from district-based respondents depicted an unsatisfactory picture while the situation in the sub-counties is quite pathetic. Further analysis of disaggregated data based on role-differentiation revealed lack of planning and budgeting skills being more severely descriptive of politicians than of the civil servants. This scenario is vindicated by the finding that out of the 27 senior district politicians interviewed, 12 or 44 percent lacked sufficient knowledge in planning and budgeting. This compared quite unfavourably with the civil servants all of whom displayed adequate know-how in this area. While the lack of planning and budgeting skills among politicians was blamed on experience, it is postulated in this thesis that humble educational levels, given that there is no educational standard required for any one to seek elective office at district or sub-county level, have a significant bearing on this scenario. Politicians whose planning and budgeting knowledge was scanty attributed this deficiency to lack of experience, arguing that civil servants were more knowledgeable on the theme because they had worked long in the district compared to them; most of whom had just been elected into office. Data on the sub-counties situation was even more disillusioning. The level of inadequate planning and budgeting skills far exceeds that at the district. The situation is worsened by the condition of key planning committees supposed to link up with the DTPC, these are either absent or inactive. As a result, the ensuing gap caused by lack of an effective planning unit at the sub-county to coordinate and amalgamate community needs and ensure their incorporation into the district development plan renders the bottom-up planning process both incomplete and disjointed. It has to be emphasised that with decentralisation, the development planning function that used to be carried out wholly by Central Government is now carried out at local government level as well, and the Local Governments Act designates the district council as the planning authority of a district. Indeed according to

section 36 (3) of the LGA, it is a cardinal requirement for the district council to prepare a comprehensive and integrated development plan incorporating plans of lower level local governments for submission to the National Planning Authority, and by extension, it is also mandatory for lower local governments (sub-counties) to prepare plans incorporating plans of lower councils (parishes and villages) within their areas of jurisdiction.

In principle, and as envisaged by the LGA, planning should start at village level and move upwards, with village development plans being incorporated into parish development plans, which are incorporated into sub-county plans, which are themselves incorporated into the district development plan. The practice is however different. It is a key finding of this study that due to institutional weaknesses arising out of insufficient planning skills and knowledge at the district and sub-county levels, real bottom-up planning remains a mirage. This inadequacy constitutes a major impediment to an effective development planning process, itself a key cornerstone to meaningful devolution and empowerment.

Rondinelli (1981:133) tells us that decentralisation is necessary because it increases the scope of decisions, and thus incentives available to local participants and builds institutions that encourage, structure, focus and stabilise such participation. While it may be premature to dispute his contention, data derived from this study indicates that the extent to which the above will happen will depend on the level of knowledge and skills of the stakeholders of decentralisation, who in this case are the local politicians, the local government managers and the community. While legislation itself is important in terms of provision of an enabling environment, real empowerment will accrue from physical and direct efforts aimed at building the capacity of local people to make informed decisions.

On the basis of the study findings in Hoima District, one can say that decentralisation cannot and will not increase the scope of local decision making unless local people, both the leaders and the led, are well equipped

with knowledge and information on their various roles and obligations within the framework of a decentralised environment.

6.7 Resource Mobilisation

Judging from data derived from the study, there is consensus that local revenue is too insufficient to cover all expenses of service delivery. The problem of insufficient revenue is more acute in the sub-counties because here, unlike at the district which is cushioned by inter-governmental grants, there is total dependency on local taxation. Findings also revealed a high degree of non-compliance with the LGA on matters of revenue-sharing, which in some cases has led to a spate of discordant relationships between the district and the deviant sub-counties. It is evident from the available data that insufficient local revenue is a direct consequence of the low levels of revenue collection. Figures obtained from Hoima District Local Government Treasury for example put local revenue collections for FY 2001/2002 at 57 percent of the budgeted total, and while political interference was largely cited as the key cause of poor local revenue collection, the study found it closely related to the all-pervasive scenario of low taxable incomes, which in turn was heavily determined by the local tax base.

The tax base paradigm and its relevance to the financial viability of local governments has been underscored by many a writer. **Rondinelli et. al.** (1989:69) argue that if decentralisation is to have a real impact on enabling local organisations to provide service and infrastructure more effectively, then they must have stronger authority to raise revenues and to generate large amounts of those revenues. In the case of Hoima however, the issue at stake is not one of legal authority, as this exists under the LGA where it is clearly stipulated that in rural areas revenue shall be collected by the sub-county councils who shall retain 65% of the revenue collected and pass on the balance to the district.

While it is true that politicians in pursuance of their short-term interests (votes during elections) have, to a large extent, influenced the trend of local revenue collection, the real causative agent would appear to be the narrow tax base that has impeded levying of taxes beyond certain levels. It is the hardships encountered by tax payers in the process of compliance to their tax obligations that compel the politicians to intervene on the latter's behalf for short-term tactical advantages.

While poor assessment of graduated tax was ranked last by respondents as a reason for poor revenue collection, two local revenue enhancement studies, the first conducted in 1996 by Crown Agents, and the second in 2000 by the Local Government Finance Commission, all identified poor tax assessment as a vital setback in local revenue mobilisation. The studies also revealed that the revenue sources at the disposal of local governments have a high potential of yielding more revenue than is currently being realised, but they are generally under exploited. While this dimension (viability of local revenue sources) was not addressed by the study, it is acknowledged in this thesis that optimum exploitation of local revenue sources is a subject that has come to dominate many local governance fora in contemporary times. Further, the subject cannot be discussed in isolation, especially of the peasant agriculture-oriented tax base whose inelasticity means in principle that there is a limit beyond which it cannot expand to generate additional revenue.

Data obtained from the District Treasury department also highlighted the strong correlation between the increase in numbers and sizes of Central Government transfers and the constantly dwindling local revenues. While for example, in the year ending 30th June 1996 the District was able to collect 77% of the budgeted local revenue against total Central transfer receipts of Uganda shillings 1.789 billion, this percentage had by 30th June 2002 drastically fallen to 57%, as central receipts reached a Uganda shillings 7.940 billion mark. This finding is also confirmed in a Local Government Development Programme (LGDP) review Report of 2002

where it is suggested that the increase in numbers and volume of Central Government transfers to local governments could also be contributing to the poor performance of local revenues. It has to be noted that there is a wide range of national priority policy areas in Uganda in which local governments, in conjunction with the Central Government, have an important role to play in terms of delivering public services. It has already been noted that local governments are supposed to maintain schools, public health centres, district feeder roads etc. It is therefore argued in this thesis that as long as the status quo remains, we shall continue to witness further expansion of Central grants, especially those of a conditional nature as a means of funding local services.

6.8 Visibility and Strength of the Civil Society

Tables 39, 40, 41 and 42 in chapter five depict the status of the Civil Society in Hoima District. The data captured portray a depressing picture of resignation, defeatism and melancholy. A case in point is the holding of village council meetings. While 63.6 percent of respondents interviewed were dissatisfied with the regularity of village council meetings, more than half of them could not take action to ameliorate the problem, with some (43.2%) fearing their chairmen, and others (9%) not knowing what to do. This element of defeatism was not limited to village council meetings alone. A similar situation was discerned regarding expenditure of 25% local revenue. In this case 61.3 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied with the way money was spent, but only 31.1 percent had rebuked their local leadership over the misuse. The rest, 68.9, argued that the money involved was too little to warrant any complaint. It should be noted that weakness of the civil society in the form seen above is not confined to Hoima District. The Development Network of Indigenous Voluntary Associations-**DENIVA** in its 2002 report identifies the high degree of malaise among the civic populations in the Districts of Rakai, Ntungamo, Katakwi and Gulu, among others, as one of the major contributory factors towards the failure of decentralisation to promote popular participation through empowering the people to take charge of affairs that affect their livelihood.

Lack of information featured prominently as a reason for the invisibility and weakness of the Civil Society. Respondents said they could not act on their errant local leaders because they lacked information, and in cases where they had, it was received belatedly.

The argument of this thesis is that participation is a vital *sine qua non* for effective devolution, but without the necessary information local people will find it increasingly difficult to get involved in the devolution process. The problem seems to lie with the local leaders who tend to view local people as undesirable elements only to be brought on board when it is unavoidable. **DENIVA** (2002:14) concurs and argues that strengthening participatory governance requires a change of attitude on the part of the Centre and that of local governments to be able to acknowledge more enthusiastically the role and contribution of citizens and the Civil Society in the country's decision-making process. **DENIVA** (2002:15) adds that this change of attitude could manifest itself through conducting educational programmes and dissemination of information to stakeholders.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, the key findings on this theme are that the Civil Society in Hoima, in particular, and in Uganda generally is weak, and this weakness is predominantly caused by lack of information and education among the civic population. While some civil society organisations are visible in some districts, their participation in district planning processes have largely remained symbolic with very minimal involvement, if at all, in the development process (**DENIVA**, 2002:14). Given this kind of weakness on part of the civil society, it is certainly not possible for devolution to result in more accountable government.

6.9 Local Democracy and Democratic Methods of Work

Local democracy which **Reddy** (1999:13) terms as decentralised decision-making and management is the level of democracy that is closest to the people and allows the local populace to actively participate in affairs which

affect them directly. Thematically it was seen to be a significant yardstick in determining the extent to which local government was useful as a means of enhancing local decision-making, thus empowering the local population. In assessing the level of local democracy and democratic methods of work, the parameter used by the study was the regularity of village council general meetings. The argument of this thesis is that having regular village council general meetings was the main way of involving local citizens in the performance of local public duties, widening the basis of political participation, and facilitating problem-oriented grass root approaches which are appreciated by the citizens. Looking at the study however, the findings show that village council general meetings are not regularly held. 61 percent of the respondents confirmed that village council general meetings were irregularly held. Among this sub-group 48.4 percent said the meetings took place once a year, 19.8 percent said the meetings took place twice a year, while 7.1 percent said the meetings were never held at all. The findings of **USAID** (1996:69), in a study on *Democracy and Governance in Uganda* are similar to the above. They found out that after elections village executive committees assume responsibilities of the village councils and very rarely convene general meetings where all members would be involved. In the same study **USAID** (1996:70), when members of the electorate were asked whether they participate in the decision-making process of their councils, 63 percent said they did not, while 37 percent said they did, thus confirming the view that participation at village level appears to end during elections.

There is at the moment no remedy in sight to cure this malady because both the Local Governments (Resistance Councils) Statute of 1993 and its successor, the Local Governments Act (1997) are silent about the frequency of village and parish council meetings. The law only pronounces itself on local government councils and says that these must meet at least once every two months. The USAID study emphasises the inherent contradiction embedded in the local democratisation process whereby the

role of local government councils as channels for local democratic decision-making is embellished in spite of their remoteness to the citizens.

Arising from the above, it is clear that decentralisation has not really enhanced citizen participation in local decision-making at the basic levels of the village and parish. This lack of citizen participation in decision-making underscores the paradox of representative democracy and testifies to the principle of Michels's iron law of oligarchy that states that *democracy is the dictatorship of the delegates over the delegators, and the delegates will desire to stay in office unless removed by extraordinary means.*

6.10 Presence of Non-Governmental Organisations

Data derived from the study shows a nominal presence of non-governmental organisations, with only 28.3 percent of village executive committees and 36.4 percent of Sub-County Chiefs acknowledging the presence of NGOs in their areas of operation. Even where they were available and vibrant, the study could only identify activities of one major NGO, World Vision, whose activities are prominent in the education sector.

The implication of this finding is that Hoima District is overwhelmingly dependent on the State (Central and local government) for the provision of essential services, besides lacking the vital input of NGOs in the public policy and programme design through their interface with people in local communities. The situation is worsened by the fact that Central and local government agencies despise and ridicule local NGOs and respect and would prefer to deal with international NGOs (DENIVA, 2001:15). However, **Kagonyera** (2001:14) warns against the above trend and advises that,

Within the framework of the Decentralisation Act, involving the Civil Society can strengthen the planning process at the local government level. The NGOs operating at the community or grass roots level are well placed to appreciate the needs and problems of the communities. Therefore, local governments need to exploit this opportunity offered by the experience and

close contact between the civil society and the local community in developing district plans so as to ensure improved social services provision and delivery.

With limited activities of NGOs in districts, as is the case in Hoima, it is not possible to harness this vital advantage. What emerges from the above analysis is that the absence of effective NGOs on the ground coupled with a weak Civil Society has only served to reinforce the top-down approach in the development process, and in so doing negated the principle of empowerment which entails, among other issues, that development should be undertaken with the direct aim of increasing the power and control of groups of intended beneficiaries over the circumstances of their own lives.

6.11 Knowledge of Existing Devolution Obstacles

Data derived from the study revealed that devolution stakeholders in Hoima District are yet to internalise vital decentralisation obstacles as an initial step towards addressing the challenges facing the District within the broad framework of better service delivery, empowerment and sustainable local governance. Three parameters, namely local democracy, resource mobilisation, and community participation are used to analyse this theme.

Judging from available data it has already been noted (**Table 44**) that 52.2 percent of the respondents did nothing when village council general meetings failed to be convened by the respective chairmen. It is already argued that failure to convene village council meetings constitutes a major infringement on local people's right to participate in taking decisions that affect their lives, and is therefore seen in this study as a major obstacle to the devolution process. It is the argument of this thesis that the omission occasioned by the respondents' inaction when village council meetings failed to be convened is itself testimony of the extent to which the population is unaware of the key obstacles militating against their own empowerment and the need to remove them.

Resource mobilisation is another area where people's unawareness of existing devolution obstacles can be discerned. Data from **Tables 44 and 45** shows that after 199 respondents (61.3%) said that the community was not satisfied with the expenditure of 25% local revenue remitted to villages, only 62 of them (31.1%) said they rebuked their local chairmen over the issue. There was no action from the remaining 137 respondents (68.9%), evidence that they possibly did not see misuse of their local resources as a hindrance to development of their area. Findings further show that unawareness of devolution obstacles is not confined to the local people in the communities only. When 54 district-based respondents were asked if it was in order for Hoima District to over depend on the Centre for its funding, only 13 percent of the respondents could see it as a problem.

Findings on community participation revealed a similar trend. It is noted from **Table 35** that more than half of the respondents said community members did not willingly participate in local development programmes in their areas and had to be coerced.

A devolution process that is not underpinned by a strong wave of community participation can be equated to a vehicle that attempts to run without fuel. **Reddy** (1999:14) is even more emphatic when he says that it is only when maximum participation is ensured that self-help can become a reality. Viewed in this light, it can be argued that the devolution process in Hoima, in particular, and in Uganda in general, may be doomed to failure as long as vital obstacles are not identified in time and addressed accordingly. On the basis of what has already been observed, it would be sheer romanticisation of the achievements of decentralisation to assert that the cardinal objectives of the policy have been attained. The decentralisation process in Hoima and indeed Uganda is still characterised by a high top-down orientation which has led local people to increasingly retreat from the task of local development, and this has by extension resulted in gradual dissolution of the Civil Society. This argument is backed by data in this study which shows local people constantly insisting on being

paid for their labour whenever they are called upon to participate in community activities.

6.12 Summary

In this chapter, the results of the study have been discussed on the basis of the thematic categorisation adopted in chapter five. In the course of the discussion key findings of the study have been analysed against the background of the research questions set out. The causes of some findings have been discussed in an effort to broaden the scope of analysis and contextualise the themes under discussion. In the course of discussing the study findings, a number of views and observations have been generated, and these will form the basis for the conclusions and recommendations that constitute the next chapter.

The chapter has also incorporated an analysis of findings arising out of the National Service Delivery Survey and compared them with findings on the Hoima research to establish the relationship between the two. Some similarities are noticeable, particularly in the area of service delivery, and this goes a long way to prove that problems in local government management and development are not confined to just a few areas but span the breadth and width of the entire country.

6.13 Projections for the next chapter

Chapter seven will be the last chapter. Besides containing the conclusion of the study, it will be comprised of recommendations categorized into two to feature those based on thematic findings and those that focus on areas of further research. The chapter will also emphasize the role of institutional support and performance monitoring in the strengthening of local government and highlight the significance of strengthening financial resource bases of local authorities, staff training and public accountability institutions in improving the out come of devolution. There will be emphasis on the need to nurture a symbiotic situation regarding inter-governmental relations entailing managing the dynamics of power-sharing in a way that will help build a stronger rather than a more divisive Central-local relationship.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the conclusion of the study. It is basically made up of recommendations that are divided into two to separately feature recommendations based on thematic findings and those geared towards further research. It ends with an overview on the need to strengthen the local government system through institutional support and constant monitoring of performance.

7.2 Recommendations Based on Findings

In conformity with the nomenclature established in chapter one and maintained in chapters five and six, recommendations based on findings are presented based on seven thematic areas, and these are:-

- Stakeholders' responsibilities under devolution
- Service delivery
- Community participation
- Planning and budgeting
- Resource mobilisation
- The Civil Society, and
- Local democracy

7.2.1 Stakeholder Responsibilities Under Devolution

Despite the twelve years of devolution in Uganda, it is apparent from the study that there is still very little understanding of the basic tenets, let alone the responsibilities of those whom devolution is meant to benefit, especially the women. This kind of situation has ensured that the devolution process remains supply-oriented and therefore top-down. Yet for devolution to succeed in empowering the grass-root population, it should be demand-driven and manifest itself in a manner that allows the people to own the

process. There is therefore a strong need to reverse the situation in Hoima through an intensive sensitisation programme so that people and all stakeholders are made aware of their various roles under a decentralised arrangement. Such sensitisation needs to focus a lot on the existing socio-cultural factors, such as the public/private dichotomy, that have impeded women's understanding of their enormous role in decentralised local governance.

While the existing legislation is sufficient enough to secure people's compliance, the decentralisation process can only move forward if key stakeholders are made aware and know what they are supposed to do when, why and how. Until that is done one cannot meaningfully talk of a bottom-up development approach.

This thesis argues that the first level, which urgently needs re-orientation in order to move the process of devolution forward, is the national one. While the immediate challenge for national development as a whole is to translate any success in the macro-economic arena into greater success in improvement of people's lives, value for money in expenditures, quality of budget execution, effectiveness in public service delivery still remain a serious concern. Observed from an analytical perspective, the major problem is that both information management and decision-making are focused on the administrative process of expenditures and activities rather than on the developmental outcomes, impacts and goals that are being pursued. The **World Bank** (2001:22) notes that in Uganda, recurrent and development expenditures to date continue to be reviewed separately, rather than for their combined impact in achieving overall developmental goals; monitoring and evaluation remain overly centred on compliance with the Central Government requirements and regulations rather than end results of policy, programme and project efforts, while civil servants get rewarded for doing paper work well rather than for making a difference in people's lives.

The current modus operandi regarding Central transfers, under which strong Central control is exercised over conditional grants to districts, undermines the ability of decentralised service providers to tailor their actions to the nature of local demands.

From the political and socio-economic perspective therefore, deepening of devolution will entail redressing most of the above-mentioned setbacks in a way that will help re-align the distributive and allocative priorities of the Centre with the broad objectives of decentralisation.

7.2.2 Service Delivery

In principle, delivery of public services is supported by a number of systems whose effective functioning requires adoption of best practices in their administration. This however is contingent upon presence of factors ranging from transparency and accountability, targeted planning and implementation of services, and the general availability of financial and human resources among other things. Service delivery therefore is more than just the use of established service delivery units but extends also to the systems associated with the services. This is a pre-requisite for more efficient, effective and sustainable delivery of public services. As a bottom line therefore, service delivery should not occur merely for service delivery's sake, there should be an ultimate objective of improvement of the socio-economic conditions of recipient communities.

Judging from the Hoima case study it is notable that the problem of a low level of service delivery is closely linked, not only to inadequate local revenue collection, but also to shortcomings related to some of the above mentioned factors. The situation is worsened by the ever-increasing number of Central Government grants to fund central priorities without providing for administrative costs of local government implementers in the hope that local revenue would take care of them. There are two ways through which service delivery will improve both in Hoima and other local governments. The first is by Central Government availing 100 percent of

the funds required to implement national priority programmes which include, water provision, primary health care, rural feeder roads, universal primary education and agricultural extension. The failure by the Centre to fulfil the above means that Hoima and other local governments have to seriously consider reintroducing cost-sharing in services such as provision of primary health care, water and rural feeder roads maintenance as one way of strengthening its resource base. Until the 1996 presidential elections, cost-sharing existed within the country's health care system and this had not only ensured better service provision through steady supply of drugs in the units, but also kept the morale of health workers high through prompt payment of their top-up allowances. However, health being an area of national interest, any attempts to reintroduce cost-sharing will have to be preceded by negotiation and/or clearance from the centre.

Water provision is another area where cost-sharing would help a lot in strengthening the local resource base. During the study it was noted that while billions of shillings had been spent on construction of bore holes in Hoima District in the period 1998/2001, most of them had by the time of conducting this research fallen into disrepair due to poor maintenance. In Ecuador for example, communities maintain water systems through local water boards that collect fees from each household and installation charges for those who join the system after initial construction. In this way communal participation has managed to reduce construction costs alone by nearly 18 percent (**Rondinelli**, 1991:442). The starting point in Hoima could be through opening of water source bank accounts where money equivalent to at least 2% of the capital cost of a particular water source would be deposited before construction to cater for its maintenance. In vehemently supporting the case for cost-sharing as one way of improving the quality of decentralised services, this thesis fully concurs with Bird's arguments as summarised by **Hartley in Reddy** (1999:85) that:

...attempts to meet the needs of the poor for minimal essential services by giving them away without charge is almost always a failure. For example,

suppose the water is provided free of charge through connections. When the water is free there is no incentive to use it sparingly although it is scarce. That is to say, supplying free water involves the heavy cost of building more dams to increase the available supply. With free water the investment in dams is excessive and alternative investments, such as roads, may be inadequate. That is to say, had the water been sold at a cost, less water would have been used, fewer dams would have been built, and the savings achieved with respect to water supply when applied to more road improvements would be valued more highly by the citizens than the water foregone.

While availing 100 percent funds required to implement national priority programmes will help strengthen the administrative and operational capacity of local governments and enable them deal with the key responsibilities and functions assigned to them, ambiguities that still remain in the design as well as allocation of tasks, especially between local governments and administrative units, will need to be resolved. The research found out, for example, that many functions and services entrusted to sub-county local governments to execute would be better handled by the parishes and in some cases, the village councils. A case in point is local revenue collection. While this is a function categorically assigned to sub counties, in reality sub county officials are too detached from the ordinary people to effectively perform this function, and consequently their officials remain out of touch with the situation in the countryside. This has left the parish chiefs and other parish-based officials as the only meaningful linkage between the sub-county and the communities. The second way of improving service delivery is directly related to the broadening and enhancement of community-based adult education and literacy programmes and introduction of competitive politics. Both of these in practice have a vital synergistic effect. Education contributes directly to the effectiveness of the devolved service delivery process by bringing on board actors (both deliverers and recipients of services) who are eloquent in terms of utilising and sustaining a multi-

sectoral service delivery system. Sri Lanka provides a good example of a country where a comprehensive user-friendly education system has largely been responsible for the emergence and sustainability of the most effective health care delivery system in the whole of South East Asia (**Bjorkman**, 1993:10-13).

This system has become so accessible and acceptable that today three-quarters of all births now occur in health institutions of one kind or another under the supervision of trained midwives (recently renamed Family Health Workers) (**de Silva**, 1982:131). It is also estimated that a State-supported health care facility of one type or another is located at an average maximum distance of three miles from any habitation, a sharp contrast with the situation in Uganda, where the average distance is ten miles. Indeed, by including all practitioners of traditional medicine, **Wolffers** (1987:53) argues that "within a radius of 0.8 miles some form of health-care service is available to every one" in Sri Lanka. The lessons that derive from the Sri Lankan experience are simple and succinct: the high rate of literacy, the intensely competitive political system, and the resulting politicisation all provide palatable opportunities to articulate popular demands and enhance political participation. Political awareness and mass mobilisation are all vital prerequisites to achieving more distributive equity in the delivery of services, both in Hoima, and the rest of the country. In essence the current no-party arrangement in Uganda which has left political parties in abeyance for the last 17 years is viewed by many as the antithesis of the vital need for competitive politics.

In concluding this point, it should be noted that all these arguments presume a world in which democracy works well, and in which Central-local relations are characterized by an equitable dispersal of resources and responsibilities. If there is the risk that local elites will curtail or even capture local decision-making, then there is a high probability that services and other aspects of social welfare may not improve, and this risk will be higher in societies with little experience in participative democracy at local

level. Noteworthy also is the fact that behind the promises made by competing political parties, lie diverse ideological orientations with their various value-commitments and causal logics as well as their preferred agents and modes of action. Nevertheless, the vigour of public participation within a competitive democratic environment will ensure that the overall pattern of an effective service delivery system is maintained through application of the usual array of checks and balances.

Thirdly, **Burki et. al.** (1999:5) see a possibility of devolution improving the quality of services but only if various responsibilities for performance are clearly established (accountability), while sufficient authority is allocated to deliver results. They cite the Latin American experience, where for example, in the case of roads, some success has been achieved in Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela and Colombia, by allocating responsibility for the different parts of the road network to the level of government that best represents the roads users. Thus rural roads are assigned to rural local governments, urban streets to urban local governments, secondary highways to provincial governments and major intercity highways to the national government. Their view on roads is also extended to the education and health sectors where they argue that devolution in these sectors can improve performance but only if it extends to the level of individual schools and health units. Where for example the school director is made accountable to the parents (through a school board) and has the authority to make key management decisions (including who gets hired and how the curriculum is adapted to meet the particular needs of the student body) improvements can be expected. By the same token, in the health sector, the benefits of decentralisation do not appear until responsibility and authority are extended beyond the level of local government. In their view one of the most effective forms of health care decentralisation is to shift power to the patient by changing the focus of government funding from inputs (salaries and allowances of health workers in government hospitals and health units) to outputs (reimbursements to providers, whether public or private), thus allowing patients to choose where they will go for

treatment. It has to be emphasised that whereas some of the measures advocated by **Burki et. al.** are viable and could generate positive results for service delivery in local governments in Uganda, it would be dangerous to apply them across-the-board, as some of the issues raised would appear to be irrelevant to the Ugandan situation. Indeed, looking at the Second Schedule of the Local Governments Act (1997), where the functions of the Centre and various local governments are clearly stipulated, one sees that inadequacies in service delivery are not due to lack of authority to deliver results, but rather are a result of a mixed web of deficiencies, primary among which is the lack of resources to carry out decentralised functions. In many respects therefore, the way forward is the continuation of the current structure of devolved governance that consists of a complex set of principal-agent relationships, in which local governments act both as agents of the Centre and as principals (or more precisely as agents of their constituents) in the delivery of local services. With key services such as education, health, roads and agricultural extension legally unbundled in a way that has allowed the Centre and local governments to divide aspects of service delivery according to capacity and comparative advantage, the Centre should continue to find itself playing a key financial and regulatory role – providing financing to maintain at least a minimal level of social services in all Jurisdictions, but leaving detailed management decisions to local governments. Fortunately, between the centre and local governments the role of each tier is fixed, the division of roles among various tiers of government is clear and local governments have sufficient authority to perform the roles assigned to them.

Finally, there is urgent need to shift emphasis from the quantitative aspects and focus on quality issues across the broad spectrum of service delivery. In order to achieve this, it is recommended in this thesis that there be regular studies on how local government political and administrative structures can better support the quality of service delivery especially in the major sectors of water, health, education and agricultural extension.

In the same vein the stakeholder relationships between users and service providers as well as between managers and service providers need to be critically examined and reevaluated with an aim of determining the causes of failure to significantly and effectively impact on service delivery.

A number of issues with regard to the manner in which devolution has impacted on service delivery need increased clarity. While a lot has been documented as having happened during the implementation of devolution in Uganda, there is need to determine issues around the reform process and delivery of services with the purpose of informing future implementation. For instance, does the existence of sector-wide development approaches contribute to more and better service delivery? In what manner – managerial, monitoring or support supervision skills – can the stakeholder groups responsible for ensuring more efficient and effective service delivery, be assisted for that to happen? One way forward could be by commissioning more studies and research to critically examine and analyse most of the issues highlighted above in order to come up with the most appropriate conclusion. Alternatively, the focus could be put on particular aspects of devolution that need to be reviewed so as to establish its linkage with improved service delivery. The latter would appear to be a better option because it shifts the argument from securing proof that devolution has indeed led to improved service delivery, to putting in place mechanisms that will lead to strengthening the linkage.

7.2.3 Community Participation

It is evident from the case study that the biggest setback to devolution in respect of community participation is the lingering notion that only experts from the Centre and the District can make decisions on development matters, and that these experts can be identified by their formal educational qualifications. While a convenient legal framework for promotion of community participation exists, the above mindset has, to a big extent, jeopardized efforts to foster empowerment of local people as a way of enlisting their participation in local development programmes. As a result people see themselves as detached from the devolution process with

voluntary participation at times replaced with coercive villageisation (**Samoff**, 1979:37). Since the problem is not less decentralisation, the remedy lies in mobilization. Popular participation in local development initiatives is important, as it is a means of obtaining information about local conditions, needs and attitudes. Massive mobilization of the population is therefore needed so that local stakeholders are made aware of their enormous role in decentralised governance. Nevertheless, it has to be reiterated that the first step in achieving genuine participation is a process in which the rural people themselves become more aware of their own situation, of the socio-economic reality around them, of their real problem and the causes of these problems, and what measures they themselves can take to begin changing their situation. This process of raising of levels of consciousness, or conscientisation, constitutes a process of self-transformation through which people grow and mature as human beings (**Burkey**, 1993:57). Consequently the poor levels of community participation observed in Hoima should not lead to despair, but rather, stimulate higher levels of synergy among local and national managers with the aim of intensifying community development programmes aimed at mobilizing the rural population to collaborate with government development plans.

In maintaining this argument, this thesis disagrees with **Rahman** (1984:65-67), who argues that participation is a process whose course cannot be determined from outside since it is generated by the continuing praxis of the people by a rhythm of collective action and reflection. He believes that this is what makes the process the people's own as opposed to the people being mobilised, led or directed, by outside forces.

In the debates on the meaning of people's participation, there has been much discussion as to whether participation is a means used to achieve development - or an end in itself such that, by establishing a process of genuine participation, development will occur as a direct result. The proponents of the second view, which this thesis does not support, believe

that development for the benefit of rural people cannot occur unless the people themselves control the process through the praxis of participation.

Oakley and **Marsden** (1984:37) point out that until recently the notion of participation as a means to achieving development has dominated development practice. According to them, the two main vehicles for implementing this notion of participation include community development programmes which are aimed at preparing the rural population to collaborate with government development plans; and the establishment of formal organisations (cooperatives, farmers' associations etc.) which are able to provide the structure through which the rural people can have some contact with, and voice in, development programmes.

On the basis of extensive studies of participatory organisations, **Oakley** and **Marsden** (1984:41) have formulated a set of principles, which can be useful in enhancing community activities so that these are consciously related to the strengthening of the process of participation. These are:

Involvement; The community as a whole must be involved in the basic aspects of project or programme formulation, decision-making and implementation, and the whole operational base of the programme or project must be organised with this principle in mind; data obtained in Hoima showed that district technocrats and managers were the major players regarding the planning function and this had significant negative ramifications for the level and quality of community participation as a whole.

Minimise dependence; every effort must be made to minimise the dependence of the activity, either in material or human terms, on assistance from outside, in a bid to enhance autonomy of the communities in various aspects, yet in a relationship which is still fundamentally top-down, data in Hoima showed that both the community and sub-county were still heavily dependent on the District for material and human resources.

Sustainability; the activity must be able to be sustained in the context of locally-available resources. It must represent an initiative, which can be taken up, by the community itself and further developed. In other words, it must not be beyond the capabilities of the community; a good example here is the maintenance of boreholes. The study established that while it cost an average of Uganda shillings 15 Million (US\$ 7,500) to construct a single borehole, in many cases, it was proving extremely impossible for the community to raise shillings 300,000/= (US\$ 150) for maintenance. As a result, many boreholes fell into a state of disrepair soon after installation, to the disappointment and disillusionment of local and Central planners.

Next step; similarly, the activity must represent technologically, the next step forward for the community, and not be a technological advance which is beyond the natural development of the community.

Effective as opposed to efficient; it may be necessary in the short-term to forego the slavish adherence to the economic principle of efficiency, and undertake economic activities which are an effective use of resources and can bring about some economic advance, although this may not represent the most efficient use of those resources.

While recognising that the above principles cannot be used as a universally applicable model, it is an argument of this thesis that local development activities in Hoima and Uganda, if they are to develop the community's ability to participate as a collective unit over time, cannot be undertaken in a purely mechanical way. Communities should not only consider questions of practicability and viability, but should also reflect upon how developmental activities undertaken can best be served to strengthen self-reliance and participation as a spring board towards better and more effective service delivery.

7.2.3.1 *The Role of Government Officials*

The uneasy and sometimes cold relationship between government officials and local people are encapsulated in the following words of an Indian tribal peasant quoted by **Bhasin** (1997:80):

“Government officials are like dogs. They go after those who throw pieces of bread at them. They bark at and bite those who cannot feed them”

Such opinions are not always apparent to Central and local government officials who, together with parish and community leaders, are given warm and friendly receptions during their brief and ceremonial visits to villages. These reception committees are usually headed by the village elites who have learned to profit from their good relations with government officials. Local people, however, have usually adopted one of two strategies for dealing with such visits. They either melt into the background, try to remain invisible, passive and unseen, or they assume a role of submissive ingratiation in an attempt to curry favour and advantages. They seldom express their true feelings for fear of possible negative consequences. **Jesta Akello Okori** cited in **Burkey** (1993:162) a change agent working with **Can Deg Ming Men's** group in the West Nile region of North Western Uganda agrees, and summarises her experience with local communities in West Nile in the following way:

“Village people often have a bad opinion of government servants. Some of the peasants whom I met said that the officers came as masters to push and order them around. They seldom had the time to sit down to talk to them, to live with them. They came in their awe-inspiring attires and were always afraid of dirtying them in the dirt and dust of village problems. All they were interested in was good reports from their bosses and not good relations with the poorer people. Each visit of an official could mean a loss of at least two chickens, which had to be cooked to entertain the officials and earn the village people a good name”

It is true to state that government development programmes and projects are supervised, and in many cases executed by government officers working at sub-county, county or divisional, district and ministerial levels and as **MacDonald** (1981:19) has indicated, these are part of a system which is hierarchical and downward flowing as a communication process while, on the other hand, peoples' participation implies decision-making at the grassroots level and horizontal and upward flowing communication.

It is therefore incumbent upon central and local government officials to reverse the above trend and work for better and improved relations with local people. The local democratisation process cannot proceed well if people are in basic conflict with their government, and have basically negative attitude towards its representatives. Ultimately, mutual trust and respect must replace fear and suspicion. In that way, the development process will be driven by positive impulses, as there is no people's organisations is going to achieve local government development on its own. A partnership of the people with their government must be forged. Peter Quennwell quoted in **Cohen** (1980:33), an evaluation officer with UNDP has expressed this clearly in the following words:

“ local community development programmes proceeding, regardless of the wider context, are something of a myth. No serious development practitioner would today dispute that the bottom-up approach is the only one that remains viable. All recent evidence points in this direction. But also, it is true that such developments cannot simply, on their own account provide the roads, the transport communications, or the water and fuel essential to their own success or for that matter, the credit, agricultural inputs, marketing, or the basic education and health services. These can for the most part only be made available through government programmes. Grassroot developments may point to the needs but they cannot hope to meet them all on their own”.

It has been argued in this thesis therefore, that what is needed in order to invigorate the community participation process is a genuine partnership between the people, working for their own development in their local set-up, and a government structure which is truly responsive to the needs and priorities of its people as expressed through their own local institutions.

7.2.3.2 Fostering State-Community Synergies to Promote Local Development

The State being central and all-encompassing can facilitate interaction between local governments and the communities to engender development. According to **Das Gupta** et al (2000:35), there are two main aspects to this role: reducing obstacles to collective action in communities and encouraging greater collaboration between communities and local governments. In order to forge ties within communities and facilitate local collective action, the State can initiate programmes that build up the assets of local people and make public services more accessible. These should be programmes that reduce the perception among local people that their survival depends on reduced or limited interactions with their patrons, thus releasing their energies to pursue action for upward mobility and to collaborate with others on a more equal footing.

The combination of a more egalitarian social organisation at the community level and better local government enables the creation of a powerful coalition for rapid development. While the study found such a scenario generally absent in Hoima, it is a well established view that strong links between local governments and communities improve service delivery and reduce the potential for local capture of development programmes.

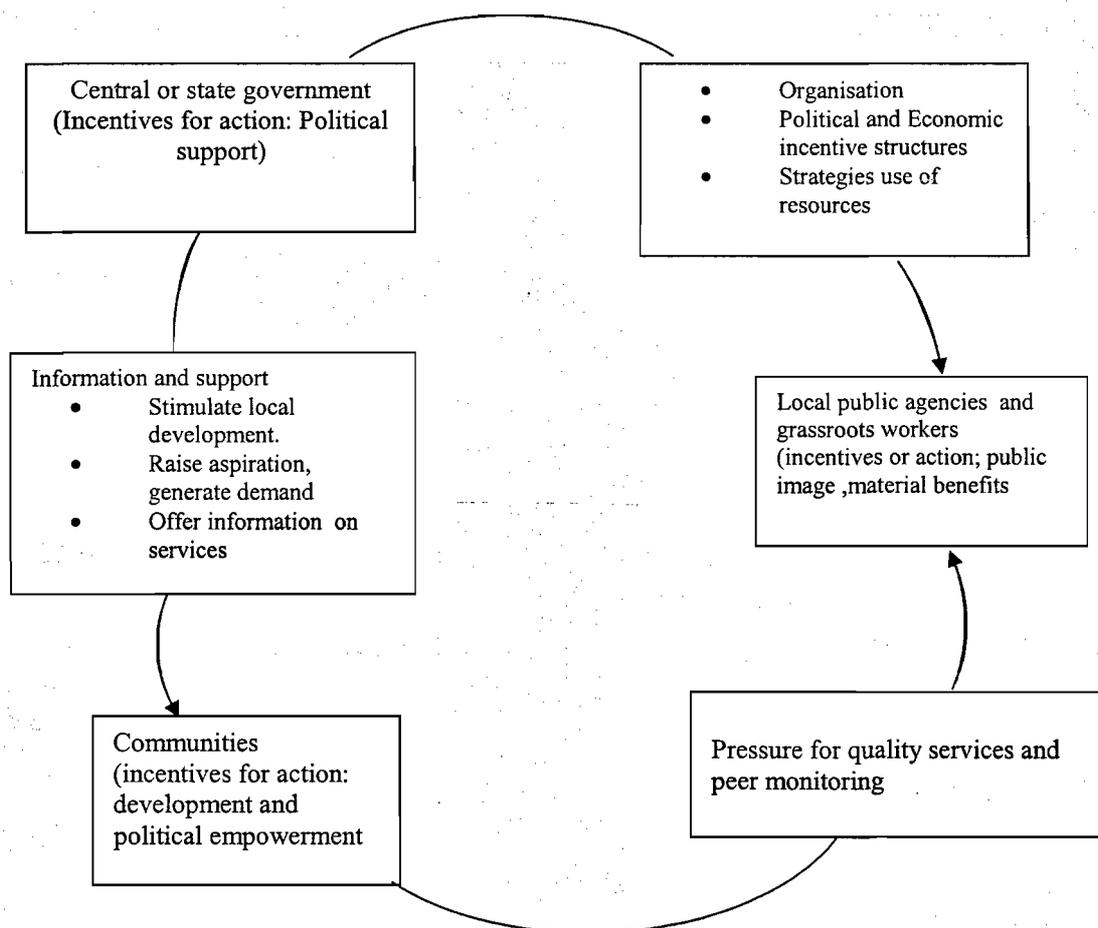
According to **Tandler** (1997:57), **Whang** (1981:25-30) and **Fel** et. al. (1979:88) this arrangement has been used successfully in very different and diverse political and administrative settings: Brazil in the 1980s, the Republic of Korea in the 1960s and 70s, and Taiwan, China, in the 1950s.

Das Gupta (2000:41) suggests several key actions that the State (Central Government) can undertake to foster development synergies between communities and local government as illustrated in **Figure 19**. These include:-

- Generating community demand for better public administration and service delivery through intensive dissemination of information;
- Forming dense networks between the State and communities and making available to communities the information and technical support they need to implement programmes;
- Change local agencies' mode of operation by putting pressure on them from above and below. In Brazil for example, the State used official job recognition to motivate staff;
- Motivating grassroots workers and leaders through positive and negative sanctions including respect from peers. Where the workers are also community members, as in the Republic of Korea, the potential sanctions are especially strong; and
- Adjusting the roles of higher levels of government ,training and motivating their staff to focus on managing overall strategy, and providing technical support regulations, and facilitation.

Figure 19

State-Community Coalitions Can Foster Rapid Development and Better Service Delivery



Source: Das Gupta, et al. 2000 : 42

While this thesis agrees with **Das Gupta et. al.** (2000 :41) that changes are incremental and take time, it also notes that, as success stories accumulate in a given setting, they create a demonstration effect for others. The examples highlighted above suggest that is possible, in a space of decades to reengineer State institutions to quicken the pace of development. They also show that with creative political thinking these changes are possible even in relatively weak institutional setting like those observed in Hoima District Local Government.

7.2.4 Planning and Budgeting

The biggest setback to the planning process in Hoima District has more to do with the nature of the development planning process itself that essentially continues to be top-down, despite the declared objective of bottom-up planning. Most of the business including the allocation of resources is determined at the district with little involvement of sub-counties, parishes and villages. It has to be emphasised that planning requires as a first condition, not a staff of economists trained in development economics, nor an input/output table, but the will to make all development decisions consistent with ultimate goals. The existing situation in Hoima will improve by building the capacity of sub-county technical planning committees through availing them with planning skills they so badly need at the moment. As far as possible, the obscurity and confusion currently endemic in the district/sub-county planning relationships should be replaced by as open and transparent a system as possible. In many ways, a key characteristic of underdevelopment is lack of information; in no area is this more true than with respect to decentralised planning. In order for the district and sub-counties to operate effectively and efficiently, planners at both levels should know from day-to-day the extent of resources they have at hand, what they can expect to get the following month, exactly how their use of these resources will be assessed, and so on. In this kind of situation that **Caiden & Wildavsky** (1980:72) call 'repetitive budgeting' it will be possible for local planning officials to ensure implementation of the set goals. **Kumar & Moodley** (2003:76-78) highlight three modes of budgeting that characterise local authorities budget processes:

- *Incremental budgeting*, which uses the previous year's expenditure as a yardstick to determine the expected expenditure for the following year. The estimated sum on an item in the budget is merely adjusted by a percentage to allow for anticipated increases. The budget for the next financial year is based on the actual income

and expenditure of the previous year and is adjusted for expected price increases.

- *Programme budgeting*, where the activities performed by departments are classified as programmes that describe a department's anticipated achievements. Budgets are then prepared for each programme rather than each department. Programme budgeting differs from incremental budgeting because, contrary to the latter, its emphasis is not only on inputs but also outputs.
- *Zero-based budgeting*, which virtually ignores past council performances on expenditure and involves a critical assessment of only those expenses which are necessary to operate the council efficiently. This method of budgeting requires a lot of time, thought and research.

Many district local governments in Uganda, including Hoima, have been using and continue to use the incremental system of budgeting. As a result their budgets tend to be either bloated or with inbuilt deficits, despite being balanced. Consequently most activities remain unimplemented by the financial year's end and are either frozen or deferred to the following year. Given the precarious nature of sources of local revenue in all of Uganda's local governments, it is extremely unwise for districts to continue to apply incremental budgeting in their budgeting processes. It has therefore been recommended in this thesis that local governments should instead apply the programme budgeting approach when carrying out their budgeting, particularly in view of its emphasis on tying inputs to outputs.

Eventually the application of this output-oriented budgeting will lead to reduced wastage, massive drop in operative costs and turn district budgets into true instruments of local development.

Finally, it is essential as well to build the capacities of both the village and parish development committees by training and sensitisation, to make them

aware of the need to ensure that the plans they initiate are consistent with the needs, problems and priorities of the people they lead. In all this, the bottom line is to ensure that decentralisation does not stop at the district but percolates through to the lowest level of organisation, namely the village.

7.2.5 Resource Mobilisation

This thesis proposes that in light of the current inelasticity of local government tax bases in all district local governments, including Hoima, the way forward is through reform of the existing tax structure and administration by introduction of what the Local Government Finance Commission refers to as the *best practices*. Best practices refer to those methods and ways of mobilising and generating local revenues that effectively use the scarce resources (manpower and money) available in a council to enhance tax administration and promote awareness in a manner that reduces the cost of compliance and maximises the revenues collected.

7.2.5.1 Strategy for Improving Local Taxation Administration and Revenue Generation By District Local Governments.

Precise estimation of the revenue base by district, which also would have been needed for estimation of district revenue potential, is possible in principle, but currently unfeasible in practice due to some crucial information gaps and a notable absence of coordination, interpretation and utilisation of existing informational sources, both within Central Government and between Central Government and local governments.

As **Zake** (1994:103) correctly notes, production of usable revenue base potential information by district requires an attention to existing statistical data and other information about the structuring of local economies, particularly in relation to the distribution of agricultural land that remains scattered between different ministries and between published and unpublished reports. Crucially, this essential tax base potential information is consistently unavailable in, and therefore largely inaccessible to, the

districts themselves . It is imperative that this situation be redressed immediately. The district specific tax base and taxation potentiality data should in turn be utilised to underpin a progression supported and directed by the Central Government toward a significantly reformulated local taxation system. This should be based on the Central Government established taxation policy and on the principle of administrative simplicity in management and operation, and of equitability and fairness in incidence. While this thesis has highlighted considerable inter-district variation in respect of the potential to increase locally raised revenue in the short term (as some districts may already have reached the practical limits of their taxable capacity), it has still been argued that, overall, there is considerable scope for increasing locally-raised revenues, particularly over the medium to long term. This thesis concurs with **Zake** (1994:103) in his observation that such an increase can most appropriately and expeditiously be achieved through a twin element policy strategy.

The first element centres on improvement in the administration and management including, where appropriate and feasible, privatisation and contracting out of the existing major instruments of local taxation and revenue generation. This element principally involves improving the effectiveness and efficiency of two major current sources of local revenue, Graduated Personal Tax and property rates, but also involves addressing the administration and management of all other presently existing and widely used revenue instruments, whether in the form of taxes, charges, licences, permits or fees. The second element involves shifting the incidence of taxation away from the less well-off. This could be achieved by both reducing regressivity through exempting the poorest Ugandans from most of the existing charges, fees and taxes, and securing enhanced progressivity in the local taxation system through an expanded district-wide property rating programme for commercial and larger residential houses.

Research conducted in Hoima District revealed a high incidence of recalcitrance on the part of tax payers to meet their tax obligations.

However, combined with prioritised attention to efficiency and effectiveness in local service delivery across all existing local council services, an appropriately reformulated and refocused local taxation system would go far toward addressing existing “willingness to pay” problems in district local governments.

Criticisms have, for example, been expressed regarding the fact that Graduated Personal Tax is imposed largely on males and that although it is applied to women in paid employment and business activities, it is less strongly pursued in the case of the latter. It is recommended that such pursuit be taken up more seriously, given the significant role of women in business, but taking into account the proposed exemptions at the lower levels of income which are the levels earned in many of the marginal activities, such as flour selling, in which women are engaged. Within the rural sector, the tax should be based on the head of household, whether male or female, the amount paid depending only on estimated income. Additional adult males within the household subject to tax would be liable only on the basis of independent income.

Smoke (1993:907-908) also raises an equally pertinent point in respect of avoidance of competition between districts and instead proposes overt encouragement and promotion of cooperation between districts as a key component in a concerted strategy to raise administration standards and improve management capacities regarding local taxation. Although the deep-seated and wide-spread administrative, financial and management weaknesses of local governments in Uganda clearly require initial capacity building efforts to be Centrally-driven, it is equally vital to establish district involvement in, and increase ownership of relevant capacity-building strategies at the earliest stage possible.

Zake (1994:101) further notes that the sustainability of any coordinated national strategies for enhancing local revenue generation and for improving local taxation administration in Uganda is crucially dependent on

close consultation with, and cooperation between districts. At district level what is required as a priority is the transformation of existing limited and constrained inter-authority cooperation and consultative fora into strong, institutionalised and mutually supporting professional associations. These should be capable of responding positively and creatively to Central Government policy initiatives and increasingly formulating and presenting their own preferred policy strategies. This, in turn, would secure and underpin local authority representation and direct involvement in the process of formulating an increasingly well-integrated system of local and Central taxation policy and administration.

Regarding the problem of poor tax assessment which was highlighted during the study, Hoima and other equally affected local governments have to critically re-examine their tax assessment mechanism, more especially the tax register system with a view to adopting a card system to manage records on graduated tax payers. It has been noted from a **USAID** report (2002: 23), that a card system to manage records on graduated tax payers without having to write new registers every year was introduced in Nakasongola and Luwero Districts in central Uganda in the FY 2001/2002. The system provides quick information about liabilities of tax payers and allows for easy management of records of incoming and departing tax payers. As a result of this system, revenues were recorded to have increased by 20% in these two districts within a time frame of one year. In the shorter-term, Hoima could adopt this system as one way of improving its tax assessment procedure and in so doing enhance its local revenue collection levels.

In the long term however, the real remedy lies in the development of a progressive tax policy that clarifies the sources of revenue, sets tax rates, clarifies on the practices for administering the taxes, and assigns revenue administration functions to specific officials.

7.2.5.2 *The Local Government Finance Commission*

The Local Government Finance Commission (LCFC) is ideally placed to encourage the rapid development of horizontal institutional links and professional networks between and among districts and municipalities, while also ensuring retention and guaranteeing the health of appropriate vertical linkages between local governments and the Central Government. Such institutions and networks both vertical and horizontal are essential for the rapid diffusion of the desired innovations and for effective implementation of all the relevant facets of taxation policy and administration. **Smoke** (1993:906), writing on Kenya's experience of local governments revenue generation, notes that, even when similar resource bases exist for a particular type of council, levels of taxes, fees, and charges vary dramatically and unsystematically across local authorities. He further observes that it is not unusual, for example, for two comparable councils to charge very different fees for the same licences or service, without apparent justification on the basis of population, wealth or costs of service provision. Such a situation of inter and intra-jurisdictional differences in local tax bases and rates, which also exists in Uganda, tends to affect the composition and location of consumption and production activities, as well as create vertical and horizontal inequities across and within local authorities. In Uganda it also reflects some failure of the Local Government Finance Commission in the execution of its mandate which, among others, includes ensuring standardisation of local taxation and advising local governments on appropriate tax levels to be levied. The proposed revenue enhancement strategy of this thesis therefore envisages a comprehensively enhanced role for the Local Government Finance Commission to an extent that is not only in conformity with its mandate, but also enables it to overcome the aforementioned weakness.

It should be noted that the Local Government Finance Commission also provides an institutionalised mechanism for the coordination of revenue generation strategy among districts and entails an appropriate forum for the discussion of associated issues that are neither wholly local nor Central.

The LGFC is therefore strategically placed to mediate between and encourage the development of relationships of cooperation among the different units and levels of local governments in Uganda.

Unfortunately, the Local Government Finance Commission, for administrative and institutional reasons, has to date not embraced this role. Remaining at the headquarters or in principle a Kampala-based organisation, and only depending on periodic meetings as the main mode of dialogue and interface with local governments, has detached the Commission from the practical situation in the countryside and deprived it of the legitimacy to fully represent local government views. There is therefore an acute need for rejuvenation on the part of the Local Government Finance Commission. There is no way it can effectively play the advisory role to Central and local governments on revenue and taxation matters while it remains so remote and isolated from the reality in the countryside. While this may not necessarily entail organisationally expanding the LGFC to districts it certainly calls for re-orientating its instructional structures in a way that would substitute its current top-down approach with a bottom-up orientation.

7.2.5.3 Tax assignment between Central and Local Governments

As already observed in section 3.8 of chapter three one of the most persistent financial problems in Uganda is that the central government has tended to monopolise the progressive sources of revenue such as sales tax while leaving the non-elastic sources like market dues and trading licences to local authorities. In principle, however, though the centre monopolises the progressive sources of revenue, the most important thing is for it and local governments to share the revenue collected equitably. Basing on **Musgrave** (1983:45)'s principle of equity (consistency of revenue means with expenditure needs) and efficiency (minimising resource cost), this thesis proposes a number of broad principles that could be followed in tax assignment between central and local governments. As a basic principle it is vital for all progressive redistributive taxes to be centralised. A progressive personal income tax should for example be imposed by the

central government which is primarily responsible for income redistribution. Given that many parts of Uganda experience a lot of tax evasion because many people are engaged in the informal sector whose activities defy accurate identification and concretisation, the capacity of income tax as a redistributive mechanism is to this extent limited.

In view of this problem, the central government should retain the exclusive authority to determine the tax base but should allow sub-national governments, that is, the local and lower local governments to levy supplementary rates, preferably flat rate charges on the central tax liability. In the same vein taxes on mobile factors of production such as corporate income tax should remain a responsibility of the centre simply because if local governments impose such taxes corporations may shift income to lower taxing jurisdictions through transfer pricing practices and this could prove detrimental to local efforts at tax base expansion. Import and export duties would also remain centralised because they affect macro-economic variables and involve inter-state relations. Taxes on capital wealth, wealth transfers and inheritances should also be a responsibility of the central government to avoid tax competition among sub-national jurisdictions and the resulting mis-allocation of capital.

On the other hand, local authorities should levy taxes on completely immobile real property such as land and buildings. Property tax is a significant source of revenue especially for local urban authorities, but the problem with this tax especially in the countryside is that most peasants do not have land titles, yet for purposes of taxation, it is essential to establish the owner of the property. Because many peasants in Uganda cannot afford to pay for land surveying and title deeds, it is necessary for the country to adopt a simple general boundary survey for purposes of getting land titles in the countryside.

There are cheaper methods of levying property taxes such as land tax. It is recommended in this thesis that the village council or LCI be relied upon in

accomplishing this exercise. At the local village council level the villagers could get together and with the help of experts, establish the percentages of the land they own vis-à-vis the total land of the community. The next step would entail establishing whether the quality or value of the land is good, fair or poor. In other words, land taxes should be assessed according to quality and quantity of the land.

It has to be emphasized that property taxes have many advantages including the fact that immovable properties are clearly located in specific jurisdictions so that there can be no argument about which local authority should get the money. And unlike most taxable objects, land and buildings cannot be hidden from the assessor's view, though ownership might not be easy to identify. The many advantages of property tax however need not overshadow the defects of the tax some of which are encapsulated in the words of **Davey** (1974:151):

Property taxes are the most direct and visible of all taxes – neither passed on nor deducted from earnings – and therefore the most politically sensitive. Assessments tend to be complex and therefore infrequent so that the base declines in real terms; elasticity can only be maintained by forms of indexation that are rarely practiced outside the Americas.

On the basis of the citation above, it is evident that owners of property wield so much power that it is usually difficult to have adequate taxes from this source. At the same time, people who acquire this property usually work very hard in order to earn it. The bottom line in this regard is to avoid overtaxing property owners in order to benefit those who depend on the state to solve problems which could be addressed through individual hard work. In essence it is important to strike a balance between the interests of the entrepreneurs and those of the powerless rural people.

Until it is replaced graduated tax should continue to be imposed by local authorities along side other user charges such as market dues, water and

sewage charges, rents and fees. It should be noted that some of these taxes can also be levied by the centre provided there is no double taxation and the combined tax burden is not too much for the tax payer.

7.2.5.4 Taxing the Farm Sector

Agricultural incomes are effectively exempt from income tax and there are no taxes on land in Uganda. The large proportion of land, almost half, currently farmed as commercial enterprises of 5 acres and above indicates the clear need for income tax, or an income tax equivalent, to be applied to very significant incomes currently derived from large-scale farming. It is recommended in this thesis that for the time being, as a contribution to local government revenues a rural development charge be levied on a per acre basis on farms exceeding one acre in size. During the research conducted in Hoima, service delivery was found to be a crucial independent variable in defining people's willingness to pay taxes. The low voluntary compliance rates that currently characterise both the local and national taxation systems were found by the research to be an additional constraint on effecting increases in local taxation revenues. It is postulated that a simplified, fairly administered local taxation system, operating as a low cost service to the country's taxpayers could be one of the many necessary improvements to the standards of local service delivery that are required if willingness to pay local taxes is to raise significantly.

7.2.5.5 Privatisation and Contracting Out of Revenue Collection

The pattern of high administrative costs and low returns (indicative of low taxation efficiency) combined with low levels of voluntary compliance (indicative of low taxation effectiveness), illustrated above for Graduated Personal Tax in particular, applies widely to the other major taxation instruments currently utilised by districts (markets) and by municipalities (markets and property rates) as well as to other, more minor, sometimes idiosyncratic, instruments chosen to raise local revenues. Conversely where, as in the case of markets, privatisation and contracting out had been widely implemented among both districts and municipalities in

Uganda, taxation efficiency has clearly increased significantly with administrative, particularly staff, costs markedly reduced and revenue from privatised markets markedly up.

In an environment where revenue collection is privatised or contracted out, issues of effectiveness (the extent to which compliance is voluntary or coerced) also immediately become less problematic for local taxation administration, although it would be unwise to suggest that local governments could or should evade or avoid these monitoring and regulatory regimes. **Zake** (1994:102) argues that a successful revenue collection privatisation process must be preceded by establishment of a well-managed competitive bidding system. Nevertheless, the wider relevance of and further potential for taxation-related privatisations in Uganda is clear. In addition in relation to Graduated Personal Tax, this thesis has argued that most, if not all, the stages of the existing system could in principle be privatised with some significant advantages beyond the obvious ones of administrative cost reduction, perhaps most notably in terms of freeing up sub-county and parish chiefs to perform their other important tasks, notably those relating to mobilisation of the population for agricultural production, health, sanitation and community development, more effectively.

7.2.6 The Civil Society

In section 2.11 of chapter two, it was observed that decentralisation can only serve as a tool of empowerment if institutions at the lower levels as well as the people at the grassroots are invested both with the responsibilities and the authority to decide and commit available resources in discharging those responsibilities. It was however noted from analysed data that local people in Hoima are involved in societal affairs to a very limited degree primarily due to lack of information, but also on account of a general wave of resignation, defeatism and malaise that characterise the social realm. This scenario where the civic population is confined to the periphery as local and district leaders ride roughshod could be ameliorated

through a gradual process of empowerment that is underpinned by an intensive sensitisation and capacity-building programme that seeks to awaken the population to their right to monitor and sanction government. This argument is also vindicated by authors such as **Friedmann** (1992:77), **Bebbington et. al.** (1993:12), and **Lehmann** (1990:84), all of whom concur that an informed, mobilised Civil Society operating within the framework of an invigorated NGO set-up would represent a positive attempt on the part of the grassroots to assert greater control over the environments in which they live. Once the population is sensitised to its roles and gets acquainted with the process of governance through the relevant information (**Landell-Mills**, 1992:443), then there will be increased calls for effective accountability and transparency in the conduct of public affairs. The emergence of NGOs and CBOs will be a natural outcome of a process in which an empowered civil society as a political community is able to organise itself and coordinate its activities independently of the State.

7.2.6.1 The Role of Civil Society in Enforcing Transparency and Accountability in the Provision of Public Services

At a World Bank-sponsored workshop on the theme "Assessing public sector performance – a role for civil society", held in Kampala, Uganda on 16 October 2000, the importance of mobilizing public service users themselves as monitors of public service delivery was emphasized. It is noted in the **World Bank** (2001:20) report arising out of the workshop that a number of NGOs and parliamentarians affirmed the role of civil society, despite its weaknesses, in assessing public sector performance and in enforcing accountability. In order to achieve this objective, the success that has been had with the practice of public notices could be exploited and expanded to its fullest. It could be replicated in a broad range of sectoral and local government planning and management operations. The posting of public notices could be applied not just for resource allocations, but also for other aspects of local government operations such as appointments and promotions, work planning and other decision-making criteria.

In order to enhance the practice, this thesis recommends that all local governments, both district and sub-county, be required to designate appropriate spaces within their premises for posting of notices. A practice of placing notices in newspapers and through radio broadcasts currently practiced only by the Ministries of Finance and Local Government, would give additional thrust if adopted by district local governments as well. And to enforce compliance, failure to facilitate appropriate public notices could be made a sanctionable managerial responsibility, perhaps with NGOs also involved in monitoring compliance.

Instant mini-surveys or client report cards – where service users upon exit from a facility rate different aspects of facility service provision – should be considered as a mechanism for direct end user feedback on service facility quality both at the Centre and in local governments²⁸. Report cards can be used to monitor aspects of client satisfaction on a regular basis, can be tailored to individual service facilities, and can be fed directly into frontline operational decision-making (**World Bank**, 2001:21). In light of the above, report cards could be useful in monitoring local performance relative to national standards established through commitments made in client charters and memoranda of understanding between line ministries and district local governments.

This thesis also recommends that the Community-Based Management Information System (CBMIS) initiative, which aims to help communities articulate their developmental needs and priorities, as well as local government efforts to mobilize communities in the local government planning and management process, should be harnessed in strengthening transparency and participation of all in local development initiatives, and in order to maintain the credibility that initial transparency initiatives have created, it is vital that both the Centre and local governments are seen to

²⁸ The practice of suggestion boxes is widespread, but responses are reportedly not systematically analysed or acted upon. Suggestion boxes are, in any case, highly vulnerable to biased sampling errors.

act upon cases of malpractice that surface through civil society monitoring of public services.

7.2.7 Local Democracy

Direct citizen participation in local decision-making is imperative for democratic local government, and yet (as the Hoima case demonstrates) the fact that village and other local level meetings are held irregularly or not at all negates this imperative. If people are going to deliberate and find solutions to their common problems, then they need to meet quite often. Unfortunately, because of the lacuna in the law, which determines the frequency of meetings for local government councils without doing the same for administrative unit councils, convening of village and parish council meetings has largely been left to the discretion of chairpersons, most of whom, as the study revealed, are not very keen on convening them. To ameliorate the situation, it is vital for the decentralisation law to be amended to make it mandatory for administrative unit councils to convene meetings at least once every month. That is the only way those with political power – the chairpersons – will be prevented from maintaining the prevailing pattern. While this will take care of the quantitative aspect in terms of the need to routinely convene meetings to enable community members to interface and deliberate on developmental matters, there is also the qualitative aspect of local democracy that must manifest itself through the growth of participation (physical involvement in local decision-making) and the strengthening of associational life, both of which are crucial in empowering ordinary people, giving them the voice to demand for more accountable government and ultimately building a stronger Civil Society.

Dreze & Sen (1995:85) observe that strong Civil Society organisations can promote the political empowerment of local people, pressuring the State to better serve their interests and increasing the effectiveness of local development programmes. They argue that what is needed is an enabling institutional environment for civil society to develop and thicken. They

contend that there are two main ways to strengthen the institutional environments of the civil society to make it more effective in enhancing local democracy. First, democratic processes must permit all major levels of decision-making. Second, citizens must be given systematic access to information so that they can hold their civil servants and politicians accountable. If information on budget and use of funds from Central Government to local level is made available, people can hold their leaders accountable for results.

This dissemination of information needs to be legally mandated so that it does not stop with a change of government. Progress in information technology and increasing exposure to global events should help create a new environment of public awareness that will help reinforce local democratic politics.

Respect for the rule of law, an efficient public administration, and a high quality political system, all facilitate the emergence of local democratic institutions that include and cater for the local people. However, the impact of these factors on local development depends on how effectively they are translated into empowerment at the community level because even in States with extensive political and civil liberties and with governments that are neither captured by elites nor corrupt, local people are often voiceless, and their interests figure little in public policy.

7.3 Recommendations for Further Research

A study as limited in scope as this one could not have exhaustively analysed all paradigms and concepts pertinent to devolution and empowerment and how the two impinge on effective local government. In view of the need to limit the analytical focus of the study, there are important dimensions relevant to the process of devolution and empowerment that were not considered. These include the aspect of accountability for public resources and the role of public accountability institutions, such as the office of the Auditor General, the Inspector General

of Government (IGG), the Local Government Public Accounts Committee of Parliament and the District Local Government Public Accounts Committees (LGPAC) in ensuring efficient and effective utilisation of resources in local governments. This need arises given the fact that the almost euphoric optimism that characterised much of the writing about Ugandan decentralisation a decade ago has to some extent given way to detailed criticism and unrelieved pessimism on account of reported rampant corruption and sleaze in districts, so much so that it is not uncommon to hear arguments attributing the success of the policy more to the creation of “self-enrichment” opportunities for the local leaders than the real intended objective of empowering the people. If devolution is to lead to more accountable government, then watchdog institutions and agencies such as those enumerated above have to play a more proactive role in ensuring that local government operations are characterised by the principle of ‘value for money’. This is therefore a dimension which needs to be investigated as one way of enriching the findings of this study. The impact of local and national accountability institutions on the strengthening of devolution through better service delivery and optimum utilisation of resources requires assessment, and it is such assessment that will help establish whether or not one of the key decentralisation objectives – the improvement of the capacity of local councils to plan, finance and manage the delivery of services to their constituents – is being achieved.

7.4 Strengthening Local Government Through Institutional Support and Performance Monitoring

It is apparent, both from analysed data on the Hoima case study and the general literature available on Ugandan decentralisation, that the limited capacities of local government have indeed restricted the potential for democratic decentralisation. This points to one fact that effective local government in Uganda will require a huge dose of institutional support through strengthening of local authorities’ financial resource bases, staff training, especially of sub-county bureaucrats, and performance monitoring in order to identify gaps left by the law and precedent and fill them in time.

Furthermore effective decentralised planning at local level will require Central Government sensitivity to the problems, needs, aspirations and priorities of the grassroots (Reddy, 1999:89). Decentralisation alone, whether it takes the form of allocating more expenditure responsibility, more fiscal resources, or both, to local governments must be backed up in these ways if the results are to be politically, socially, and economically beneficial.

A United Nations Development Programme workshop on the Decentralisation Process held in Berne, Switzerland between 20 and 23 April 1993 identified five key ways through which local government as an institution could be strengthened and palatable conditions essential for its sustainability cultivated. This thesis concurs with the UNDP position, and is of the view that application of some of these recommendations which are highlighted below would go a long way in improving the outcome of devolution.

- First, it is important to build a strong national identity which all people feel they want to belong to, so as to instil confidence that the nation will endure whatever the power balance. Mutual respect between the local and Centre should be established to create a situation where the local feels the Centre speaks for it, and where the national identity is built from its parts. Achieving this will entail managing the dynamics of power-sharing in a way that will help build a stronger rather than a more divisive Central-local relationship. This could be achieved through:
 - designing boundaries which fractionise rather than polarize potential conflict areas;
 - developing systems, such as national planning and policy making systems, which transfer "influence" type of power (contributing to Central decisions) rather than "control" type of power (devolving Central decisions); and

- using the education system to build civic awareness and positive societal values for cooperation and tolerance. Centrist and sometimes intransigent tendencies that still bedevil Central Government officials, and in the process curtail local government development, could be relatively eased through adoption of the above mentioned measures
- Second, political commitment needs to be supported by a local basis of human and economic resources to sustain a diffusion of power. Adequate capacity and sufficient financial resources are essential elements to either have in place or to build up in any local government development effort. In the case of Uganda this is a short-fall that has consistently plagued the devolution process right from its inception.
- Third, clarity is essential in establishing devolution goals, and in building up a sense of direction and purpose. Clarity of the process-a plan to reach the goals, and who is responsible for what-is also important, keeping sight of the long-term so as not to be distracted by short-term interests. Consequently, an objective and critical look at the country should be a starting point so as to define the real need for and commitment to devolution.
- Fourth, devolution arrangements should focus on obtaining agreed boundaries, based on sound, transparent criteria which set out the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government and the various parties concerned. Equally crucial in terms of the need to be defined are the areas of interaction between the levels, including the building of formal linkages and informal networks which ensure dialogue between the layers and interest groups, and of mechanisms for conflict management and conflict resolution.

- Finally, success for local government will depend on having qualified and highly capable leaders and managers to implement the devolution policy. These individuals must demonstrate integrity, caution, consistency and transparency. There is therefore need to have a minimum qualification threshold below which people should not be eligible for election to district and sub-county councils. The current arrangement where no qualifications are required for one to be eligible for election to district and sub-county has led to councils being stuffed with illiterate officials who have at times failed to cope with the demanding tasks of policy formulation at those levels.

7.5 Summary

This chapter has mainly dwelt on recommendations and conclusions which it has based first on the research findings, and second on the need for further research. It concludes with a note of emphasis that underscores the importance of institutional support and monitoring as a way of strengthening local government structures throughout the country.

In general terms this study has sought to expand the understanding of devolution as a concept and its relationship with the empowerment process. It has built on past thinking on the theme and substantially broadened and deepened what was judged to be necessary to meet the challenge of enhancing the scope and extent of empowerment.

The study accepts the now established view of top-down planning as encompassing not only a low level of local democracy but also low level of community participation, leading to marginalisation of the local people, a definition the study expands to include powerlessness, voicelessness, vulnerability and fear.

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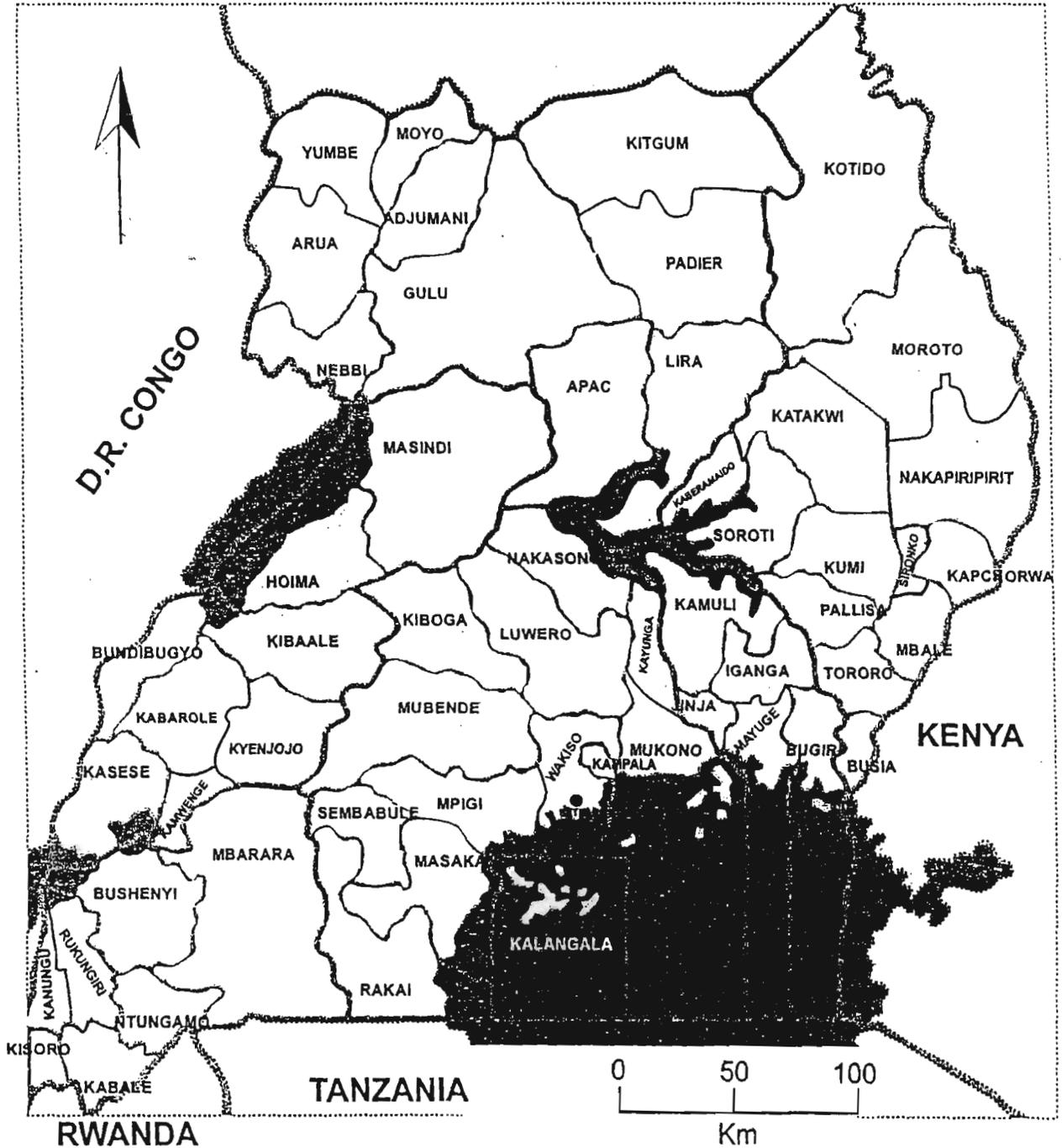
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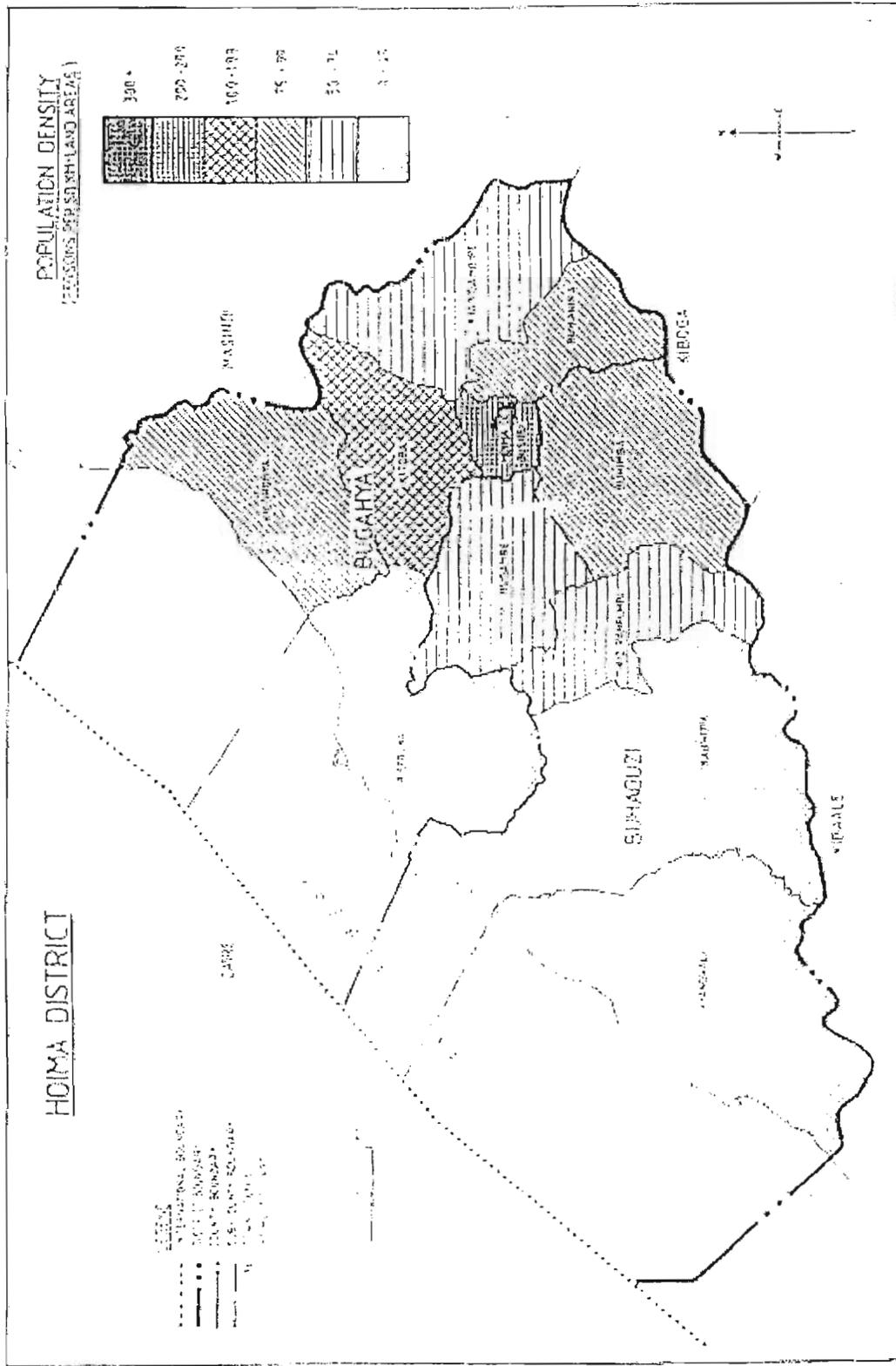
ANNEXTURES

Annexure A
Map of Uganda Showing 56 District Local Governments



Annexure B
Map of Hoima District Showing Sub-county and
Urban Local Governments

Map 2



Annexure C

Second Schedule Functions and Services of government and Local Governments

PART 1

Functions and services for which Government is responsible.

1. Arms, ammunition and explosives.
2. Defence, security, maintenance of law and order.
3. Banks, banking, promissory notes, currency and exchange control.
4. Subject to the Constitution, taxation and taxation policy.
5. Citizenship, immigration, emigration, refugees, deportation, extradition, passport and national identity cards.
6. Copyrights, patents and trademarks and all forms of intellectual property, incorporation and regulation of business organisations.
7. Land, mines, mineral and water resources and the environment.
8. National parks, as may be prescribed by Parliament.
9. Public holidays.
10. National monuments, antiquities, archives and public records as Parliament may determine.
11. Foreign relations and external trade.
12. The regulation of trade and commerce.
13. Making national plans for the provision of services and co-ordinating plans made by Local Governments.
14. National elections.
15. Energy policy.

2. Medical and health services including –

- (a) hospitals, other than hospitals providing referral and medical training;
- (b) health centres, dispensaries, sub-dispensaries and first-aid posts;
- (c) maternity and child welfare services;

the control of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis;

- (d) control of the spread of disease in the District;
- (e) rural ambulance services;
- (f) primary health care services;
- (g) vector control;
- (h) environment sanitation;
- (i) health education;

3. Water services:

The provision and maintenance of water supplies in liaison with the Ministry responsible for Natural Resources, where applicable.

4. Road services:

The construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of roads not under the responsibility of Government.

5. All decentralized services and activities which include but are not limited

to –

- (i) Crop, animal and fisheries husbandry extension services;
- (ii) Entomological services and vermin control;
- (iii) Human resources management and development;

- (iv) Recurrent and development budget;
- (v) District statistical services;
- (vi) District project identification;
- (vii) District planning;
- (viii) Local government development planning;
- (ix) Land administration;
- (x) Land surveying;
- (xi) Physical planning;
- (xii) Forests and wetlands;
- (xiii) Licensing of produce buying;
- (xiv) Trade licenses;
- (xv) Trade development services;
- (xvi) Commercial inspectorate;
- (xvii) Co-operative development;
- (xviii) Industrial relations
- (xix) Social rehabilitation;
- (xx) Labour matters;
- (xxi) Probation and welfare;
- (xxii) Street children and orphans;
- (xxiii) Women in development;
- (xxiv) Community development;
- (xxv) Youth affairs;
- (xxvi) Cultural affairs;
- (xxvii) District information services.

6. Regulate, control, manage, administer, promote and license any of the things or services which the Council is empowered or required to do, and established, maintain, carry on, control, manage or administer and prescribe the forms in connection therewith to fix fees or charges to be levied in that respect.
7. Aid and support the establishment and maintenance of schools, hospitals, libraries, art galleries, museums, tourist centres, homes for the aged, destitute or infirm or for the orphans, and to provide bursaries to assist in the education of children of persons, welfare, youth, persons with disabilities, women and sports organisations.
8. Preserve public decency, and to prevent offences against public order in public places and to prevent damage to property of the Central Government and the Council.
9. Undertake private works and services and to charge, recover the costs and contract out public services to the private sector.
10. Sell all by-products resulting from carrying on by, or on behalf of the Council, of any works or services.
11. Promote publicity for the Council and the District as a whole.
12. Promote schemes of health, education and road safety sensitisation.
13. provide and manage –
 - (a) Sporting and recreational facilities and programmes of informal education for both adults and young people including the running or provision of community centres.

(b) The development of social work among adults;

(c) Remedial social welfare programmes aimed at the alleviation of social distress;

(d) The welfare of children and the elderly; and

(e) Public vehicular parking.

14. The registration of marriages, births and deaths for transmission to the Registrar General.

15. Assist Government to preserve the environment through protection of forests, wetlands, lakeshores, streams and prevention of environmental degradation.

16. Any other service or function, which is not specified in the Second Schedule of this Act.

17. Upon delegation by Government, identification and preservation of sites and objects or buildings of historical and architectural value.

PART 3

Functions and Services for which Urban councils are responsible include but not limited to –

1 Establish, acquire, erect, maintain, promote, assist or control with the participation of the citizens –

(a) Lighting of streets and public places;

(b) Fire brigade services;

- (c) Ambulance services;
- (d) Clinics, dispensaries, health and inoculation centres;
- (e) Cemeteries, crematoria and mortuaries and auxiliary services, and provide for the burial of bodies of destitute persons and of unclaimed bodies;
- (f) Omnibus stations and related office accommodation, cafes, restaurants, refreshment rooms and other buildings;
- (g) Offices, stores, workshops, depots and other building for the purposes of the Council;
- (h) Public halls, libraries, art galleries and museums;
- (i) Slaughter houses, cold storage facilities and premises for the inspection or processing of milk, meat or hides and skins;
- (j) markets and piers, jetties and landing places;
- (k) Botanical and zoological gardens;
- (l) Public baths and swimming pools;
- (m) Laundries and other places for the washing of clothes;
- (n) Canteens, social centres, clubs and hospitals, including such facilities for employees and staff;
- (o) Public lavatories and urinals;
- (p) Pounds for stray animals and clinics for the treatment of sick animals;
- (q) Camping and grazing grounds;
- (r) Lairages;
- (s) Dipping tanks;
- (t) Disinfecting stations;

- (u) Public weighing machines;
 - (v) Public monuments;
 - (w) Sanitary services for the removal and disposal of night soil; rubbish, carcasses of dead animals and all kinds of refuse and effluent;
 - (x) Water supplies-outside the jurisdiction of National Water & Sewerage Corporation;
 - (y) Education services which cover primary and secondary schools, special education, trade and technical schools;
 - (z) Maintenance of roads.
- 2 Establish, maintain or control public parks, gardens and recreation grounds on any land vested in the Council and in connection with or for the purposes of that public park, garden or recreation ground to –
- (a). Establish, erect, maintain and control aquariums, aviaries, piers, pavilions, cafes restaurants, refreshment rooms and other buildings or erections that the Council may deem necessary;
 - (b). Reserve any portion of the public park, garden, or recreation ground for any particular game or recreation or any other specific purposes, exclude the public from those portions and provide for their renting and hiring to the public, clubs or other organisations; and
 - (c). Provide or permit any other person to provide any apparatus, equipment or other amenity.
- 3 Prohibit, restrict, regulate or license –

- (a) The sale or hawking of wares or the erection of stalls on any street, or the use of any part of the street or public place for the purpose of carrying on any trade, business or profession;
- (b) The depositing on any street, public place or unoccupied land any refuse, rubbish, derelict vehicles, or any other material or thing whatsoever, and to provide for the removal and disposal thereof;
- (c) Street decorations and the erection of shelters, temporary buildings, platforms, seats, and other structures at any entertainment, procession, exhibition, ceremony or display, whether in a public place or not;
- (d) The placing of banners, wires, ropes or any other impediments over or across any street or public place;
- (e) The collection of money or goods in any public place for any charitable or other purposes;
- (f) The public exhibition or any monstrosity, freak of nature, or abnormal person or animal;
- (g) Singing, dancing, drumming, the playing of musical instruments, the production of musical or the making of any noise likely to disturb any person, or any performance for profit in any public place;
- (h) The storage or stacking of firewood or other fuel;
- (i) The washing or drying of clothes other than on private premises;
- (j) The quarrying of stone, lime, clay, murrum or other material;

(k) The keeping of dogs, animals and poultry, and provide for the seizure and destruction of ownerless, unlicensed, diseased or dangerous dogs, and the seizure and disposal of stray animals and poultry;

(l) Billiard saloons, dance halls and other places of public resort.

(m) Lodging houses;

(n) the burning of rubbish and grassland;

(o) prostitution and brothels;

(p) cinema and video halls;

4 Lay out and adorn any street, square or open space vested in the Council by the erection of statues, fountains or other structures or in any other manner.

5 Decorate streets and public buildings, erect shelters, temporary

6 buildings, platforms, seats and other structures on public places.

7 Clear, level and maintain public and unoccupied land taken on lease from a land board and to plant, trim, protect and remove, flowers, trees and shrubs in or from any public place.

8 Identify streets and other public places by assigning names thereto and to cause those names to be exhibited on posts or pillars or to be painted or otherwise exhibited on any building or other erection fronting.

- 9 Number, or otherwise identify any buildings fronting on any street or other public place, and cause such identification to be exhibited on the buildings or require the owner on a building.
- 10 Require the owner or occupier of any premises to remove or lower any fence or to remove, lower or trim any tree, hedge, or shrub overhanging any street or interfering with the passage of traffic or pedestrians, or any wires or other works or to require any owner or occupier to perform the removal lowering or trimming which may be necessary for the maintenance of public safety or amenity or build and maintain the pavement boarding his or her property to the specifications of the Urban Council.
- 11 Require the fencing or enclosing of plots and restrict the use of barbed wire, broken glass or any similar substance on fences and walls.
- 12 Preserve public decency. And to prevent offences against public order in streets and public places, and to prevent damage to or defacement of property of the public or of the Council.
- 13 Prevent and extinguish fires, to remove buildings in order to prevent the spread of any fire and to compensate the owner of any building removed.
- 14 Establish, maintain, hire, support or control bands and orchestras and generally to provide for musical entertainment at public paces and functions.
- 15 Undertake private works and services and to charge and recover costs thereon and contract out public services to the private sector.
- 16 At the request of the owner of the land situate within its area of jurisdiction construct, in such manner as the Council may think fit, by its

servants or by contract, a footway or pavement along any street contiguous with such land or vehicular crossings over any footway or pavement and to recover the whole or any part of the cost of such construction including the cost of supervision, plant, machinery and tools from such owner in the manner as it may think fit.

17 Sell all by-products resulting from the carrying on, by or on behalf of the Council of any works or services.

18 Promote publicity for the Council.

19 Promote schemes of housing, health education and road safety sensitisation.

20 Make provision for the return of destitute persons to their homes.

21 Arrange for the insurance of all assets of the Council against financial risks of any kind to which the Council may be subjected.

22 Lay out land and provide and maintain necessary public services.

23 Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, sell or lease any plots of land or any buildings thereon; and

24 Aid and support, whether by the grant of money or otherwise, the establishment and maintenance of school, hospitals, libraries, art galleries, museums, musical or scientific institutions, homes for the aged, destitute or persons with disabilities, or for the orphans, and to provide bursaries to assist in the education of the children of persons residing in the area of jurisdiction to make donations to charitable and philanthropic, welfare and youth organisations and to make presentations to other local authorities or public bodies.

25 Provide –

- (a) Gowns, chains and badges of office for Councillors and officers of the Council;
- (b) Badges, medallions or scrolls for presentation to persons who have given meritorious service to the Urban Councils; and
- (c) Floral tributes in memory of Councillors, officers of the Council and persons of note

26 Obtain and protect armorial bearings

27 Regulate, control, manage, administer, promote or license any of the things or services, which the Council is required or empowered to do and establish, maintain, carry on. Control, manage or administer, and prescribe the forms in connection therewith; and to fix fees or charges to be made in respect thereof.

28 With the consent of a neighbouring Local Government, render advice and or assist to control development and to administer town and country

29 Planning schemes in any area within an agreed distance from the boundaries of its jurisdiction.

30 Provide, control and manage the following services –

- (a) Sporting and recreational facilities and programmes of informal education for both adults and young people including the provision and running of community centres;
- (b) The development of social work among adults;
- (c) Remedial social welfare programmes aimed at the alleviation of social distress;
- (d) The welfare of children;
- (e) Public vehicle parking;

31 Initiate and contract twinning arrangements with International Local Governments or Local Authorities in consultation with the Minister.

32 Any other function or service incidental to the above.

33 Any other function not reserved for Government.

PART 4

Functions and Services to be devolved by a District Council to Lower Local Government Councils.

1 Provision of nursery and primary education.

2 The provision of agricultural auxiliary field services.

3 The provision and control of soil erosion and protection of local wetlands.

4 The control of vermin in consultation with the Ministry responsible for Tourism and Wildlife and any other relevant Ministry.

5 The taking of measures for the prohibition, restriction, prevention, regulation or abatement of grass, forest or bush fires including the requisition, of able-bodied male persons to extinguish such fires and to cut fire-breaks and general local environment protection.

6 The control of local hunting and fishing

7 The provision of –

(a). Hygiene services and health units other than health centres;

(b). Adult education; and

(c). Community based health care services.

8 The provision and management of ferries.

- 9 The provision of measures to prevent and contain food shortages, including relief work, the provision of seed and the storage of foodstuffs.
- 10 Markets establishment, management and collection of revenue.
- 11 The establishment, control and management of recreation grounds, open spaces and parks.
- 12 The making, altering, diversion and maintenance of works, paths, culverts, bridges, road drains and water courses, and the regulations of the making of pits and other excavations.
- 13 Measures requiring owners and occupiers of land of premises to close and keep free from vegetation any road adjoining their land or premises.
- 14 The enforcement of –
- (a). Standards of building and standards of maintenance of buildings including dwelling-houses, latrines, kitchens and stables for animals.
 - (b). Proper methods for the disposal of refuse, and the making, improving, operation and maintenance of wells, dams and other water supplies.
- 15 The control of trading centres, markets and landing sites; and the carrying on the local industries and the organization and encouragement of local trade.
- 16 The regulation of traditional liquor as defined in the Liquor Act.
- 17 The organization of social, cultural, and sporting activities and social, cultural and sporting clubs.

- 18 The publication of newspapers and periodicals and the provisions of information services.
- 19 The provision of community development schemes as may be approved by the District Council and the regulation of any labour reasonably required as part of normal communal or civic obligations.
- 20 The maintenance of community roads (*Bulungi Bwansi* roads).
- 21 Protection and maintenance of local water resources.
- 22 Maintenance of community infrastructure
- 23 Any other functions which the District Council deem fit to devolve or as agreed upon between the District Council and the Lower Council.

PART 5

(A) Functions and Services to remain at City or Municipal Council (Not to be devolved to the Divisions).

1. Staff establishment structure and setting of remuneration levels.
2. Setting of service delivery standards.
3. Recruitment and payment of salaries of established staff.
4. Property valuation and valuation lists. (Valuation Court).
5. Setting of levels of trade licences and fees.
6. Monitor the general administration and provision of services in Divisions.
7. Ordinances legislation.
8. Determination of taxation levels and supply of receipting media.
9. Procurement of drugs.
10. Central laboratory services.

11. Mortuary and cemeteries.
12. Local examinations (schools).
13. Co-curricular activities.
14. Procurement and Management of refuse tipping sites.
15. Procurement and maintenance of heavy plant and equipment.
16. Loan repayment (external).
17. Construction and maintenance of major drains.
18. Installation of traffic signals.
19. Road Construction and maintenance (tarmac).
20. National and District functions.
21. Legal services (interpretation and prosecution).
22. Architectural and Design standards.
23. Approval of building plans.
24. Master structure plan.
25. Cadestral survey and mapping.
26. Approval of schemes.
27. City Councillors' expenses.
28. Street lighting energy charges.
29. Audit.
30. Tender Board expenses.
31. District Service Commission expenses.
32. Board policy and objectives guidelines.
33. Advertising standards.
34. Mailo land administration
35. Staff training.

(B) Functions and Services to be devolved by a City or Municipal Council to Divisions.

1. Payment of salaries for support staff.
2. Determination levels of staff numbers (support staff).
3. Division Council expenses.
4. Poverty eradication.
5. Administration of licences.
6. Assessment of graduated tax.
7. Revenue collection.
8. Health education and visiting.
9. Vector and vermin control.
10. Secondary drains.
11. Curative services (clinics).
12. Immunisation.
13. Food and drug inspection.
14. AIDS education.
15. Administration of markets.
16. Control of development – enforcement of building rules.
17. Primary and nursery education.
18. Monitoring the utilisation of grants to schools.
19. Grass cutting and maintenance of parks.
20. Road sweeping.
21. Repair of murrum and earth roads.
22. Environmental care and protection.

23. Neighbourhood structure plans.
24. Local land management.
25. Resolving local land issues.
26. Law enforcement.
27. Welfare and community services.
28. Agriculture and veterinary extension services.
29. Youth, persons with disabilities, women and sports.
30. Co-operative societies and groups.
31. Spring protection and provision of drinking water.
32. Any other service imposed by Parliament or agreed upon between the Division and City or Municipal Council as the case may be.

Annexure D

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS (PERSONAL INTERVIEW) WITH LOCAL COUNCIL ONE EXECUTIVES

INTRODUCTION

I have come from Hoima District Local Government Headquarters. For quite some years I have worked for Hoima District as head of the District Administration. Now I am on leave and currently involved in a study whose overall objective is to evaluate/assess the impact of the decentralisation policy in Uganda and more especially on the levels of service delivery, good governance and general community participation in local development programmes, here in Hoima. I could not afford to exclude you from a list of people to be interviewed during the course of this study due to an important leadership role you have been playing in the day-to-day management of affairs of your village council. Your frank and candid contribution will go along way in helping us attain the objectives of the study.

Let me assure that whatever you share with me will be kept confidential for the benefit of the study.

1. How old are you?
2. When were you first elected as a Chairperson/member of your village executive committee?
3. Besides being the Chairperson/member of your village executive committee do you have any other occupation?

4. As a Chairperson/member of your village executive committee are you paid any salary? If yes, how much? If no how does this affect your effectiveness as a Chairperson/member of the village executive committee?
5. As a Chairperson/member of the village executive committee, can you explain to me the main functions performed by your committee?
6. Are there any services rendered to the community by your committee?
7. How are such services/implemented?
8. Where do you get the resources from?
9. Does the community normally make a contribution to the services rendered?
10. In what form does the community contribute
11. Is the community contribution effected/attained willingly or through coercion?
12. Briefly outline other services rendered in your village by state organs other than your council.
13. Briefly outline those services rendered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs).
14. Does your village have access to a protected water sources?
15. If yes what type? and how many?
 - (i) Borehole
 - (ii) Protected spring/well

- (iii) Piped water
 - (iv) Rain harvesting tank
 - (v) Gravity flow-scheme
16. How often do you receive in this village/community public/NGO officials to advise on;
- (i) Protection of water sources
 - (ii) Construction of latrines
 - (iii) Maintenance of access roads/community roads.
17. Do you have households in your village that use the bush/field/lake/etc. because they don't have toilets?
18. How has the availability of clean water for household consumption changed in your village over the past 8 years?
19. How has the number of useable latrine/toilet facilities changed in your village over the past 8 years?
20. How has the number and quality of community/access roads in your village changed over the past 8 years?
21. As executive committee for your local council one, do you collect any revenue?
22. If yes, what kind of revenue is collected?
23. According to the decentralisation law, of the 100% total revenue net that remain in the sub-county after remitting the district share, 5% is

for the county, 65% is for the sub county, 5% for the parish and 25% comes to your village councils.

Does your council receive this money?

24. How often does it come?
25. How do you spend it?
26. Do you convene any village council general meetings?
27. If yes, how often?
28. How is the attendance of women on such meetings?
29. What normally dominates the agenda of such meetings
 - Land wrangles
 - Defilement cases
 - Village planning
 - Expenditure of 25% revenue from sub county
 - Others
30. Generally, how have the conditions of living changed in your village over the past 5 years?

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation and please rest assured that whatever information you have provided will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Annexure E

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS (PERSONAL INTERVIEWS) FOR SUB COUNTY CHIEFS

I am currently involved in a study on the impact of the decentralisation policy in Uganda particularly on the levels and quality of service delivery, good governance and community participation in development matters. As the head of all civic servants in your sub county you are at the centre stage in the entire process of over seeing general implementation of government programmes in your area of Jurisdiction. I would like to request you to kindly answer the following questions. Please note that all answers will be kept confidential.

1. What is your level of education?
2. For how long have you worked in this sub county?
3. As a sub county chief what are your responsibilities?
4. You are supposed to have under your chairmanship a sub county technical and planning committee. Is there one operational in this S/C? What does it do?
5. What is its composition?
6. How regularly does it sit?
7. Did you hold any budget conference this year?
8. Who were the key actors? Did they understand the process?
9. Has your council approved your budget already? If no why? If yes outline the process.
10. Do you normally inform the general public the details of your budget?
11. If not, does the public try to find out on their own?

12. Does the district assist you while you are budgeting?
13. In which areas does the district assist you?
14. What will be your total council expenditure under your budget this year?
15. What are your sources of revenue?
16. Are your revenue sources adequate enough to finance your budget?
17. By law, all local government budgets must be balanced before their respective councils approve them. Do you follow these provisions while budgeting?
18. What happens in cases of insufficient revenue to cover expenditure?
19. The Local Government Act (1997) requires you to collect all revenue in your sub county and remit 35% of such collected revenue to the district. Is this done?
20. What is your view on this (above) arrangement?
21. Of the remaining revenue (after remitting the district share) the law requires the sub county to retain 65% and remit 5%, 5% and 25% to the county parish and village councils respectively. What is your view on this arrangement?
22. Is the revenue you remain with sufficient enough to enable you deliver services reserved for the sub county?

If not, from where do you get the balance?
23. Until about 8 years ago sub county officials other than the parish and sub parish chiefs reported to their bosses at the district headquarters who in turn also reported to their bosses at the Ministry (ies). Now all

civil servants in your sub county by law report to you. How has this affected the delivery of services?

(Give details)

24. While all civil servants in the sub county are under you, they, including your self, are not employees of the sub county and are merely deployed there by the district.
 - (i) What effects does this have on service delivery?
 - (ii) How do you cope in such a situation?
25. Does your sub county council sit regularly?
26. On average how many times in a year does your council sit?
27. Are you or your council in a position to discipline errant Civil servants in your sub county? Or you refer such cases to the district?
28. In this sub country you have a sub county development committee (SCDC) and a sub county integrated development association (SIDA) what role do these 2 institutions play?
29. Are there any NGOs operating within this sub county?
30. Generally how has the condition of living changed in this sub county over the past 5 years?
31. You know the services that as a sub county you are required to render to the public. In your opinion does your sub county have capacity to render those services? If no why?
32. How would you rate the people of this sub county in terms of their participation in community development projects?

Thank you very much.

Annexure F

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTION (PERSONAL INTERVIEWS) FOR LOCAL COUNCIL THREE (SUB COUNTY) CHAIRPERSON

I am currently involved in a study on the impact of the decentralisation policy in Uganda particularly on the level and quality of service delivery, good governance and community participation in development programmes.

I am requesting you to answer the following questions honestly without any fear and hereby promise that all answers will be kept in confidence.

1. When did you first get elected as chairperson of this sub county local council?
2. What was your occupation prior to your election?
3. Are you are a family man /woman?
4. How large is your family?
5. How big is your council?
6. What is its representation?
7. In the past political power like the one you have used to be seen as an opening for eating and personal advancement. What is the position today?
8. What in your view are the key qualities you posses that led to your election?

9. As the lowest level of government what function and services are performed by a Sub county?
10. Who are the implementers?
11. As the political head of the Sub-county what role do you and your executive committee members play in performance of the above functions?
12. Do you have a Budget for 2002/2003?
13. (a) If No why? If yes when was it approved by your council?
(b) Briefly outlines the process you went through.
14. If you have already a budget (2002/2003) what is the total council expenditure under that budget?
15. What sources of revenue are available to your council (list them)?
16. Are revenue sources sufficient enough to generate enough revenue to finance your budget?
17. By Law all Local governments' Budgets must be balanced before July are approved by the respective councils.

Do you follow this provision while budgeting?
18. What do you do in cases of insufficient revenue to cover council expenditure?
19. According to the decentralisation law the Sub-county local government collects all revenues in rural Areas. What is the position in your Sub-county?

20. The law requires the sub county to remit to the District local Government 35% of all revenue collected within that Sub-county.

In your opinion is this fair? (Give reasons).

21. Out of the total revenue that stays at the sub county (after remitting the district share) the law requires the sub county to retain 65% and remit 5%, 5% and 25% to the county, parish and village councils respectively. What is your view on this arrangement? (Give reasons).

22. Although it is a local government your sub county does not employ civil servants of it own to implement its mandate, but depends on those posted by the District. How do you cope in such kind of situation? (Give details)

23. In this sub county you have a sub county development committee (SCDC) and a sub county integrated development association (SIDA).

What roles do these 2 institutions play?

24. How many members are on your executive committee? Are there any women?

25. Generally how have the condition of living changed in your sub county over the past 8 years?

Mr chairman I thank you very much for you time and would like to once again to assure you of the strict confidentiality with which all information you have given me will be treated.

Thank you.

Annexure G

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS (PERSONAL/INTERVIEWS) FOR SENIOR POLITICIANS AND TOP MANAGEMENT OF HOIMA DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCIL

I am currently involved in a study on the impact of the decentralisation policy in Uganda. Focus in this study is being put on evaluating the levels and quality of service delivery, good governance and community participation in development matters.

As a senior leader in the district, you are indeed at the centre stage in the entire process of overseeing general implementation of government programmes in this area. I wish to request you to answer a few questions I will present to you. All answers will be kept confidential.

1. For how long have you served Hoima District Local Council?
2. What is your level of education?
3. In the position you hold in this Local Council what are your major responsibilities?
4. Are you a full-time employee of this council? Who pays your salary?
5. Briefly explain to me the services rendered to the population by your council.
6. How do these compare with the services rendered by the same council before decentralization?
7. How does council fund these services?

8. What percentage of the estimated local revenue was collected last financial year?
9. It is said that Local Governments are finding it extremely difficult to collect local revenue. Is this true?
10. If true, what is causing this problem?
11. What recommendations can you give to help solve the problems?
12. Does the Central Government give any grants to fund decentralised services?
13. If yes how many does Hoima receive?
14. Is part of these grants sent to the sub counties?
15. According to the system of government in Uganda today, the Central Government is charged with National Policy formulation, while District Local Governments deal with implementation. Does the situation on the ground reflect this principle?
16. If not what would you recommend as the way forward?
17. Does your District benefit from conditional grants?
18. What sectors are funded by those conditional grants?
19. According to the decentralisation policy and law districts evolve, approve and implement their own plans and budgets yet conditional grants are given to districts to fund priorities of the centre. What is your view on this contradiction?
20. How big was the district's budget last financial year (2001/2002)?

21. What proportion of that budget was funded by locally raised revenue?
22. What proportion was funded through Central Government transfers?
23. What generally is your view on local revenue sharing between the district and sub county local governments?
24. Until about 8 years ago, all civil servants in this district were employees of the Central Government. Now all civil servants with the exception of delegated staff in hospitals and the police are district employees. In your view how has this development affected the delivery of services?
25. Generally how have the conditions of living changed in this district over the past 8 years?

Thank you.

Annexure H

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CIVIC AND OPINION LEADERS

I have come from Hoima District Head quarters and I am involved in a study whose aim is to evaluate the impact of the decentralization policy in Uganda. This study in particular seeks to examine the impact of decentralization within the broad framework of improved service delivery, food governance and the role of civil society. As respectable leaders of society I wish to request you to answer a few questions touching very important subject being probed into by the study. I also promise that whatever you share with me will be handled with optimum confidentiality.

1. How regularly does your village council chairperson convene meetings?
 - (a) Quite regularly (Once in every 2 months)
 - (b) Not so regularly (Bi-annually)
 - (C) Rearly (Once in 2Years)
 - (d) Do not know /Not shire.

2. Compared to 8 years ago how responsive is your (LC 1) today to peoples complaints?
 - (a) More responsive
 - (b) Equally responsive
 - (c) Less responsive
 - (d) Do not know/not sure

3. Compared to 8 years ago how responsive is your sub-county LC111) to people's needs?
 - (a) Very responsive
 - (b) Equally responsive
 - (c) Less responsive
 - (d) Not responsive
 - (e) Do not know.

4. Compared to 8 years ago how responsive is Hoima District local council (LCV) to people's needs?
 - (a) Very responsive
 - (b) Equally responsive
 - (c) Less responsive
 - (d) Not responsive
 - (e) Do not know

5. How safe is your community perceived to be from crime and violence?
 - (a) Very safe
 - (b) Generally safe
 - (c) Neither safe nor unsafe
 - (d) Very unsafe /generally unsafe
 - (e) Do not know compensation to the aggrieved party

6. Are you confident that government authorities can provide protection from crime violence?
 - (a) Very confident
 - (b) Generally confident
 - (c) Neither confident nor otherwise
 - (d) Not confident at all
 - (e) Do not know

7. If you wronged how confident do you feel that formal institutions can offer opportunity for recourse and redress in your favour?
 - (a) Very confident
 - (b) Generally confident
 - (c) Neither confident nor otherwise
 - (d) Not confident all
 - (e) Do not know

8. What institutions do you perceive to offer better prospects for fair and transparent treatment?
- (a) Court presided over by a magistrate
 - (b) Local council (LC) court
 - (c) Traditional or customary court
 - (d) Others (special)
9. Would you consider any or all of these to be delivery of justice?
- (a) A hearing in court
 - (b) A hearing by community elders
 - (c) A hearing without monetary compensation to the aggrieved party
 - (d) A hearing where the transgressor is warned but no action is taken.
10. Compared to 8 years ago how is central government police performance today?
- (a) More responsive
 - (b) Equally responsive
 - (c) Less responsive
 - (d) Do not know/not sure.
11. Compared to 8 years how is Hoima District administration police performance today?
- (a) More responsive
 - (b) Equally responsive
 - (c) Less responsive
 - (d) Do not know /Not sure.

12. Does your community have access to a protected water source

- (a) No
- (b) Yes
 - (i) Borehole?
 - (ii) Protected spring?
 - (iii) Piped water?
 - (iv) Rain harvesting land?

13. If yes to No.12, who organised that water source?

- (a) Organized by the community
- (b) Organized by the authorities
- (c) Do not know the organizer.

14. What is the most common method used for treatment in your community?

- (a) Modern health care
- (b) Traditional medicine
- (c) Self treatment with shop bought medication
- (d) Self treatment with traditional herbs /medicine
- (e) All utilized at the same time
- (f) Do not know

15. Do people in your community prefer to attend private rather than a Government health unit?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Not sure /Do not know

16. How would you characterize your community in terms of its ability to pay for medical expenses?

- (a) Always able to
- (b) Sometimes can afford
- (c) Always have difficulties.

17. What would you regard as the main reason for failure to pay medical expenses in your community?

- (a) Many people are ill for a long time
- (b) Many people are too poor
- (c) Many people expect to get free medical treatment.
- (d) Other (specify)

18. Which factors are likely to affect school attendance by children in your community?

- (a) The rainy season
- (b) Insecurity
- (c) Need to care for younger children
- (d) Other homework
- (e) Harvest time
- (f) Fishing
- (g) Distance from school
- (h) Other (specify)

19. Give me one importance why you would send a child to school

- (a) Because it will help my child in future
- (b) Because the child learns useful
- (c) Because government says so
- (d) Because school looks after the children during the day.

20. How has the publicity of primary education changed in the past 8 years in your Area

- (a) Better now
- (b) Same as before introduction of universal Primary education in 1996
- (c) Worse now
- (d) Not sure /Do not Know

21. Does an Agricultural or Veterinary extension officer regularly visit your community to advise on better agricultural practice?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No
- (c) Do not know

22. Which is the type of household that is the most likely to be visited by an extension officer?

- (a) Poor family
- (b) Any family
- (c) Rich family
- (d) None.

23. How has the quality of extension services changed over the last 8 years?

- (a) Same as 8 years ago
- (b) Worse than before independence
- (c) Better now
- (d) Less good now.

24. In your view in your community satisfied with the way your 25% local revenue remitted to your village is spent?

- (a) No
- (b) Yes
- (c) Do not know

25. If no (to No 24) have you (member of the village council) ever rebuked your LC One executive over such misuse of your money and insisted on better expenditure

- (a) No
- (b) Yes
- (c) Do not know.

(b) Where the village Council meetings are not convened regularly what is normally your reaction?

- (a) Members insist on meetings being held
- (b) Fearful of the chairperson 's wrath members don't talk
- (c) Members complain to other authorities
- (d) Do not know

ANNEXTURE I

APPROVAL OF TITLE AND SCHEME OF WORK



University of
Durban - Westville

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STUDENT ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

200202054

10 DECEMBER 2003

MR P M ISINGOMA
HOIMA DISTRICT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
P.O.BOX 2 HOIMA
UGANDA
0001

DEAR MR ISINGOMA

TITLE AND SCHEME OF WORK

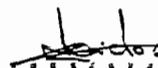
I wish to inform you that the University Senate has approved the following title and scheme of work submitted by you for the DOCTOR ADMINISTRATIONIS degree

Title : DEVOLUTION AND EMPOWERMENT THROUGH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN UGANDA : A CASE STUDY OF HOIMA DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Supervisor : PROF P S REDDY

Joint Supervisor : PROF M A H WALLIS

Yours faithfully


K. Naidoo
Graduate and International Studies Unit

ANNEXTURE J
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH REQUEST

Telegrams:
Telephones:
Chief Administrative Officer 0465 - 40235
Deputy CAO 0465 - 40235
District Medical Officer 0465 - 40321
District Planner 0465 - 40150
District Extension Coordinator 0465 - 40013
District Education Officer 0465 - 40329
District Engineer 0465 - 40383
Chief Finance Officer 0465 - 40018



HOIMA DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT
P.O. BOX 2
HOIMA
UGANDA

In any correspondence on
this matter please quote Ref. No. ...

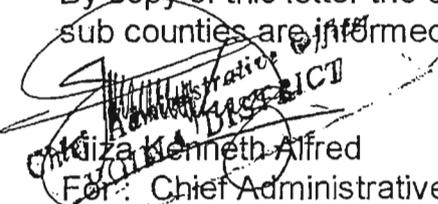
30/9/2002

REF. CR/D/10001
MR PATRICK MWESIGWA ISINGOMA
P.O BOX 73
HOIMA

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH/DATA COLLECTION IN
11 SUB COUNTY COUNCILS AND TWO TOWNS, IN HOIMA
DISTRICT.

We refer to your recent request in connection with the above captioned subject. We wish to confirm that we have no objection to your request. You can go ahead with data collection in the sub counties of Busiisi, Buhimba, Kiziranfumbi, Kabwoya, Kyangwali, Buseruka, Bugambe, Kigorobyia, Kitoba, Kyabigambire and Buhanika.

By copy of this letter the chairmen and sub county chiefs of the affected sub counties are informed accordingly.


For: Chief Administrative Officer

C.C. Resident District Commissioner/Hoima
C.C. District Chair Person/Hoima
C.C. All Sub County Chairmen
C.C. All Sub County Chiefs



Business School

Office of the School Secretary

April 15, 2004

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that I have edited the thesis of Isingoma Patrick Mwesigwa, entitled: *Devolution and Empowerment through the Local Government System in Uganda: A Case Study of Hoima District Local Government*, submitted to the University of Kwa Zulu Natal, West Vile Campus in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Doctorate of Public Administration.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Kakooza, Ph.D in Communication and Ideology (Wales)
School Secretary