



## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON THE IMPACT OF CENTRALIZED EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY ON QUALITY SERVICE DELIVERY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS IN KENYA

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### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was a critical analysis on impact of centralized Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy on quality service delivery in Early Childhood Development centers in Kenya. As much as early childhood education has been devolved, the Centralized Early Childhood Development Policy is still under the mandate of the National government. This has made many to still misunderstand the policy, leading to inequalities in resource distribution, quality teacher recruitment and recruitment and funding of these centers. This study was solely to critically analyze impact of centralized Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy on quality service delivery, impact of teacher training and recruitment, impact of resources allocation and distribution, and impact of government involvement and funding of schools on quality service delivery in Early Childhood Development centers in Kenya. This study employed qualitative research design that was used to conduct a critical analysis. This study constituted recommendations to the national government, county government, and stakeholders in early childhood education on centralized Early Childhood Development policy, leading to equality in distribution of resources, recruitment of quality teachers, and better remuneration of the teachers. This study also recommended on entrepreneurs on establishment of quality Early Childhood Development centers and emphasized on proper understanding of Centralized Early Childhood Development Policy of the early childhood education.

**Keywords:** centralized ECD policy, quality service delivery, early childhood education

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## 1. Introduction

The Kenyan government, in 1982 adopted the decentralized policy to cater for the early childhood education in Kenya, where by responsibility was shifted from the provincial levels to the district levels up to the grassroots levels. In 2006, the government adopted early childhood development policy which outlined comprehensive framework on early childhood services and programs. After the promulgation of the constitution in 2010, the early childhood education sector was to be devolved in the county governments, who were given the mandate to fund the early childhood centers and recruit and remunerate early childhood teachers, which came in to being after the March 4<sup>th</sup> 2013 general elections.

As per the fourth schedule of the constitution on distribution of functions between the national government and the county government, the early childhood education was devolved into the county government. But, as much this has been done, the centralized Early Childhood Development policy is still under the mandate of the national government, that is, the national government is responsible for the preprimary education policy, standards and curriculum. (Matiang'i.F, 2016) *"Without centralized Early Childhood Development policy, serious inequalities in educational Early Childhood Development standards in the 47 counties has cropped in terms of the quality teachers, curricula, and instructional materials as well as methods of quality delivery."* This led the researchers to critically analyze impact of Centralized Early Childhood Development Policy on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

As much as early childhood education has been devolved, many stakeholders still don't understand what centralized early childhood development policy is all about. They confuse it with model classroom; hence end up squandering funds meant to develop early childhood centers. (turkanaguardian.com, 2014)

According to Matiang'i.F,(2016), as much as centralized Early Childhood Development policy is still under the mandate of the national government, there is serious inequalities in distribution of resources, recruitment of quality teachers, funding of schools, offering of services such as construction of Early Childhood Development facilities and infrastructure. The county governments due to lack of full mandate of the centralized early childhood development policy, they are unable to fully implement the policy hence questionable services in early childhood centers in Kenya

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to critically analyze the impact of Centralized Early Childhood Development Policy on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya. This was in hand with the objectives which focused on centralized early childhood development policy, teacher's training and recruitment, resources allocation and distribution and government involvement in delivery of quality services in early childhood centers.

### **4. Objectives of the Study**

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- I. To critically analyze on impact of centralized Early Childhood Development Policy on quality service delivery in early childhood education in Kenya
- II. To critically analyze on impact of teacher training and recruitment on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya.
- III. To critically analyze on impact of resources allocation and distribution on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya.
- IV. To critically analyze on impact of government involvement and funding of schools on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya.

### **5. Research Questions**

This research study sought to answer the following research questions:

- I. To what extend do Centralized Early Childhood Development Policy impact on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya
- II. To what extend do teacher training and recruitment impact on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya
- III. To what extend do resources allocation and distribution impact on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya
- IV. What is the impact of government involvement and funding of schools on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya

### **6. Research Methodology**

The researchers employed the qualitative research design using critical analysis, to critically analyze the impact of Centralized Early Childhood Development Policy on quality service delivery in early childhood centers in Kenya (Constitution, 2010)This

research method enabled the researchers to critique the study and came up with recommendations on how to educate all stakeholders on importance of Early Childhood Development Centralized Policy, hence quality service delivery in all Early Childhood Development centers in Kenya.

## 7. Significance of the Study

This study may be of benefit to the following: the central government may be able to release the centralized Early Childhood Development policy under the mandate of the county government hence clear Early Childhood Development policy and curricular. The county government may be able to understand well the centralized Early Childhood Development policy and be able to educate stakeholders on proper and quality service delivery in Early Childhood Development centers. Parents may be able to understand on what part is required of them to do, hence enabling their children to acquire quality services in early childhood centers in Kenya. Children may be able to obtain quality services in early childhood centers in Kenya.

## 8.0 Critique Literature Review

### 8.1 Centralized Early Childhood Development Policy and Quality Service Delivery in Early Childhood Development Centres

Since 2013, early childhood education was devolved into the county government, as it was stipulated in the constitution of 2010. But the centralized Early Childhood Development policy, still lies under the national government, leading to inequalities in educational standards in the country. This means that, the national government is responsible for the provision of standards, curricula, and guidelines for effective management and coordination of Early Childhood Development institutions throughout the country.

According to Matiang'i .F, (2016) *,"as long as the centralized Early Childhood Development policy is still under the national government, there is fear that serious inequalities are cropping up in educational standards in all the 47 counties."* There are inequalities in distribution of resources, quality teachers, provision of instructional materials, and the methods of delivery hence questionable service delivery in preschools. For instance, counties in marginalized regions, lag behind in terms of quality teachers, good structures, infrastructure, and standard instructional resources.

During the colonial period, Early Childhood Development services were limited both in rural and urban areas. (Ministry of education, science and technology (MOEST), 2005). These services were offered to residents in urban, tea, coffee, and sugar plantations and to children of those parents were forced into forced labor away from

home. After independence, the quality of Early Childhood Development centers started to improve by 2008, even though, much is still yet to be done to improve on quality service delivery (ministry of education, 2009)

Early Childhood Development centers in Kenya are to offer quality services to both community and the child, and the stakeholders. Quality service delivery will be noticed only if there is equitability in distribution of resources, schools funding, recruitment of quality teachers and proper remuneration of the teachers. (Matiang'i. F, 2016). Poor remuneration of Early Childhood Development teachers has greatly crippled the quality service delivery in preschools in many counties. Due to this, many of the teachers opt to engage themselves in alternative careers, businesses, hence creating places for untrained and unqualified teachers to take over the teaching hence questionable service delivery. For instance, in Turkana county, standard eight pupils and dropouts are forced to take over the classrooms to teach these Early Childhood Development children. (Turkanaguardian, 2014)

## **8.2 Teacher Training and Recruitment of Early Childhood Development Teachers**

Teacher training refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in their classrooms or schools and wider community. In 1985, the DICECEs were set up to decentralize the management of early childhood development to the district levels as well as the CICECEs and MUCECEs at the local levels respectively. These arms were responsible for the provision of teacher training services, and monitoring and inspection of preschools.

Teacher recruitment is the selecting, appointing and hiring of best qualified teachers (en.m.wikipedia.org). After devolvement, the mandate of recruitment of early childhood development teachers was passed on to the county governments. Recruitment of quality Early Childhood Development teachers in all these 47 counties is not equal. In most counties within marginalized regions, have very few or no qualified teachers, for instance, in Turkana County, most early childhood centers have no teachers whereby, class eight pupils or school dropouts end up in the classrooms to offer Early Childhood Development teaching services which are of low quality. (Turkanaguardian, 2014)

Early Childhood Development teachers are poorly remunerated in almost all the 47 counties. In many counties, Early Childhood Development teachers are being supported by parents, churches, or well-wishers to fund their remunerations. (Dodge & Colker, 1992), for instance, in Vihiga county, degree holders earn gross salary of kshs.10,000 diploma holders earn kshs8,000 and certificate holders earn kshs 5,000 respectively, which can't sustain the teachers welfare and being.(Daily Nation, Saturday, January 11<sup>th</sup> 2014-Everline Okewo)

### 8.3 Resource Allocation and Distribution

According to Matiang'i. F, (2016), *“as long as the centralized Early Childhood Development policy is still under the national government, there is fear that serious inequalities are cropping up in educational standards in all the 47 counties.”* There are inequalities in distribution of resources, quality teachers, provision of instructional materials, and the methods of delivery hence questionable service delivery in preschools. For instance, counties in marginalized regions, lag behind in terms of quality teachers, good structures, infrastructure, and standard instructional resources. For instance in Turkana County, there is lack of trained and qualified teachers, proper infrastructure and facilities, whereas counties such as Nairobi, there are trained teachers having no opportunities or places to offer their services, and if they have the opportunities, they are poorly remunerated, hence poor distribution and allocation of resources in the 47 counties.

### 8.4 Government Involvement and Funding of Schools

Before independence, early childhood education was being funded by parents, community, churches, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), (Kamunge, 1988). The government through partnership with organization such as World Bank and Bernard Van Leer foundations funded the early childhood education and took part in the training of the early childhood education teachers. After promulgation of the new constitution in 2010, early childhood education was to be funded by the county government. (Constitution, 2010). As much as county governments are to fund the preschool sector, many counties' capacity to effectively manage these centers is still in doubt, as many have not yet implemented this, forcing the community, parents and churches to step in and take responsibility of funding the schools and remunerating the teachers. (Shinali. M & Kamau. B, 2016)

As much as the early childhood education has been devolved to the county governments, the national government has the obligation and mandate to ensure that the provision of early childhood education services is a right to be enjoyed by each and every child irrespective of race or tribe. According to Matiangi. F, (2016), the national government is in the process of reviewing the early childhood policy, in order to provide standards, curricula and guidelines for effective management and coordination of early childhood development facilities throughout the country in all the 47 counties.

## 9. Conclusion

- I. The wellbeing of the devolved Early Childhood Development sector is to be enhanced through sensitization and creation of awareness to stakeholders and investors in early childhood education.

- II. Distribution and allocation of resources in all Early Childhood Development centers should be strictly put in place and equitability in all counties including those in marginalized regions to be observed.

## 10. Recommendations

- I. The centralized Early Childhood Development policy, should be brought down to the county government level and made clear in terms of guidelines, curricular and standards on education to be offered in preschools,
- II. Teachers service commission (TSC), and the county governments should work hand in hand by each other in recruitment of quality teachers and also in remuneration of the preschool teachers.
- III. Disciplinary action should be taken on all corrupt individuals and officials in order to minimize cases of mismanagement of funds and facilities.

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