Access to Higher Education in a Devolved System of Government

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Abstract

The New Constitution (2010) brought in its wake a devolved government with key functions being devolved to county governments. This paper set out to address the following objectives: (1) to evaluate the status of higher education within Uasin Gishu County; (2) to establish the challenges facing HEIs in Uasin Gishu County and (3) to suggest a raft of policy measures to mitigate the constraints facing higher education within the county. Data was obtained from secondary sources including various publications of the State Department of Education, county department of education, Kenya Bureau of Statistics, journals, newspapers, policy documents etc. The findings of the study indicate that HEIs have increased in number and size, but there are still challenges in provision, accessing and management of higher education within the county. Although the county has several Universities, the growing number of admissible students cannot be fully absorbed by the existing Universities. The increased private social demand for education has led to the proliferation of several University campuses, which pose serious challenges of quality and standards. Universities still continue to grapple with the challenges of limited finances, facilities and adequate faculty to meet the growing demand. Access to higher education has to be expanded, especially to students from rural areas and marginalized communities.

Keywords: access, higher education, devolved government

1.0   Introduction

The Constitution of Kenya was formally promulgated into law on 27th August 2010 (Mwenda, 2010). The promulgation of the New Kenyan Constitution (2010) ushered in a new era in the democratic governance of Kenya during the post-independence era. After a protracted struggle to achieve independence, Kenya finally achieve its independence from the colonial masters in 1963 and inherited a constitution that provided the blueprint for self-governance in the preceding years. After a period of time, there were several amendments that changed the old constitution, but not until 2012 did the country finally re-write its new Constitution that reflected the democratic ideals of the people and presented a new legal blue-print for future progression and development. The New Constitution (2010) dramatically changed the system of governance from a centralized bureaucracy to a devolved system. In 2013, following the implementation of the new constitution, 47 new Counties were established. The devolved system of governance affected crucial functions which were previously the onus of the central government. One of these critical functions was the provision of educational services.

2.0   Statement of the problem

The 47 Counties created by the New Constitution (2010) are mandated with responsibilities of providing specific services which were previously in the domain of the

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National government in accordance with Chapter 11, Sec. 186 and detailed in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution. The devolved systems are more democratic and participatory placing greater onus on local citizenry to contribute their ideas and chart their destiny within the broader, shared vision of our national destiny (Mutambo, 2016). Some of the services that have been devolved included the provision of basic health care and management of early childhood and primary education. Provision of secondary education, tertiary and higher education still remains the function of the central government. Given that the county governments have a significant role in providing pre-primary education and health care, their influence on the Gross Enrollment Rate and transition rate at primary and secondary education cannot be held withstanding.

The revised structure of educational administration has also transformed the national classification of schools with those previously designated as District and Provincial schools now being sub-county and county schools respectively. In terms of admission to University, the proportion of students within the county that sit for the University entry exam KCSE is a determining factor. This is largely determined by post-primary transition rate and the number of KCSE candidates in any particular year. Despite the national government's responsibility in managing higher education, there are overbearing implications on the Counties which play host to University and national polytechnics. There is the need to understand the status of University education within the counties in terms of provision, access, equity, gender parity and quality. The study limits itself to the County of Uasin Gishu but whets the academic appetite to extend the research to other counties within the Republic. It also provides the avenue for conducting future causal-comparative studies that will shed more light towards understanding the broader research problem.

3.0   Research objectives
This study is hinged on the following research objectives:
1.   To evaluate the status of higher education within Uasin Gishu County;
2.   To identify the challenges facing higher education in Uasin Gishu County
3.   To suggest a raft of measures to mitigate the constraints facing higher education within the county.

4.0   Literature Review
Devolution in Kenya is a current phenomenon although the concept has been in existence in other democracies for a long period of time. A cursory look at the extant literature reveals a bias towards matters of governance and the political economy. This is understandably so because devolution is a political concept and a concern of the governance. The specific literature that deals with education within devolved systems of governance are rather scanty especially those that related to Africa and the Kenyan context. Mutambo, A. (2016) reports that, devolution and diversified economies are the best strategies to reduce regional inequalities and combat the problem of poverty within the African continent. Devolution has been widely accepted as form of governance that is inclusive and empowers the citizens to have a greater say on the development agenda and matters that affect them (Wamwangi, 2014).

4.1   Development of University Education

Immediately after independence, the government appointed the Ominde commission to review the status of education and make recommendations. It was viewed that if education could produce high and middle level manpower, then the rate of economic development in the country could be accelerated (Sifuna, 1990). The development of University Education in Kenya is a relatively recent phenomenon. This is largely because the colonialists did not attach a high premium on education of the African populace. The European colonial masters were mainly interested in training the Africans for simple clerical jobs and skilled vocational training so that they could take up roles in European businesses and settler farms. Waweru (2013) contends that the establishment of University Education in Kenya is largely associated with the Royal Technical College in 1956 which later metamorphosed to the University of Nairobi in 1970. Previously, other institutions of higher learning that existed before independence were, St. Paul's Theological College (1903), Scott Theological College (1962).

In 1985, a Commission for Higher Education (CHE) was established through the Higher Education Act (Cap. 211 of 1986). The mandate of CHE was to coordinate the development of higher education including long-term planning, programming etc. under the Universities Education Act 2012, CUE's mandate was expanded to include public Universities. This followed the repealing of the individual University Acts for 7 public Universities. By 2009, the number of Universities had increased to seven public universities and 25 private universities.

4.2   Universities Authorized to Operate in Kenya

The higher education fraternity has undergone tremendous transformation in the recent past. Of significant importance is the enactment of Universities Act No. 42 of 2012 .This established the legal framework for the governance and administration of universities in Kenya. It caused repealing of Acts of Parliament for seven (7) universities which operated under individual Acts. The new law also caused 15 public university constituent colleges operating under Legal Orders to be upgraded to fully-fledged public universities, giving rise to a total of 22 public universities. Another nine (9) public university constituent colleges established in 2011 by a Legal Order under the then Universities' Act (Cap210b of 1986) after requisite verification of academic resources by the Commission for University Education. Current information from the website of Commission for University Education reveals that by November 2015, there were 23 chartered public universities, 10 public University constituent colleges, and 11 chartered private universities, 5 private University Constituent colleges, 14 institutions operating under Letters of Interim Authority awaiting award of charter by CUE.

4.3   Access and equity in higher education

Most African countries are lagging behind in terms of literacy, gender parity and access to quality education levels (Coker-Kolo and Darkey, 2013). The authors report that at independence, the new African governments embarked on the process of training manpower to take the reins of government form the colonial masters. Universities are tasked with training skilled manpower with the necessary skills. This led to creation of many Universities. Many of the traditional Universities have expanded their spheres of influence by establishing campuses in different parts of the country enabling many students to access their services. The development of open and distance learning has also

created access to education in far-flung areas. Students can know access education from the comfort of their offices and homes. This rapid educational expansion has helped reduce socio-economic inequalities of access by increasing educational opportunities (Boliver, 2010)

Universities have shifted their focus from offering degrees in their traditional areas of specializations to those that are readily marketable and in higher demand by students. The University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University have shifted from offering courses in medicine, engineering and education to market driven courses in business studies and law. Nearly every county within the Republic has at least one Campus of a major University. This scenario has also been reported in developed countries, e.g. Universities in Italy started to expand their supply by opening campuses in other cities (Bratti, Checchi and De Blasco, 2008). The government has also continued to accelerate the expansion by granting charters to more private Universities and University colleges. Other modes of study have also been established with Universities offering courses through distance learning, self-sponsored, school-based and evening/weekend modes. This means that more students have the flexibility and convenience to pursue their studies. The affirmative action and gender rules in admitting girls and students from marginalized communities means that more female students have greater opportunities to pursue higher education.

4.4   Gender and higher education

Gender parity has continually been a challenge in higher education in Africa. This state of affairs has been a consequence of several factors, ranging from cultural, socio-economic, policy mandates to political reasons. Historically, African societies have been patriarchal and as such the education of the male gender has always been given more significance as opposed to the female counterpart. As a result enrollment in educational institutions has continually been biased towards the male gender. Coker-Kolo and Darkey (2013) aver that Gender Parity in Sub-Saharan Africa is 0.66. This is below the Parity Index of between 0.97 and 1.03. The implication of this is that the education system in many sub-Saharan countries favors the males as opposed to the females.

In order to address the issues of gender parity, the concept of gender mainstreaming (GM) has been gaining momentum in current developmental discourses. According to Morley (2007), the concept of GM is a "strategy that claims to make women's and men's experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes. The ultimate aim is to achieve gender parity." Pg. 609. In terms of policy, there has been more focus on minimal indicators such as enrolment of underprivileged groups with less emphasis on qualitative aspects of student access and Universities as employers. Few women continue to occupy less positions in senior leadership positions in higher education which are dominated by men (Onsongo, 2004). In Kenya this is exemplified by the few number of women Vice-Chancellors. However, this situation has slowly been improving, with more women being appointed as Vice Chancellors especially in public Universities. Public Universities that are headed by female Vice Chancellors include University of Eldoret, Egerton, Masai Mara and until recently, Kenyatta University. Private Universities include Africa Nazarene, United States International University. There are several reasons that explain the low participation of women in University management roles, such as the socialization

process, socio-cultural beliefs and policy issues (Onsongo, 2004). The author explains that the matter has not been given adequate attention in many institutions.

Gender parity in University enrolment has not been achieved. There are more male students than female students (Onsongo, 2004). This disparity is replicated in various degree programs which depict more female students preferring Arts based and the so-called 'soft' course in contrast to their male counterparts who are get admitted into the science-based course. One of the reasons for this disparity is the uneven transition rates experienced after primary education, where the drop-out rate for girls is higher than that of boys.

4.5   *Higher education in Uasin Gishu County*
The status of education in Uasin Gishu County has experienced widespread transformation over the last several years, especially with the liberalization of the education sector and the emergence of county based governance structures. The county has witnessed rapid expansion in the number of educational institutions at both middle level and Higher Education. Most of these institutions are located within Eldoret that is the administrative and commercial headquarters for the County. The centrality and the strategic location of Eldoret as transition point to Western Kenya, Uganda and other countries with the East African Community has placed an advantageous premium on its development as an economic and educational hub in the region.

A quick check of the number of Universities having Campuses within Uasin Gishu County revealed the following:

Table 1

No	Name of University/Campus
1	Moi University
2	University of Eldoret
3	University of Nairobi – Eldoret Extension Centre
4	Catholic University of East Africa – Gaba Campus
5	Africa Nazarene University - Eldoret Regional Center
6	Africa International University
7	Kisii University – Eldoret Campus
8	Laikipia University – Eldoret Campus
9	University of Eastern Africa – Baraton
10	Mt. Kenya University - Eldoret Campus
11	Scott University
12	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

4.6   *Challenges facing higher education*
University education has continued to experience rapid expansion. The changing global and national socio-economic dynamics have impacted on public Universities in several ways.

4.6.1 Brain Drain

The problem of brain drain has been an unrelenting major developmental setback for many African Countries. An increasing number of highly educated Africans have left their countries in pursuit of greener pastures especially in Europe and the United States. The main reasons for this 'brain exodus' are the poor working conditions and low wages in their home countries. This has created a shortage of trained personnel to manage the developing economies and assist the counties transition into newly developed economies. Universities have experienced the brunt of this problem as many of them continue to experience shortage of lectures with Ph.Ds. This has left many African Universities with young, inexperienced and inadequately trained staff (Mbirithi, 2007). This has affected the quality of teaching and learning in higher educational institutions which have continually been accused of producing half-baked graduates. The quantity and quality of research has also been affected as less and less number of faculty members are engaged in productive research because many of them are forced to moonlight in order to supplement their meager salaries. The technological gap between Africa and the rest of the world has continued to widen as a consequence of this skilled labour outflow (Mbirithi, 2007)

4.6.2   Financing higher education

The international development community has held the belief that primary and secondary schooling are more important than tertiary education in poverty alleviation (Bloom et, 2006). Consequently, higher education in Africa has suffered reductions in spending with many Universities continuing to struggle under the heavy burden of underfunding. Following the aftermath of reduced funding from the government and bilateral donor agencies, African Universities have been obligated to seek alternative means to finance their recurrent expenditures. Through developing strategic partnerships many Universities have been able to strengthen their resource bases. Universities make their own investments in the areas of research seeking to be at the forefront and to secure external support (Sa, 2010). Government funding for higher Education has increased in the recent years.

According to the Education Sector Report (GOK, 2012), the Government of Kenya has solely been funding Higher Education Sector since 2008. Government funding for Higher Education rose from KES. 22 M in 2008 to KES 22M in 2011. There was no financial support received from donors. This demonstrates the government's commitment to support higher education and the importance attached to this sub-sector. The Vision 2030 recognizes the "serious shortage" of capacity, both in private and public institutions. This calls for concerted efforts by all industry stakeholders to invest more resources in higher education. Universities have also to come up with innovative ways of generating more income to support their programmes. The recent proliferation of regional campuses and self-sponsored programmes in public Universities is an attestation to this phenomenon.

4.6.3   Overstretched facilities

The rapid increase in enrolment in public universities has placed a huge strain on resources in these institutions (Mbirithi, 2007). The transition rate from primary to secondary schools has increased in the last few years. This increase has been as a result of the introduction of free primary education, free day secondary school education and

policies aimed at encouraging education of the girl child and those in marginalized and vulnerable communities. Consequently transition to post-secondary institutions such Universities, polytechnics and colleges has increased tremendously and place a heavy strain on the available facilities. With dwindling financial resources, the facilities in public Universities have been placed under heavy strain (Mbirithi, 2007). The large number of students cannot be accommodated in the hostels and lecture halls. Many students miss out on the opportunity to join University and parents are forced squeeze out extra money for tuition and accommodation for students joining University under the self-sponsored mode.

4.6.4   Political patronage

Politics has continued to play an upper hand in the administration of public Universities. Right from admission of students, hiring of teaching and non-teaching staff to the management of these institutions, politicians have had a significant influence. Politician have influenced the appointed of senior University administrators right from the appointed of the members of the University Councils, the recruitment of the Vice Chancellors and other senior staff to hiring of lectures. It is not unusual to read in the newspapers of students being influenced by politicians to go on strike because of issues of hiring of staff. The politics of student organizations have not been spared either. Politicians are known to finance the campaigns of their favorite student leaders so that their interests are taken care of in the student councils. This meddling in University management has produced cronyism and impacted on the quality and efficiency of University administration.

4.6.5   Negative ethnicity and infighting

Tribalism has been a core problem in higher education institutions. Recently the Cabinet Secretary for Education decried this matter and emphasized that University should not be allowed to degenerate into citadels of tribalism. With the dawn of devolution, most public Universities have experienced increased instances of ethnic politics. Each county considers the public universities within their boundaries as symbols of their intellectual prowess and that these institutions should be headed by their 'own' people. There is increasing pressure that Universities should employ more people from local communities than from those outside the counties where they are based. In cases where the universities are headed by people from 'outside', then there is a lot of infighting and opposition. This has become a major problem. In many cases, the university administration is at loggerheads with the academic and anon-academic staff unions. Many public universities have experienced strikes by lectures and non-teaching staff as well. It was recent reported in the Daily Nation that Kenya Universities Staff Union has called for the dismissal of two vice-chancellors of public Universities (Wanzala, 2016). The union's secretary cited mismanagement and misconduct as the reasons for their dismissal. Although some of these calls for dismissal are tainted with internal politics and issues beyond what is on paper, they provide clear testimony of the levels of acrimony and infighting amongst the ranks and profile of staff within public universities.

4.6.6   Mismanagement

Although Universities are supposed to train the best personnel in terms of knowledge and expertise, it is ironical to observe that some of the Universities have been embroiled in

problems of poor management practices. On numerous occasions, University administrators have been accused of malpractices such as wastage of funds, poor allocation or resources and embezzlement of funds. It common knowledge that many public Universities delay in paying their part-time lecturers who consist the largest percentage of their teaching staff and contribute most to the success of the highly lucrative self-sponsored programs. Recently one of the local dailies reported that the Council of one Public University in Eldoret had launched investigations into reports that that the University had not remitted employees salary deductions to the banks (Wanzala, 2016). The University Academic Staff Union has reported petitioned the Council to examine the act and the "rapidly deteriorating institutional financial health" pg. 11. In another case, a magistrate's court had to step in and order staff who were striking to demand increases in their allowances to go back to work.

Several Universities have been accused several times of delaying the payments to suppliers leading to shortages of essential supplies such as stationery and foodstuffs. The deteriorating condition of facilities in these public institutions is another confirmation of this problem. With the devolution of management to different levels, it is not fair to attribute the problem of mismanagement entirely to University administrators. The national government which is responsible for financing higher education has contributed to lack of adequate facilities due to low financing. Universities are frequently called upon to plug-in the gap in the budgets by generating funds to finance their recurrent expenditure. With limited financing, the Universities are forced to prioritize core functions leaving other areas underfunded and performing poorly.

4.6.7 *Insecurity*

Insecurity has become a major problem for all educational institutions in Kenya. The number of death cases reported within public universities is increasing with time. These cases range from students killing each other in vicious love triangles to those related to politics of student unions. The increasingly growing problem of terrorism has presented a major security problem for universities. The most outstanding testimony to this problem is the Al-shabaab attack on Garissa University in 2015. There have been frequent reports of terrorists recruiting students from public universities to join their organisations. More than two students from Nairobi University were recently reported to have fled to Somali to join Islamic State fighters in Syria. This presents a major threat not only to the Universities but the country as all whole because it is reported that once trained, these terrorist return to execute terrorist acts in their own countries because of their knowledge of the local conditions and the ease with which they can penetrate and outwit the security apparatus without raising suspicion. The demand for security training is on the rise as the government and the private sector strive to counter terrorism. Institutions of higher learning are increasingly become aware of the need to offer courses that in disciplines dealing with security. The Education Cabinet Secretary recently launched the Centre for Security and Diplomacy at KCA University (Mukinda and Wanzala, 2016). The Centre is collaboration between KCA University and the East African Institute of Security Studies whose main focus is the development of research, skills in security studies and policy. The courses offered include counter-terrorism, case management procedures, crime analytical skills, peace support and conflict management, law enforcement and security sector reforms. Universities are conducting research with the aim of identifying trends and providing research-based solutions.

5.0   Methods

The research study was a mixed research utilizing both quantitative and textual research approaches. Qualitative data was collected through informal interviews while quantitative data was collected using questionnaires. Textual analysis was conducted to document findings from previous studies. Textual content was analyzed from newspaper reports, University enrolment data, research reports and other documents. Interviews were conducted with University administrators who provided insights of the challenges facing their institutions.

6.0   Data Analysis and Presentation

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 18.0. Qualitative data was coded and presented under emerging themes that represented the major challenges facing Universities. Findings of the study were presented using descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies and percentages. Frequency tables were used to pictorially present the findings of the study.

7.0   Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

This section begins by discussing the status of HE with the county, the challenges facing the institutions and county governments in terms of access, resources and administrative concerns. From the discussion, general conclusions are made with recommendation on how to mitigate the challenges and improve the quality of HE.

7.1   Status of education in Uasin Gishu County

Higher Education within Uasin Gishu County has rapidly expanded since the introduction of devolved systems of government. Institutions offering post-secondary HE include tertiary level institutions and Universities. There are several middle levels colleges and polytechnics within the county, but for the purposes of this study, focus was given to public Universities alone. Eldoret National Polytechnic, Rift Valley Technical Training Institute and Ziwa Polytechnic are among the prominent tertiary institutions offering technical education within the County. Moi University and University of Eldoret are the two public Universities with having their main campus and several campuses within the county. Other public and private Universities have established campuses and regional centers within the county. The table below indicates the number of Universities operating within the County. Recent admissions to public universities by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) allocated the largest share of admissions to Moi University. Out of the 74,046 students admitted into the 33 public universities, Moi University admitted the highest number (5,834). The report indicates that a large number of students (79,000) were left out despite meeting the minimum entry requirements (Nyamori and Oduor, 2016). Eldoret polytechnic with a declared capacity of 2,740 will admit 1.057 leaving a surplus of 1,683. The Rift Valley Technical Institute whose capacity is 845 students will admit only 202. It is interesting to know how the surplus places will be filled by the relevant institutions.

7.2 Constraints facing Higher Education in Uasin Gishu County

The challenges facing HE education in Uasin Gishu are more or less similar to those facing HE nationwide. A review of past research reveals the following major constraints:

7.2.1   Financing

Financing of HE remains the single most important challenge. Several universities and HEI (Higher Educational Institutions) are facing acute budgetary shortages. Although the government has increased financial allocation to the education sector, universities have continued to suffer shortages due to various factors including increased enrolment, economic inflation, expansion and numerous programs being offered in response to the social demand and industry requirements. Private universities have suffered the brunt of this problem because many of them rely on internal funding and have to generate revue from their own sources. They have to compete with public universities to capture students who cannot be absorbed through the central placement board (KUCCPS). Public universities have established the self-sponsored mode where students who cannot get the central placement are admitted directly by individual universities so long as they meet the minimum entry requirements. Both Private and public universities have experienced shortages have experienced their fair share of financial mismanagement. It is public knowledge that financial resources are being misappropriated in several institutions and the relevant government agencies and the university councils have been called upon to investigate these allegations. The sad thing to note is that despite the existence of these cases, very little action is ever taken to punish the offenders. In most cases, they are fired, redeployed with little or no hope of recovering the lost funds. Several universities have diversified into income generating activities to generate income. While this is laudable and welcome, it has come with undesired side effects. Universities have expanded the number of campuses and borrowed heavily from commercial banks at high interest rates to finances their program expansions. Funds have been diverted to fund new projects thus stifling core functional areas. Since profiteering is not the core function of HEIs, the quality of teaching and learning in these institutions have been grossly affected as the emphasis shifts from quality to quantity. However, it is gladdening to note that the government has reined in on these institutions to bring back normalcy through the Commissions of University Education.

7.2.2 Facilities

The number of facilities required in response to the increased enrollment in HEIs has grown exponentially. Laboratories, lecture rooms, hostels and other amenities are required to accommodate large number of students. Each year, the KUCCPS places a higher number of students to the public universities and a large number of qualified students miss out on opportunities in the public universities. These students find alternative education in local and international private universities. Whether they go to local or private universities there is increased strain on the available resources. Many universities in Uasin Gishu are located within the precincts of Eldoret and the pressure for space and suitable facilities is eminent. Many institutions are forced to rent space in commercial buildings within the CBD. Since these buildings were not constructed for educational purposes, they are not ideal for accommodating campuses of for learning. Some of these buildings are located next to bus parks, markets, clubs and entertainment spots, which renders them unsuitable for learning. The CUE has reined in on the intuitions operating campuses in such places and these has caused tension amongst parents and led to protests and student unrest. The affected universities have experienced mass exodus of students due the anxiety and panic caused by the commission's announcements in local media regarding the status of the affected campuses and the

programmes their offer. One of the affected universities was dealt a severe blow after the commission refused to recognize their first PhD graduates upon completion of their studies and graduation. The pressure is on the universities to comply with the requirements of the commission entrenched in the Standards and Guideline for Universities either by moving to better facilities, revamping the current ones or face closure. Whichever option they take, there are huge financial implications which bears heavily on their already strained budgets.

7.2.3   *Inadequate resources*

There are inadequate seats for students to use during lectures. The libraries are ill-stocked with books that were published several years ago and are currently outdated. Most lecture rooms and halls especially in public universities do not have adequate utilities. Lecturers cannot have access to projectors, computer, internet and power sockets are broken making it difficulty to use multi-media equipment to deliver lectures. Such mundane services such as photocopy services, typing and stationery supplies are limited. On the other hand available resources are misused and neglected. It is a common scene in in most universities to see broken seats, chairs and tables. Windows and doors are left without repairs and loose electrical wires hang dangerously from power outlets. Although most universities have subscribed to online journals and have e-libraries, the usage of these resources by both students and faculty is below average. Many students are not aware of the existence of these resources in the institutions.

7.2.4   *Overcrowded lecture halls*

 The problem of crowded lecture rooms and halls is an inherent challenge facing many universities. The situation is exacerbated in public universities where it is common for lecturers to handle classes with an average of 200-800 students. This compromises the quality of teaching and learning in these institutions. The lecturers cannot monitor attendance and in some cases there is hardly a way for them to find out whether students are in class or not. Teaching becomes very difficult because lecturers have to shout in order to be heard. This is damaging to their vocal cords and the universities do not have public address systems. Several lecturers report that they have to purchase their own sound amplifying gadgets to deal with large classes. Students in such large classes cannot learn effectively due to overcrowding. Lecturers find it very hard to manage such classes which in many cases are taught by more than one lecturer. The problem extends further when the students have sat for examinations and their scripts have to be marked. The lecturers hurriedly mark the large number of scripts in order to beat the deadlines.

7.2.5   *Shortage of lecturers holding PHDs*

It is a national concern that the number of lecturers holding Ph.Ds is below the required levels. The number of professors in the public and private universities is also way below the requirement. This shortage is attributed to several factors, the main one being brai-drain. Many lecturers with doctorates have left the country to seek employment in more lucrative environments in advanced countries. The private universities have borne the brunt of this brain migration where lecturers seek to join public universities as soon as they obtain their doctoral degrees. This has compromised the quality of teaching in universities especially at the graduate levels where lecturers with junior qualification are assigned to teach and supervisors students at higher levels. It is common to encounter

Masters degree holders teaching students at master's level or Ph.D holders supervising and teaching doctoral students. The CUE requires that the lectures should hold a qualification that is at least one level higher that the level that they are engaged to teach. Some universities are engaging lecturers with questionable qualifications from unaccredited foreign universities.

7.2.6 Internal politics and wrangling

Politics cannot be separated from the affairs of any organization. As a matter of fact, organizational politics are a way of life and even beneficial for the well being of the organization because it allows the members of he organization to express themselves and vent out their emotions. It only becomes harmful when people engage in politics that is divisive and toxic to the organizational culture. In Kenya, politics have for all long time taken ethnic dimension and the same has been extended to HEI's. The "our people" syndrome is deeply rooted in the psyche of the people and many times people want those from their ethnic communities to occupy positions of leadership in their institutions. In HEI's tribal politics has played itself out in the recruitment of personnel, admission of students and even election of students into leadership positions. Internal wrangling among students and staff from different communities have played out in the open and factional politics are tearing HEI's apart. Recently a local politician organized students to march and attempt to evict a lawfully appointed senior most university administrator for reason which were not clearly apparent and have been attributed to ethnic alignment. There are undercurrents of feelings that senior management positions in HEI's should be occupied by people from local communities. While it is true that local communities need fair representation in local institutions, it is also incumbent to acknowledge that these are public institutions funded by public funds and should reflect the face of Kenya.

8.0   Conclusions

From the discussion presented above, it is clear that HEIs in Uasin Gishu has grown tremendously. It is a reality the County is home to a reasonable number of universities in Kenya. The sector is still expanding as more institutions are setting up base within the county. However, there are several challenges facing HEIs in Uasin Gishu The majority of these challenges are not unique to the county because they are more or less generic challenges facing all HEIs in Kenya in general. These institutions have to find ways of dealing with these challenges, restore the glory of their names and reclaim their pristine positions as citadels of higher learning and academic intellectualism.

8.1   Measures to mitigate the constraints facing HE in UG County

One of the objectives of this study was to suggest a raft of measures to mitigate against the challenges that face HEIs within the county. Higher Educational institutions are already implementing action plans to combat the above measures and what is called for is not entirely new but rather an increased intensity in pursuing these strategies and adopting new ones where the old ones seem to be outdated or not working. Some of the measures suggested include the following:

1. HEIs must intensify their efforts in income generation and reduce their reliance on government supported funding. This means they must venture more into income generating activities. Some of these activities include farming, real estate, hotel industry providing hostel services to the increasing number of self-sponsored students

and those that cannot obtain accommodation within the university hostels. Faculty members need to intensify their efforts seeking grants for research in their domiciled institutions.

2. The universities need to provide improved facilities and resources for teaching and learning. There is a serious need to repair the existing facilities and maintain them in top-notch conditions so that the new ones are not acquired while the existing ones have not been repaired. Wastage and destruction of facilities should be prevented by putting in place mechanisms to monitor life cycles of the existing ones and penalize those responsible for wanton destruction or negligence. The procurement processes must be fully adhered to and quality products and service supplied to universities. Modern teaching facilities need to be acquired so that HEIs reflect world class teaching standards.

3. The issue of overcrowded classes must be addressed to ensure quality teaching and learning. More lecture rooms and halls have to be constructed and proper timetabling done properly to ensure that large classes are avoided. Existing faculty need to be fully engaged so that cases of few lectures handling large classes while others are not optimally engaged is reduced.

4. The universities have to increase the number of Ph.D holders within the faculties. Financial support for professional development will provide opportunities for more lectures to pursue doctorates in their areas of specialization. The government must harmonize salaries in both private and public universities so that exodus of lecturers from private to public universities is avoided. The remuneration of lectures should be addressed. The current situation where MCAs are paid salaries equivalent to/more than a university professor should be addressed in advanced degree holders are to be retained in their universities.

5. There must be away of preventing local politicians from interfering with university management. Mechanisms must be put in place to address ethnic and regional balancing in university appointments and admissions. Management must come with ways of addressing student concern before they escalate to damaging levels. This can be in form of regular meetings and vent-out gatherings. Cronyism and favoritism should be eliminated and replaced with merits while making any appointments.

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