

Transformation in Public Service Delivery in Kenya: A Case of Huduma Kenya Centres

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Abstract:- Huduma is a Kiswahili word for service, as such it has been appropriately been adopted to represent the government's readiness to avail itself in terms of service to the citizens in the most easily accessible way through use of technology to reach all corners of the republic. The Huduma Kenya programme aims to transform Public Service Delivery by providing citizens access to various Public Services and information from One-Stop-Shop citizen centered service centres and through integrated technology platforms. Huduma centres operate from what were previously Kenya Post and Tele-communication offices located countrywide thus easing accessibility and affordability of public services. Huduma Kenya is an approach that is reforming service delivery in Kenya. It is interactive, integrated, vertical and horizontal as it brings on board to one stop services from different departments, ministries and agencies of both county and national governments. The huduma programme presents a shift in paradigm from the centralization to devolution and getting services closer to the clients, the citizens of Kenya. Institutional reform is emphatic on accountability, transparency and trust. It has received local and international awards to its attempt to transform public service delivery to a majority and satisfaction of many in Kenya and abroad. At a practical level the successes of huduma Kenya can be replicated across the globe as a means to achieve best practices in the public sector yet have an angle of PPE as is the case in Kenya.

Key words: huduma centre, one-stop-shop, transformation, accessibility, customer-satisfactory, affordability

I. INTRODUCTION

The e-Governance scenario in Africa has come a long way since computers were first introduced in the 1970s. The focus now is on extending the reach of governance to have a major impact on the people at large. E-governance is an important tool to enhance the quality of government services to citizens, to bring in more transparency, to reduce corruption and subjectivity, to reduce costs for citizens and to make government more accessible. Huduma Kenya programme is one among many initiatives to aimed at enhancing delivery of the otherwise considered cumbersome and complex bureaucracy. As such seeking some public service in Kenya has been a nightmare for a long time. Graft and ineptitude defined service delivery in the country.

However today and as from 2013 Kenyans can access services with a smile and continue to do so thanks to the innovative idea locally known as huduma kenya initiative, another first one alongside *mpesa* and *ushahidi* of kenya's innovations. This dream come true is part and parcel of civil service reforms embraced since the inauguration of new governance

after the end of the Kanu-24-year rule. Today huduma Kenya program is a household name locally and internationally following its recognition and awards for having transformed public service in Kenya.

The Huduma Centre Kenya programme is co-ordinated by the Ministry for Devolution and Planning through the Huduma Kenya Secretariat. Huduma Kenya programme aims to transform Public Service Delivery by providing citizens access to various Public Services and information from One Stop Shop citizen centered service centres and through integrated technology platforms. Huduma Kenya is a 'one stop shop' approach in reforming service delivery in Kenya. It is interactive, integrated, vertical and horizontal as it brings on board to one stop services from different departments, ministries and agencies of both county and national governments.

Huduma Kenya involves amalgamating related services within one building, possibly on the same floor, effectively making it possible for service seekers to access it conveniently. Huduma Kenya provides efficient Government Services at the Convenience of the citizen. It was launched against a bedrock of rationalisation and digitisation of public services as a way of breaking that cycle and removing unnecessary bureaucracy in order to improve the public sector delivery system," he said.. But what journey have Kenyans travelled to get to this destination.

II. KENYA'S LETHARGIC AND INEFFECTUAL CIVIL SERVICE

Kenya as a former British colony, the country's model of communication is akin to that of the former masters, albeit it has lagged behind in many ways. Archival documents show letters from the secretary of state to the governor who in turn passed on to the lowest level of the provincial administration. The information ended up with the locals who were subjects of the British Crown. The chiefs used horns, drums and trumpets to summon residents to open air meetings used to convey information from the central government based in Nairobi. It was to do with socio-economic development as well as regulations relating to governance. The chief did not endear himself to the locals as he was perceived to be an agent of the oppressive and hegemonic colonial regime. He was detested across the board in the colony, mainly because of the nature of his duty as a critical agent for the implementation of

colonial policies, many of which were exploitative and dehumanizing.

In 1963 when Kenya gained her independence from the British. The post-colonial public service that Kenya inherited from the British was a Westminster-Whitehall tradition (Hyde 1970). It was a system founded on public service guided by lack of professional ethics and lack of impartiality. It was meant to implement government policies effectively and efficiently. Here is a snapshot of the rot that has been the civil service in independent Kenya. The government operations were largely undertaken by hands, traditionally, that is, with minimal automation as is common today when automation and digitization of services using technology is a reality. So they have remained with modest changes up to and until this was revolutionized ICT in the 1990s and continue to gain ground today. With hindsight we can recall that, stacks of spring and box files, annual reports and books held in shelves and cabinets, defined many government offices. With a civil service that had received minimal education not much could be expected in the uptake of technology, which was in its rudimentary stage, a poor shadow of what it is today. Electricity supply was equally low, especially in the rural areas, a trend that has not quite been adequately addressed, posing challenges in e-government in these areas.

In terms of communication to citizens, the government had one radio station, Voice of Kenya (VoK) through which important information was passed on. Telephony was through landlines, mainly found in a few government offices. Disconnection due to non-payment was common and vandalism and unclear voices defined these operations. To make a call one had to go through a telephone operator, stationed at the Kenya Postal Services Offices, a system that was long established in the former East Africa Protectorate (today Kenya) in the 1930s. On 1st July 1933 a Postal Union of the three East African territories came into operation and was further strengthened by the East African Customs and Postal Union formally introduced on 1st May 1935.

Although the East African countries became independent sovereign states between 1961 and 1963, they continued cooperating closely with one another in a number of ways, not the least being their common postal services which culminated into the formation of East African Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EAP&T) under the Treaty for East African Cooperation which came into effect on 1 December 1967. In 1977, due to the breakup of the East African Community, the Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (KP&TC) was established. In the EAP&TC and KP&TC eras postal services were provided under a department of the larger Corporations.

Emerging market and economic trends and spearheaded by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) led to the establishment of efforts to separate postal services from those of Telecommunications were initiated in the late 1980s. They bore fruit in Kenya and in July 1999, the KP&TC was split to create, among others, the Postal Corporation of Kenya (PCK)

whose mandate under the Postal Corporation Act of 1998 is to provide and operate postal services, postal financial services, and perform other functions and duties as the minister of communications may assign.

In pursuit of this mandate, PCK operates a network of 31 Head Post offices 472 departmental postal outlets and 204 postal agencies (subpost offices). The population served per post office is 55,630. This is against a universal standard of 6,000 persons per post office. This network is served by a staff complement of 4,114 as at June 2009. Among the products and services of PCK are; letter post, parcels, Expedited Mail Services (EMS), Philately, Postal Financial Services (Money Orders and Postal Orders), Agency Services (Third party payments and receipts) and technology based money transfer services. The good infrastructure holding the posts and telecommunications has now been put into good use as it is the premises which now hold the huduma centres all over the country inspite of distance, location and state of security in far-flung corners of Kenya serving citizen, *wananchi* with ease irrespective of political persuasion and affiliations, hitherto restricted to the Nairobi capital.

For vital social services the centralization of government in Nairobi disadvantaged those citizens in far-flung areas of the country such as Lokitaung, Lamu and Mandera, among others. For issuance of birth registration, identity card and passport, title deeds, driving license, application to join university and access loan for higher education, queries on teachers' salaries and civil servants coming to the headquarters in Nairobi was not optional.

To resolve these issues citizens had to be on the road for days on end, incur massive expenditure on bus fare, subsistence, extortion for services and loss of human hours. Red tape was the order of the day as those urban-based civil servants in Nairobi preyed on their rural-colleagues, coming from remote districts of the nation. It was worse for those who were hesitant to bribe or 'grease' the hands of the civil servants for hastened service delivery. Incidents of mysterious 'disappearance' of files were common. Such 'files' resurfaced soon after a bribe, '*kitu kidogo*' was given contributing to high levels of corruption and rot in the civil service reported across the period. With hindsight we can say efficiency and inaccessibility characterized service delivery. It was government by physical presence. Yet after all these hurdles the services they received were poorly rated having been rendered by demotivated public servants.

Before the introduction of ICT in governance Kenya's civil service was defined by clientele politics anchored in a patrimonial systems where cliques of alliances were privileged over the rest of the non allies, considered as foe, undeserving of public services. Cohen contends that the public sector was used as the basis of patronage and reward, they became deeply politicized and ineffectual (Cohen 1993, 456). Clansmen, lacked the calibre thus low morale contributed to bureaucratic inefficiency and incapacity.

III. THE INTEGRATION OF ICT IN KENYA’S PUBLIC SERVICE

Kenyans adopted a new constitution in 2010 and among its stipulated ideals were those related to institutional structures and relationships across the, judiciary, legislature and executive, the three arms of Government. Additionally, given the platform against which the citizens adopted the constitution to among others allow for realization of the citizen’s aspirations. This can also be achieved through proper management of resources. Strategic leadership, effective change management and strategic decision making is part of the broader Public Sector Reforms (that have been going on in Kenya) aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the public service.

This age old bureaucracy has been transformed by the automation and further decentralization of services. Today, during a visit to any government office, one will notice a Personal Computer or laptop, a telephone head for a land line, a cell phone and few of the traditional shelves and cabinets for storing official documents. That is, there is an inter-phase of ‘traditional’ and digital way of transacting business but more edged toward a digitized and automated service delivery. The introduction of the 47 service centres across Kenya is a milestone that has brought service closer to citizens.

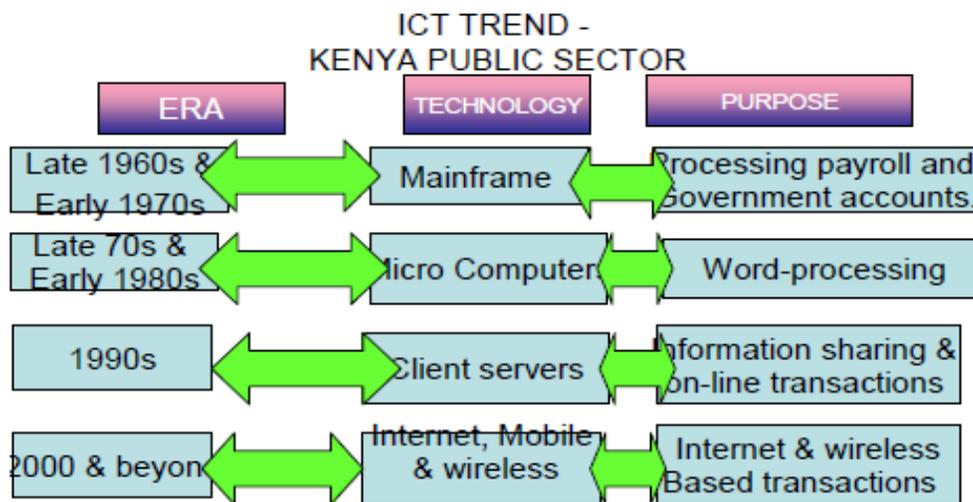
This has been transformed through the huduma Kenya centres launched in 2013. Huduma promises improved personnel records, job classification, work plans, staff appraisal and

evaluation system and timely promotions on merit. In 1992 a civil service review revealed that efficiency and morale have continued to deteriorate’. Poor coordination of activities and the lack of machinery to evaluate and monitor performance had continued to ail the public service sector (Cohen 459). This coupled with lack of specialists and middle level managers that could motivate the rank and file continued to pull the service down.

IV. ANTECEDENTS TO ADOPTION OF ICT TRENDS IN KENYA

According to the Computer Society of Kenya (2013) the history of ICT in Kenya within the government is traced back to the 1960s when treasury purchased a mainframe computer that automated the payroll services of government employees. This became the epitome of ICT usage in Kenya and for decades it was managed by the Government Information Technology Services (GITS). Bowman (2010) records that mainframe computers were mostly installed in international airlines, universities, government ministries as well as in major parastatals. Siambi (2008) provides that the next major integration of ICTs in Kenya was in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the Micro computer was embraced for word-processing. Consequently, in the 1990s there was introduction of client servers that aided in information sharing as well as initiated online transactions. From 2000 up to present there has been an increase in the uptake of Internet, mobile and wireless telephony that are significant in connectivity and related transactions as shown in Graph 1.

Graph 1: A Graphical Representation of the ICT Trend in the Kenyan Public Sector



Source : Siambi, W. (2008). *Introduction of ICT in the Public Service Commission of Kenya For Service Delivery: Experience and Challenges*. Canadian International Development Agency

Essentially, the greatest landmark in the development of ICTs in Kenya were seen after the 2002 election when President Kibaki was elected. Bowman (2010) documented that during Kibaki's first term there was evidence in policy and infrastructural development. For example, there was provision of internet using Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) and Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) technologies in most postal offices across the country. CDMA is a kind of digital cellular technology that is known for enhancing the capacity for voice and data communication (Beal, 2015). CDMA technology allows for several subscribers to connect at any given time thus being the cornerstone of 3G technologies (Beal, 2015). Drawing from *Mobilecomputing.com* (2007) GSM is a digital mobile telephony system that digitizes and compresses data that subsequently sends it to a channel with other streams of user data. Using these automated technologies Kenya made strides through the participation in acquisition of live marine internet cable projects such as EASSy, TEAMS as well as SEACOM. The end results were increased internet speed, reduced prices for mobile consumers as well as diminished broadband pricing for consumers. Nonetheless, Bowman (2010) highlights that the infrastructural developments between 2002 and 2007 did not so much benefit Kenyans living in the rural areas rather the biggest beneficiary was the government through wiring of ministries.

V. KENYA'S ICT POLICY ENVIRONMENT 1963- 2002

Africa has not been left out in the adoption of information communications technology policies despite the slow pace exhibited by some of the nations in their implementation. African Information Society Initiative (AISI) was the regionally created institution mandated to support in the implementation of e-government in Africa (Massaba, 2015). Other institutions within the African Union that have at one time or another spearheaded or supported development of ICT policies in the region include New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as well as Pan African Development System (PADIS). Asogwa (2011) provides that the aforementioned institutions within the region are evidence that the rationale of development in Africa is grounded on development of ICT.

As we have already alluded to under the leadership of the first president of Kenya Jomo Kenyatta, policy making in Kenya was grounded on particularistic patronage (Barkan & Chege, 1989). This was different from when Kenya was still under the British rule whereby there was a firm administrative structure that segmented Kenyans first based on ethnicity and subsequently into divisions, districts as well as provinces (Klopp, 2001). Between 1977 and 1998 Kenya Post and Telecommunications Corporation (KP&TC) was established by an act of parliament as a monopoly parastatal becoming the sole provider of telephone services in Kenya. Kenyatta's rule was especially sceptical about ICT integration in Kenya as was evidenced in the 1970s when the government imposed punitive measures in the importation of computers (Aduda &

Ohaga, 2004). Ironically, the justification made was that computers would result in high rates of unemployment.

Similarly, under the Moi (1978-2002) regime computers were viewed with a lot of distrust as was apparent in many other African countries. Subsequently, the allocation of resources in the 1980s was characterized by political support of his government. Thus Moi placed more post office with electricity in his former Rift Valley province while dramatically underdeveloping the communication infrastructure in his opponents' region, former Central Province (Barkan and Chege 1989). In reference to policy making, Moi's regime was decentralized as resources were allocated to those regions whose leaders supported the intents and objectives of Moi's government. According to Klopp (2001) the decentralization during Moi's regime was not well intended as rather than ending the inequity between the wealthy and the underprivileged it propagated selfish political leanings.

During the 1990s Moi's government position in reference to the importation of computers, hardware as well as software was that it was a matter of threat to national security. This is because it was viewed that these technologies would lead to the exposure of secrets of the state. Bowman (2010) viewed this as a diversion as Moi ran a semi-authoritarian government whose take on integration of computer technology meant a substitute to information source which was a threat to the government given that the 1990s had an increase on a rather powerful opposition. The resistance to integration was so intense such that in 1991 the head of Public Service Commission issued a warning to all government offices prohibiting them from integrating internet in conduct of their mandate (*ibid*). The drafts on informatics policy during this regime was only available to the executive. Subsequently, their content was questionable as it lacked participation of all the relevant stakeholders.

Aduda and Ohaga (2004) provide that the integration of computers in Kenya took a turn in the 1990s when Kenya's telecommunications sector was liberalized.. The push is linked to the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that began in the late 1980s and were initiated by the Bretton Wood institutions, demanding that for talks to resume about funding Kenya, then Telkom had to be privatized. It is implicit to also note that in 1997, 69 governments consented to a World Trade Organization (WTO) proposition of liberalization of domestic telecommunication markets to foreign competitors (Aduda and Ohaga, 2004). International pressure on the liberalization of the communications sector was also pursued by International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Consequently, the liberalization of the telecommunications sector in the country was articulated in Sessional Paper No.2 of 1996 (Bowman, 2010).

By 2000 the world was experiencing increased economic activities in both the telecommunication sector as well as global computing. Drawing from the Republic of Kenya Report (2000) the National Y2K steering committee initiated

a telecommunications and computing policy pitch by bringing stakeholders in the sector together. Among those who were included in the committee were high level government employees as well as the private sector stakeholders who recommended that the committee be made permanent to steer the country in the quest for ICT integration in development. Nonetheless due to Moi's lack of interest the recommendations were not discussed in cabinet meetings. The end of the dark ages in technology were beckoning as the sun set years for the KANU-era set in starting in 2002.

VI. KENYA'S ICT POLICY ENVIRONMENT 2002-2006

2002 was a historic year in Kenyan politics as it saw a regime change from Kenya African National Union (KANU) to the opposition National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) under the leadership of former President Mwai Kibaki. As earlier mentioned, Kibaki's regime was characteristic of profound success in the integration of ICT in government of Kenya departments as well as ministries. Etta (2005) indicated that the Kibaki regime was characterized by multi-stakeholder politics that allowed for all in the ICT sector to assert their role in the ICT policy making process. In addition, the regime recognized the crucial role of ICT in the quest for development in the country and thus the emphasis on technocratic experience as opposed to former regional ties in the allocation of resources.

Mulunda (2005) reported that the communication sector had created 12,000 direct jobs besides earning about 714 million dollars annually by 2005. Subsequently, more conventions were held by stakeholders in the sector to continue with the dialogue of ICT integration in Kenya. For example, the Kenyan private sector, not for profit organizations, academics as well as the Kenya ICT community were hosted on March 2005 by Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTAnet) for the Second National Kenyan ICT Convention in Safari Park. The convention led to the development of sector working groups that were mandated with the task of commenting on specified segments of draft Kenya ICT policy.

VII. FROM PRACTICE TO POLICY, 2006-2014

Since the end of KANU-24 year rule, an end to single party dominance, subsequent regimes and political parties have embraced new ways of governance and service delivery to Kenyans. We may recall that as soon as Mwai Kibaki took over the presidency in 2003, radical changes were introduced in the civil service. The changes included annual performance contracting, setting of targets for workers in order to keep them on their toes, introduction of rapid response initiatives in which 100-day timelines were set for workers to circumvent processes yet yield results in service delivery, formulation of service charters to be implemented by civil service, giving it new momentum. Jointly the core of the reforms has been agitation for Results Oriented Management (ROM) approach, which makes it necessary to adjust operations to respond to predetermined objectives, outputs and results. The adoption of this approach therefore demanded a paradigm shift in

Government. This called for a transformation from a passive, inward looking bureaucracy to one which is pro-active, outward looking and results oriented one that seeks 'customer satisfaction' and 'value for money'. Consequently the ministries'/departments are required to develop strategic plans which reflected their objectives derived from the 9th National Development Plan, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and based on the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), Sectoral Priorities and Millennium Development Goals According to the new Constitution, the devolution policy adopted. It also redefines institutional structures and relationships across the three arms of Government. Additionally, given the platform against which the citizens adopted the constitution there was a push for improved governance, accountability and service. This can also be achieved through proper management of resources. Strategic leadership, effective change management and strategic decision making is part of the broader Public Sector Reforms (that have been going on in Kenya) aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the public service. These initiatives are intended to make civil service more result oriented and make Kenyans access and enjoy the services for which they pay taxes. In the developed world service delivery is key in the rating of any government and can cost a regime power. As Kenya gets to increase democratic space it is imperative that citizens enjoy some level of comfort as they are served by the government of the day.

According to World Bank (2002) and Harris (2004) poverty and not ICT are the primary bottlenecks to ICT development in most developing countries. Yet ICT has a multiplier effect for such underlying processes and what makes development function well, can be made to function better using ICT. Thus Kenya has opted to trend on and embrace ICT for development since the 1990s.

VIII. KENYA'S FIRST ICT POLICY OF 2006

Kenya's first information communication technology policy was realized in March 2006 and was published through a special issue of the Kenya Government Gazette. The vision embodied in the policy is to have a *prosperous ICT-driven Kenyan Society* while the mission is to *improve the livelihoods of Kenyans by ensuring that the availability of accessible, efficient, reliable and affordable ICT services*. In view of development, the national (ICT) policy and by extension the Kenyan government identifies that ICTs are essential to social and economic developments as is envisaged in the Economic Recovery Strategy for wealth and Employment Creation 2003-2007. It is important to note that the policy was only adopted after significant consultations and revisions drawn from public comments, academics, private sector as well as the civil society.

The policy seeks to facilitate sustained economic growth and poverty reduction; promote social justice and equity; mainstream gender in national development; empower the youth and disadvantaged groups; stimulate investment and

innovation in ICT; and achieve universal access. It is based on internationally accepted standards and best practices, particularly the COMESA Model adopted in 2003.

The policy is based on four guiding principles: infrastructure development, human resource development, stakeholder participation and appropriate policy and regulatory framework. These four principles are in line with what experts recommend as four components, key in ensuring that e-government is optimal. In line with the policy is the hypotheses by Layne (2001) that describes a four-stage growth model to develop a fully functional e-government. Based on technical, organizational and managerial feasibilities, the four stages of a growth model for e-governance are: • Cataloguing (Information) • Transaction • Vertical integration (Interactive) • Horizontal integration (Strategic, interactive) or transformation. These four stages are arranged in terms of complexity and different levels of integration. This section explains these four stages, mainly based on the original paper of Layne 2001. The first stage is “cataloguing” or “Information” because efforts are focused on cataloguing government information and presenting it on the web. The first stage is focused on establishing an on-line presence for the government. The second stage “Transaction”, where e-government initiatives are focused on connecting the internal government system to on-line interfaces and allows citizens to transact with government systems to on-line interfaces and electronically, is referred as “transaction-based” e-government. This stage is a link between the live database and the on-line transaction.

However, the critical benefits of implementing e-governance are actually derived from the integration of underlying processes across different level of government. Any citizen can contact one point of government to complete any level of governmental transaction, which can be referred as “one stops shopping” concept. This integration may happen in two ways: vertical and horizontal. Vertical integration refers to local and central administration connected for any functions or services of government, while horizontal integration refers integration across different functions and services.

IX. HUDUMA PROGRAMME AS AN ASPECT OF INSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN KENYA'S PUBLIC SERVICE

Huduma is a Kiswahili word which means service. It is now a one stop centre where Kenyans can easily obtain public services, at least 20 of the same. The motto or slogan for this initiative is Service Excellence or Huduma Bora. The centres promise to adopt global standards for customer service delivery. The centres also support empowerment –operate cybercafés, stationery bureaus and restaurants and depend on business outsourcing.

E-governance is no more and no less than governance in an electronic environment. It is both governance of that environment and governance within that environment, using

electronic tools (Zussman, 2002). Thus it has far reaching implications of information and communication technologies.

E-governance is the application of information & communication technologies to transform the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of informational & transactional exchanges with in government, between govt. & govt. agencies of National, State, Municipal & Local levels, citizen & businesses, and to empower citizens through access & use of information.

The huduma programme presents a shift in paradigm from the centralization to devolution and getting services closer to the clients, the citizens of Kenya. Institutional reform is emphatic on accountability, transparency and trust. Reform pertains to the structures and processes of government as well as to the roles and responsibilities governments delegates to the private and nonprofit actors for carrying out public functions. Reform also addresses the culture of government and the way the public service perceives its role in respect to government, citizens and society.

The Huduma Kenya program is an Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) strategy that aims at the delivery of Public Services through a “One Stop Shop” Model with a great emphasis in Customer Service Excellence. This “One Stop Shop” approach enables citizens and customers to access various public services and information from a single location and through integrated service platforms. In this regard, the Presidency has been steering the Program through the Ministry of Devolution and Planning under the Huduma Kenya Secretariat. The Huduma Kenya Secretariat was instituted through the Presidential Gazette Notice No. 2177 of 31st March 2014 establishing the Governance Structure of the Huduma Kenya Program. The Huduma Kenya Secretariat is the third tier Management Structure of the Huduma Kenya Program below the Summit and Technical Committee as provided for in the Gazette. This structure was established in order to anchor this extensive and transformational Programme (Marwa, 2013).

Extant sources indicate that the Ministry of Devolution and Planning worked with the University of Nairobi's Enterprises and Services Ltd (UNES) consultancy unit to formulate, develop and realise the concept and implementation of the practice of Huduma Centres.

The huduma centres were launched in November 2013 by President Uhuru. The centres are meant to decentralize service delivery and circumvent the challenges that are associated with the physical distance and time expended in search of service. Huduma centres have comparative advantage over the former physical location of government offices where one had to hop from office to office for signature, stamp and approval. All this has been decoupled into a single stop. In most cases, there were different offices, sections, departments and ministries dealing with particular aspects of obtaining an ID or issuance of birth certificates.

More critically the search for service in Kenya has been grossly undermined by the rentseeking behavior and graft that civil servants have demanded of Kenyans over the years. We note that corruption is an impediment to development in more than one way. It wastes time as officers delay giving service in order to prompt the service seekers to induce them into action by giving a bribe. Also, done and circumvent burdensome bureaucratic requirements, making it almost impossible for businesses to operate without facilitation payments. The Global Corruption Barometer 2011 as well as the Eastern Africa Bribery Index 2012 also confirms that citizens have to pay bribes for simple bureaucratic tasks and accessing basic public services (Ndegwa, 2004). The centres become a one stop shop for at least key services among them; business registration, issuance of new generation national identity cards or student loan application and repayment forms, National Social Security Fund and National Hospital Insurance Fund registration, and report corruption.

The promises of Transformation of Civil Service

The initiative has improved Kenya's global competitiveness by aligning our standards or public service delivery with recognized international benchmarks. Ultimately, this will reduce the cost of doing business and allow citizens to focus their time, otherwise spent along government corridors, on more productive activities. At the launch the president did not mince word but called corruption and lethargy for what they are. Government will not require citizens to provide copies of documents issued by the same Government.

Enterprise systems will enable Government departments share citizen data and information link up to eradicate corruption, and enhance transparency and accountability in service delivery," he said. The centres also bring an interplay of Public Private Enterprise (PPE) as in the subsequent phases of the programme.

The President said Government inefficiency manifested in moving from one office to another and that long queues breed corruption. "The new Government sees the rationalisation and digitisation of public services as a way of breaking that cycle and removing unnecessary bureaucracy in order to improve the public sector delivery system," he said.

X. HUDUMA CENTRES: TOWARDS AN AUDIT

Through the drastic reduction and eventual elimination of the bureaucratic and corruption structures that have retarded this nation's socio-economic development, the Jubilee Government is on the verge of transforming Kenya into a fast-growing economy that will be an example to developing and developed countries. Huduma Kenya is the concept and structure that has been established under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, to eliminate much of the bureaucratic delays and graft in the provision of a large number of public services.

Under the devolved system of governance with 47 county structures, the national government has to ensure its presence is felt everywhere, through the effective and efficient provision of essential services. It is Huduma Kenya that provides the most appropriate vehicle for effective and efficient service delivery by the national government – at all levels.

Operation of Huduma Centres in Kenya

Huduma centres operate from what were previously Kenya Post and Tele-communication offices. Most have requisite infrastructure such as landline telephones as well as mobile phone. Physical space is adequate. It is a better way of utilizing government offices which otherwise lay underutilized following the shift of most citizens towards email, internet and speedy electronic communication rendering most postal services obsolete. The conversion of the postal services is a step in the right direction given that it is a better way of utilizing government offices which otherwise lay underutilized following the shift of most citizens towards email, internet and speedy electronic communication rendering most postal services obsolete. Previously utility bills, such as of electricity, were paid through the post office but today people have the option of mpesa which is efficient. Money transfer was also via mpesa thus the postal services have few services.

Using the huduma centres, service delivery has been digitized. Electronic service delivery is through e-huduma portal to provide online government service and m-huduma which used mobile phone, platform to provide government services, through the mobile phone, a single prefix call centre service for customer care and a unified multi-channel payment. It is a gateway to Kenya that is accessible 24/7 from anywhere in the world.

Services at the Huduma Centres

1. Renewal of Drivers licenses and Status check
2. Duplicate National Identity Card
3. NHIF Registration and Claims
4. NHIF Member Statements and accredited Institutions
5. Assessment and Payment of Stamp Duty – Lands
6. Nairobi City Single Business Permit
7. Issuance of Seasonal NCC tickets
8. Search and Registration of Business Names
9. Registration of Welfare Groups
10. PPOA Filing reviews and /or addressing complaints in procurement and disposal
11. Student Loan Application – HELB
12. Student Loan Repayment Services – HELB
13. NSSF Registration
14. NSSF Member Statements and Benefits
15. Reporting Corruption – EACC
16. EACC Clearance Certificate
17. Status of Pension Claims
18. Kenya Police Abstract

19. Community Policing- NyumbaKumi
20. Public Complaints through the Commission on Administrative Justice – Ombudsman

We note that these are the services currently being offered from a single premise yet from different government departments and ministries or agencies. Therefore the huduma centres offer integrated services, all the above can be accessed from a single premise, a former post office. Both physical service and online service are provided. Online e-Huduma web portal provides integrated services offered by various government ministries, departments and agencies and a unified and integrated channel Huduma payment gateway to facilitate ease of payment for government services. In a good day one is able to access the desired service within the shortest time possible. This decentralization of services has to some extent increased efficiency and made processes easier for consumers of various services. This level of vertical and horizontal integration make access to services easy and affordable as utmost one travels 20kms to access a post office even in the remotest of areas in the country.

Success of Huduma Centres

The service started as a pilot in Nairobi at the GPO but as at today Thirteen Huduma centers are already operational in Kenya, they include, Nairobi – GPO, City Square- Haile Sellasie Avenue, Makadara, Machakos – GPO Machakos, Nakuru – GPO Nakuru, Eldoret – GPO Eldoret, Kakamega – GPO Kakamega, Kisumu – Former PC office, Nyeri – Provincial Headquarters, Embu – GPO Embu and Mombasa – GPO Mombasa. Oyugi, (2015). At least in most of the six regions of Kenya one can access a centre prior to 2013 pipe dream. It depicts of strategic leadership, strategic decision making and change management in the public sector on service delivery have restored the citizenry confidence in the public service and created a new government brand that customers associate with newness, freshness and high standards in delivery of public services. Overall, the accountability framework has moved the public service to significant levels of efficiency. The programme renders at least 20 services away from the initial few. Also, citizens do not produce documents in their custody that were already issued by the same government. This was a major hiccup in the previous system where citizens may have misplaced, lost or had documents defaced for which they faced the wrath of the officers over the same.

In Mombasa success stories have been reported as Ngwaru and Kimani report thus citizens who have been served at the centers have lauded the quality of service provision at the centres as superior; they indicated that they felt valued and were treated with utmost respect something they never experienced in a Government Service Point before. This is a result of the high Customer Service Standards in the Centers and the modern Government service delivery model anchored on 21st century technology that includes the use of Knowledge Management Portal, Virtual Desktop Infrastructure, Ticketing & Queue Management System and

Electronic and Instant Feedback Devices (Ministry of Planning, 2010).

In Thika a customer seeking to be issued with a passport was awed by the efficiency with which she was attended to. Within the first twenty minutes she had had her application forms downloaded, she was assisted to fill them and was advised on where to take the forms for further processing. Safe for the fact that the e-payment platform is not yet operational the application would have been faster. Nevertheless after two weeks the applicant had been issued with her brand new jumbo passport ready for her travel to her destination later in the year. For us who have lived longer such efficiency was only experienced overseas but now it is right here in Kenya. Thus making the GoK appealing as has brought services closer to the consumers and a service that is user- friendly. Decentralization has enabled the users and the GoK somewhat circumvent the bureaucratic delays and corruption associated with the civil service.

Notably is the innovation of the delivery of justice. Through e-governance and using the huduma centres an office of the ombudsman was opened, a channel through which complaints against government officers can be lodged. The office online investigates allegations of misuse of office, unethical conduct, and breach of integrity, maladministration, delay, injustice, discourtesy, inattention, incompetence, misbehavior, inefficiency or ineptitude.

Complaints can only be lodged against Public Officers, Public Institutions, State Officers and State Institutions. This is a first one a major way of citizen having reprieve after an bad encounter or experience with a callous office, a common trend in Kenya. Similar narratives are heard in Turkana, Isiolo, Wajir and Maarsabit counties which previously were perceived as being far removed from Nairobi, the seat of government under the previous constitution. Feelings of marginalization have thus been shattered as citizens easily access vital services previously only rendered in Nairobi.

But all is not rosy with the huduma programme and subsequent service provision. As we wrote this paper we attempted to access these services online and our requests were responded to as follows: “The requested URL /index.php was not found on this server. Additionally, a 404 Not Found error was encountered while trying to use an ErrorDocument to handle the request”.

Apache Server at hudumakenya.go.ke Port 80

But this is not to imply that there system is a total fiasco. There are more positive responses at the physical interaction as may be experienced through an online engagements akin to our own. The fact is that many Kenyans are happy and with improvement this will be another first for the Kenyan innovators. May be the online responses may not be ideal or as desired by the mere presence of government one stops in close proximity to many citizens, including those in Lodwar, one of the furthest points from Nairobi is a welcome and promising move by e-governance.

It is driving out corruption that hobbles development. For example, the National Transport and Safety Authority is using the Huduma centres to ease the rigorous stages of applying for a provisional driving licence, book a driving test, getting a driving license, pay fees and tracking one's application. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General as well as the Department of Justice also make use of these centres to facilitate civil marriages. The public also use the centres for business name search and registration. Through the centres, brokers who would parade around Immigration Offices on the pretext of having connections with bureaucratic officer at the Department of Immigration services to help in application for passports, visas and work permits have been minimised. The cartels have been broken and one can use an online application through the ecitizen.go.ke website of the Huduma Centre's programme. President Uhuru Kenyatta termed the programme a manifestation of efficient and effective public service delivery in Africa and beyond.

Also other benefits accrued or potentially to be witnessed are:

- Accessibility
- Transparency
- Governance
- Accountability
- Efficiency
- It cuts down on travel time and costs as citizens seek various services from a single premise, floor or one stop service delivery
- It is electronic and can be accessed from one smart phone at the convenience of the user in their bedrooms or lounge
- Circumvents the government inefficiency manifested in moving from one office to another and that long queues breed corruption.
- Promises and prospects
- In the subsequent phases of the programme, the Government will not require citizens to provide copies of documents issued by the same

Having yielded these returns, the service has seen the projection of the president, during the launch of huduma programme that, ' digitisation and automation were the current ways of discharging duties. "I, therefore, direct all cabinet secretaries to, as a matter of urgency, undertake a comprehensive review of the service delivery system with a view to digitising and automating their records and business processes" (17 November 2013).

Also in recognition of what huduma programme has done, are awards bestowed to the service providers, at the local and international level in recent years. It bears to highlight two of these much coveted awards:

Awards and Commendations to Huduma Kenya

The Association of African Public Administrators and Managers, AAPAM

The AAPAM, whose 2015 award Huduma won before the UN award, is an international professional association of African public administrators and managers, recognises the use of innovation and creativity to realise organisational objectives and goals. The other values are Courtesy, Integrity, Efficiency and Transparency. The award not only puts Kenya on the map as a vision bearer of transformation in public service delivery, it also gives the Huduma Kenya programme recognition in the East African region as a public service reform process that works and a focal point in spearheading best practice in public service delivery. The UN award gives the Huduma Centres a global standard seal of approval and Mr Kenyatta as the transformative leader.

The United Nations Public Service Award (UNPSA)

In July Huduma Kenya won the United Nations Public Service Award (UNPSA) for its exemplary work in serving Kenyans for improving the delivery of public services. It was the second time this year that the Huduma Centres scooped a prestigious international award.

The UNPSA rewards achievements and contributions of public service institutions towards effective and responsive public administration.

Certainly, and in the words of Devolution and Planning Cabinet Secretary Anne Waiguru: "...the global recognition of Huduma Centres is a confirmation that the centres are a symbol of transformational leadership in terms of service delivery to the public that has put Kenya ahead of many nations."

Challenges facing Huduma Kenya Programme

The technological hiccups in ICT are compromised further by the low morale and spirit of underpaid workers, poor quality staff, conservative, rigid and staff who resist change and take it for granted, others lack ownership or are fearful, there is little commitment to reforms and change as they catch all sorts of plausible explanations. Few incentives are provided to encourage civil servants to generate, distribute and share information or knowledge; they hoard it believing that it enhances their value and competitiveness. Old habits die hard-bureacracy and demand for greasing hands of officers. Illiteracy of the users mars their usage of the system.

The systems run down most of the times due to unreliable electricity supply. Low internet and mobile connectivity disrupts service delivery. These challenges notwithstanding the innovative service delivery has received many awards nationally and internationally for having been a game changer in service delivery in Kenya.

Prospects and Promises of Huduma Kenya Centres

When fully implemented, service delivery will have been transformed to electronic platforms and payment systems for various taxes and fees that are required for the provision of different public services. The electronic payment system will drastically reduce the possibilities of graft and the time often

wasted in such public transactions. The greatest plus of the seamlessness of the Huduma Centres is their operating model of ISD. It is projected that the Huduma Kenya programme will soon introduce e-huduma web portal to provide the same services online and the m-huduma platform to provide Government services through the mobile phone. Others are introduction of m-Huduma platform to offer M-Government services to citizens from their mobile phones and a Huduma call centre to provide customer service using a single dialing prefix.

Through the Huduma Kenya platform, the government aims at enabling citizens to access integrated public services via their phones, computers and personal digital assistants (PDA). The new portal is also expected to enhance service delivery and eradicate graft loopholes. Tenders and vacancies in the public service will also be accessible on the platform. Users will also be able to directly post their comments and complaints regarding government services.

Among the changes to be introduced in the public service include introduction of one stop Huduma Service Centres to provide customer services to citizens from a single location, online e-Huduma web portal to provide integrated services offered by various government ministries, departments and agencies and a unified and integrated channel Huduma payment gateway to facilitate ease of payment for government services. Tenders and vacancies in the public service will also be accessible on the platform. Users will also be able to directly post their comments and complaints regarding government services. Other important information that will be readily available on the portal includes county government contacts, especially considering counties were recently formed with the promulgation of Kenya's new constitution.

XI. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conversion of the postal services is a step in the right direction given that it is a better way of utilizing government offices which otherwise lay underutilized following the shift of most citizens towards email, internet and speedy electronic communication rendering most postal services obsolete. Previously utility bills, such as electricity bills, were paid through the post office but today people have the option of *mpesa* which is efficient.

The national government is felt in the 47 counties through the centres as they are an image of it. True to this, there has been an increase in the number of MDAs providing services through ICT. Instead of one hoping from one office to another seeking for government services, he/she can get them from one office hence saving time and enhancing satisfaction (Psck, 2014). The national government has to ensure its presence is felt everywhere, through the effective and efficient provision of essential services through hudumakenya centres replicated throughout the counties.

Huduma Kenya is a transformative innovation, which is steadily influencing and helping improve Kenyas structures of governance in the delivery of public service. It indeed is a disruptive innovation. Long inured to the slow-moving, labyrinth of state bureaucracy, the people are getting used to the services of the amiable attendants at the centres. They have an unmatched customer service. As of now it is a huge leap in the transformation of the Public Service and this has resulted in a number of delegations visiting the Huduma Centers from across Africa to study the Programme.. Huduma Kenya has restored the glory and confidence in the Public Service and created a new Government Brand that customers associate with newness, freshness and high standards in delivery of Public services. Implementers of the programme have received accolades and delegates from across Africa, all who would wish to implement the same The successes can be replicated across the continent and globally to transform service delivery using integrated platforms that ICT allows.

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