

THE ROLE OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES IN RURAL
DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA: THE CASE OF KERIO VALLEY
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

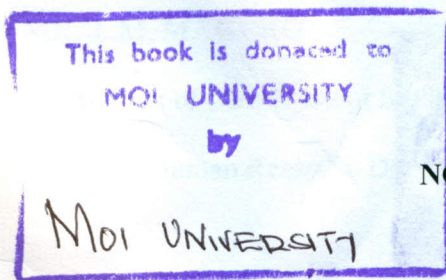
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ABSTRACT

The concept of Regional Development has been utilised by many nations as a strategy through which equity in resource distribution and utilisation can be realised for development. The concept has been applied in developed countries with visible results. In spite of its contribution, benefits have not been clearly felt in developing countries. In Kenya, the concept has been adopted through creation of Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) to accelerate rural development. Studies done on other rural development strategies like the District Focus for Rural Development indicate little success. However, little empirical studies have been done on the contribution of RDAs in rural development. Therefore, this study sought to specifically examine the impact of Regional Development Authorities on rural development using KVDA as a case study.

The study was based on the theory of decentralization as expounded by Rondinelli (1983), which has demonstrated potential to lead to more appropriate and better utilized resources, lower unit costs of services and improved operations. The study employed ex- post facto research design. Target population comprised of households in West Pokot and Marakwet districts, KVDA's management staff and government officials. Purposive and simple random sampling methods were used in selecting respondents. A sample size of 369 respondents was used. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS.

The study findings indicate that the local community is not involved in project identification and implementation. KVDA projects have however improved food supply to the locals. The regression analysis shows a relationship between RDA's activities and rural development $r=69$ and $r^2=0.353$ which shows that 35.3% of the change or improvement in rural development can be explained by the activities of Regional Development bodies. The study recommends full participation of the local community from project inception, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for eventual sustainability.