

Activities of International Non-Governmental Organizations' in the Promotion of Human Security in Kakamega County, Kenya: Assessing the Opportunities and Challenges

Abstract.

Throughout the last quarter of the 20th Century, up until this day, there has been a gradual, yet enormous, qualitative and quantitative growth in International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) in Kenya. Amidst this upsurge, has been their increased recognition as important actors in the social, political and economic welfare agendas of the country. INGOs have become widely perceived to be either complementing or supplementing the state as players in their new-found human security and development roles. As such, INGOs have self-advertised as providers of human security, which includes various elements viz., economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. However, in spite of this increased and enlarged presence and visibility of INGOs in Kenya, the much sort-after development and accompanying human security goals of the country still remain a distant mirage. In this regard, the study sought to evaluate the challenges that INGOs face in the pursuit of Human Security goals in Kakamega County, Kenya. With the relatively new status of the human security concept, the study promised to contribute to the ever increasing body of knowledge in this area, as well as enrich the developmental approaches and policies applied in Africa which are in need of urgent reform. The study population comprised of the following categories of respondents: officials of INGOs from national to grassroots levels; state officers in relevant departments, from the national level (officials from the NGO Coordination Board), to County development officers, and Members of County Assembly (MCAs); and household heads of beneficiary communities. The study relied on both probability and nonprobability sampling methods to come up with a desirable sample population. The sample sizes for household heads, government officials and members of INGO bodies was 384, 3 and 15 respectively. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data, employing Focus Group Discussions, interviews, observation, and questionnaires as methods of data collection. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used, with the researcher selecting respondents who served as key informants, envisioned to provide primary data, alongside other sources. Secondary data was attained via a thorough review of existing academic literature, which included books, journals, and periodicals. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS version 23 software to obtain descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies and percentages, and presented in tables, graphs, and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic techniques to support quantitative data and presented in form of narrative reports. From this evidence, INGOs face the study found that lack of autonomy (20%) government interference 6.67%, and absence of strategic planning (26.67%). The study found out that state of human security in Kakamega still remains below the desired levels, with the aforementioned challenges limiting the performance of the present INGOs. Therefore, there is need for more stakeholder involvement, better cooperation with the local and national governments, as well as better development strategies in order to achieve the desired developmental and human security goals