

ROLE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PERFORMANCE OF SERVICE DELIVERY OF DEVOLVED GOVERNMENTS: A CASE OF LAIKIPIA COUNTY

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Abstract: Citizen Participation in governance under the 2010 constitution gives the residents of each county the right to be involved in determining their socio economic wellbeing. This would positively influence the performance of county governments. This research sought to study role of citizen participation in performance of devolved government: a case of Laikipia County. Specifically, the study sought to: - analyze the role of citizen participation in project identification on devolved government performance; assess the role of citizen participation in budgetary process on devolved government performance; and determine the role of citizen participation in social audit on devolved government performance in Laikipia County Government. The study findings provide knowledge on the role of citizen participation in performance of the county government since this has not been extensively assessed, the concept of devolved government being a new phenomenon. The study is of importance to policy makers in the Government (National and County Government) in matters of planning and policy formulation regarding enhancing performance in service delivery. Descriptive research design was used in this study whose target population was the village elders, ward administrators and the general public in Laikipia East Constituency. The sample size was selected using multi stage random sampling technique to identify respondents. Data was collected using both secondary and primary data collection methods. Primary data collection tools were self-administered questionnaires and interviews, while journals, text books, and internet were used to collect secondary data. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 23 and was presented using frequency tables and graphs. The role of citizen participation was assessed in terms of how it affects efficient allocation of resources, accountability and reduction of corruption and equity in service delivery. It was found that the participation of citizens has been minimal and the resulting influence on the devolved service delivery negligible. In conclusion, there has been dismal impact of citizen participation, therefore devolved governments should develop a capacity needs assessment tool and a citizen capacity development plan in order to leap the optimum benefits of citizen participation. This is due to the fact that an informed citizenry would be in a position to effectively participate in projects identification, budgeting, and in social audit.

Keywords: CITIZEN, PERFORMANCE, SERVICE DELIVERY.

1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY:

Citizen participation in governance and public service delivery is increasingly pursued in a bid to improve the performance of governments. This is particularly the case at the local level where services need to be differentiated according to local preferences. As a result recent focus of decentralization reforms has been on the government's

relationship with the citizens (Brinkerhoff, 2007). In this context, decentralization is seen as a conducive means of achieving principles of good governance, by what Cheema (2007) calls, 'providing an institutional framework at the sub-national level through which groups and citizens can organize themselves and participate in political and economic decisions affecting them'. This requires local government units that have the political space and capacity to make and effect decisions.

The promulgation of a new constitution in August, 2010 saw Kenya progressively shift from a centralized form of governance to a devolved system comprising national government and county governments (Constitution, 2010). This paradigm shift was precipitated by shortfalls, bureaucracy's inefficiencies, misappropriation of public resources and marginalization in development processes Legal Resource Foundation Trust (Chopra, 2009). Public involvement in governance was viewed as the solution to these shortcomings. It was seen as a means to establish a sense of ownership, sustainability of development initiatives and strengthened local capacity.

Participation was expected to provide checks and balances against unnecessary political interference in service delivery and disregard for professionalism and meritocracy in the public sector. It was also expected to guard against abuse of office by public servants and political leaders and to provide a control against excessive discretion being vested in civil servants in public procedures.

Meaningful citizen participation in governance is a key ingredient for public reforms that were instituted by the Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010. Article 1 (1) of the Constitution vests all sovereign power to the people of Kenya. This power can be expressed through direct participation or indirectly through elected representatives. In addition, various pieces of legislations anchoring devolution highlight the principles of citizen participation. Together, these constitutional and legislative provisions avail various platforms for citizen participation in devolved governance. Citizen participation is one of the national values and is also one of the principles of public service as articulated in the Constitution in Articles 10 (2,a) and Article 232 (1).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The Kenyan Constitution (2010) provides a strong legal foundation for the enhancement of participatory governance through devolved structures at the county level. It lays the basis for development of a policy framework on citizen participation in policy process (Annette, 2012)

Despite existence of a structured policy framework on citizen participation in governance, there is limited knowledge amongst the public of the spaces or opportunities for engagement. Secondly, though the structures exist, there is in some cases little commitment to making them work on the part of duty bearers. Over the past decade or so, there have been increasing opportunities for ordinary citizens to participate in policy-making on a range of issues from example community planning, environmental management, health care and quality, political reform, and science and technology. (Chopra, 2009).

This study therefore, endeavored to analyze the role of citizen participation in influencing the performance of devolved governments in service delivery.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognitive Engagement Theory:

This study was guided by the cognitive engagement theory by Biggs's (1987). The main idea of this theory is that participation depends on citizens having access to information about politics and government policies, and their desire to use that information to engage in a reasoned way.

The increase in the levels of education that helps citizens to acquire and process large amounts of information, it is considered that education provides skills in the area of technology while at the same time increases the individual's ability to analyze it further cheaper in cost to acquire information (TV, electronic media), contribute to produce a process of citizen mobilization.

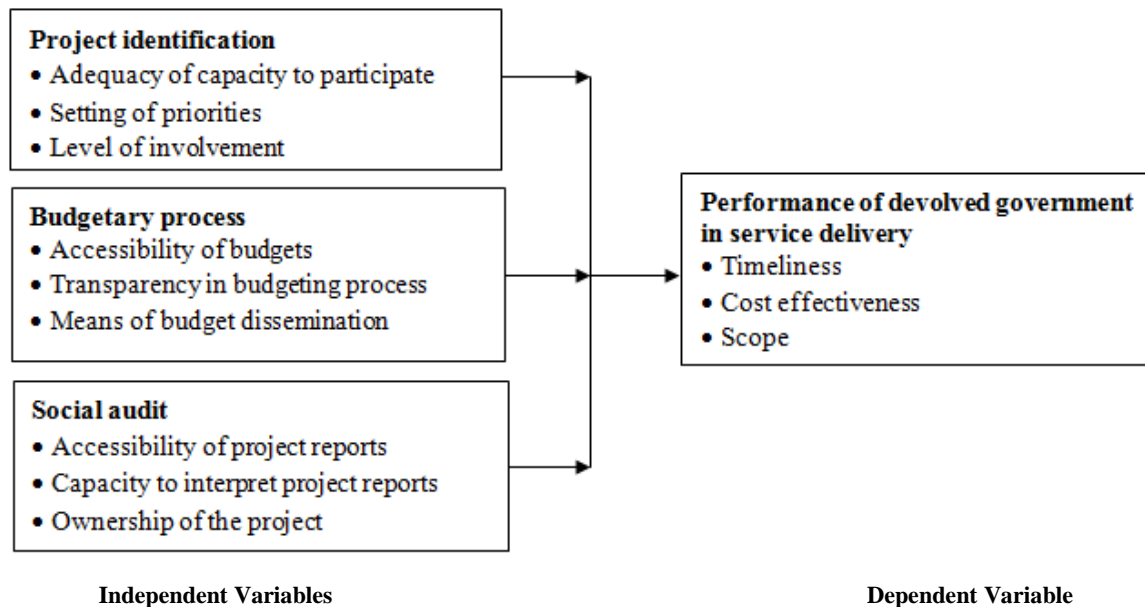
Systems Theory:

This study was guided by Systems Theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1972) who is often cited as the father of general systems theory, first introduced GST in the 1930's, which gained recognition in scientific circles in the 1950's and

1960's. A system is described by the relationships among its components (citizen participation in budgetary, citizen participation in project identification, and evaluation and citizen participation in social audit and the relationship this system has with its environment (Frick, 2004).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework illustrates the interaction between independent variables and the dependent variable in the study.



RESEARCH GAP:

This study does not relate citizen participation with performance of county governments. Secondly, there is a dearth of data on the relationship between participation and service delivery outcomes.

A study by Robinson (2007), observed that there is no systematic or comparative evidence on whether increased citizen participation in decentralized local governance generates better outputs in provision of education, health, drinking water and sanitation services'. This study does not cover all aspects of performance of county governments.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

RESPONSE RATE:

The response rate of the village elders, ward administrators and members of the public were as presented in Table below.

Table: Response rate

Category	Sample size	Response	Percentage
Village Elders	11	11	100
Ward administrators	5	5	100
Public	110	91	82.9

From the table above; illustrates the response rate of the respondents who were sampled and interviewed in the study. The study targeted 11 village elders, 5 ward administrators and 110 members of the public. The response was 100% for the village elders and ward administrators, while for the public it was 82.9%, meaning 91 members of the sampled members of the general public completely filled in and returned the questionnaires, while all the village elders and ward administrators targeted were interviewed. The high response rate is attributed to the fact that the researcher employed 5 research assistants to personally administer the questionnaires and ensure they were filled in by the respondents. Further, the researcher personally interviewed the village elders and ward administrators using the interview guide questionnaires.

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS:

The researcher sought to establish the demographic data of the public respondents and looked at their gender, age, education level, length of stay in Laikipia East Constituency, occupation and income level. Their responses are highlighted in sub sections 4.4.1 for gender, 4.4.2 for age, 4.4.3 for education, 4.4.4 for Length of stay in the study constituency, 4.4.5 for occupation and 4.6.6 for income level.

GENDER OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Their responses are shown in Table below.

Table: Gender of the members of the public

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	70	69.0
Female	28	31.0
Total	91	100.0

From the table above, 69.0% of the members of the public were males while 31.0% were females. This implies there were more males respondents than females which might be because more males are interested in participating in county governance, especially in project identification, budgetary processes and in social audit. This conforms to the observation that there is more male participation in governance processes, as observed in studies by Motsi & Madyiwa (undated) and the assertion by Dick & Zwerveen (2001) for more women involvement for effective citizen participation in governance issues. However, this was not expected to affect the responses from the respondents or in any way creating any form of biasness.

Education of the Members of the public:

The education levels of respondents are shown in Table below

Table: Education level of the members of the public

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Primary school	12	12.9
High / Secondary school	43	47.3
Professional diploma / Tertiary college	16	17.4
University degree	15	16.4
Post graduate education	5	6.0
Total	91	100.0

From the Table above, 47.3% of the respondents had attained secondary education, 17.4% had a diploma, 16.4% had university degree, 12.9% had primary education, and 6.0% of the respondents had post graduate education. The fact that the respondents' education level is relatively high in some areas, this enhanced the responses due to their ability to comprehend the questions asked in the questionnaire. Where education level was low, respondents were assisted by well guided research assistants.

LENGTH OF STAY IN LAIKIPIA EAST CONSTITUENCY:

The respondents were asked for the years they have lived in the area of study. Their lengths of respondents stay in the area are shown in Table below. **Table: Length of the members of the public stay in Laikipia East**

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	1	1.1
1 to 2 years	9	9.9
2 to 3 years	16	17.6
More than 3 years	65	71.4
Total	91	100.0

From the Table above, 71.4% of the respondents had lived in the area of study for more than three years, 17.6% between 2 and 3 years, 9.9%, had lived between 1 and 2 years, and 1.1% less than 1 year. The fact that most of the respondents had lived for more than 3 years, made the snowballing method used effective, and made it easy to identify respondents who took part in given projects. Respondents could easily identify the projects undertaken within the locality and the ones who were involved in respective projects.

OCCUPATION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:

The respondents were asked to indicate their occupation and the occupation distribution is as shown in Table below.

Table: Occupation of the members of the public

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	43	47.3
Business Service	34	37.4
Employed	1	1.1
Skilled laborer	11	12.1
Others	2	2.1
Total	91	100.0

From the Table above, 47.3% of the respondents are farmers, (both crops and livestock), 37.4% are in small scale businesses, 12.1% are skilled laborer, 2.1% are in other occupations, (housewives) and 1.1% are employed. Those in employment were few, owing to the fact that they usually don't have time to participate in county governance.

Income levels of the members of the public

The respondents were asked to indicate their income bracket and the income distribution is as shown in Table below.

Table: Income levels of the members of the public

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Ksh. 2,000 and below	2	2.2
Ksh 2,001 to Ksh 5,000	32	35.1
Ksh 5,001 to Ksh 10,000	43	47.3
Ksh 10,001 and above	14	15.4
Total	91	100.0

From the Table above, 47.3% of the respondents have income levels between Ksh 5,001 and Ksh 10,000; 35.1% had income level between Ksh 2,001 and Ksh 5,000; 15.4% had income level Ksh 10,001 and above; and 2.2% had Ksh 2,000 and below. This show the majority are living above a dollar a day.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT IDENTIFICATION:

The researcher sought to find out how citizen participation in project identification influences performance of the devolved government. The respondents were asked questions related to citizens involvement in identification and prioritization of projects, process of involvement, citizens empowerment to hold the government accountable to identified projects, and approaches to improve citizen participation in project identification. On the part of village elders and ward administrators, they were asked during the interviews, how they involved the public in project identification and prioritization, how they invite the public to participate in the projects, if the citizens have the capacity to effectively participate in project identification and prioritization, if at all they see the importance of citizen participation, and how citizen participation can be improved.

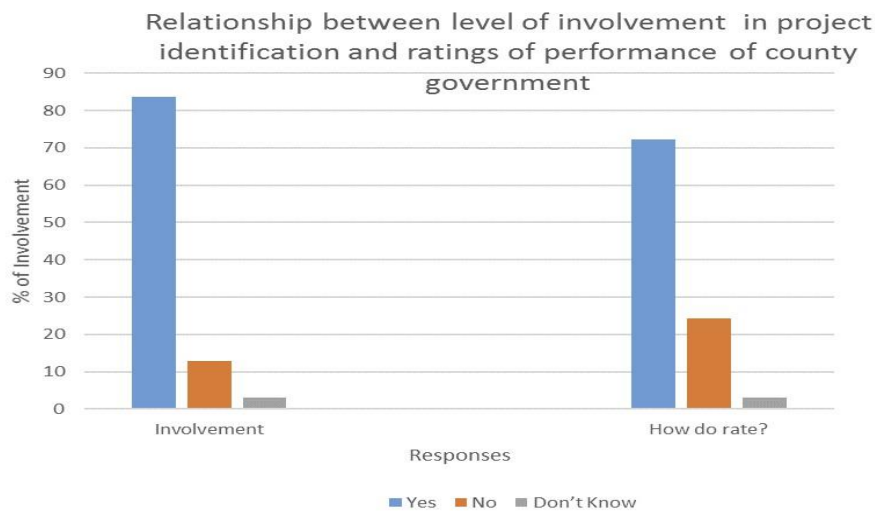
CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT IDENTIFICATION:

The study sought to find out whether, according to the respondents, if the county government involves citizens in project identification and the projects in which they have been involved and the rating of county government in citizen involvement in project identification. Their responses; are as shown in table below:

Table: Citizen Involvement in project identification and county government performance rating

Citizens involved	Frequency	Percentage	Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	76	83.7	High	66	72.3
No	12	12.9	Low	22	24.3
Don't know	3	3.4	Don't know	3	3.4
Total	91	100.0		91	100.0

The graph below shows the relationship between the level of citizen participation and performance of county government rating.



From the Table above, 83.7% of the respondents indicated that indeed county government involves citizens in projects identification, 12.9% of the respondents said they were not involved, while

3.4% indicated they did not know if the county government involved citizens in projects identification. For those who said yes, they indicated that the county government involved citizens in water and health services provision related projects especially water pans, water storage tanks and dispensaries, as indicated in the table.

Projects in which citizen have been involved identification

Related projects involved in identification	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture, Livestock and fisheries	11	12.0
Water, Environment, natural resources and Sanitation	39	42.9
Transport, public works and infrastructure	3	3.3
Trade, tourism and co-op development	1	1.1
Health services	31	34.1
Education science and technology	4	4.4
Lands, physical planning, housing & urbanization	1	1.1
Youth, sports and social services	1	1.1
Total	91	100.0

Citizens have largely been involved in identification of water pans, (42.9%) health centers, dispensaries (34.1%), 12.0% agriculture and livestock related projects like animal vaccination projects, cattle dips and irrigation, 3.3% have been involved in identification of rural roads that require upgrading and murraming, while 1.1% have been involved in youth, sports and social services; Lands, physical planning, housing and urbanization and in Trade, tourism, and cooperative development, in each of the categories.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT PRIORITIZATION:

The study sought to find out whether, according to the respondents, if the county government involves citizens in prioritization of projects identified. Their responses are as shown in Table below.

Citizen Involvement in project prioritization

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	5.3
No	83	91.3
Don't Know	3	3.4
Total	91	100.0

From the Table above, 5.3% of the respondents indicated that indeed county government involves citizens in projects prioritization, 91.3% of the respondents said they were not involved, while 3.4% indicated they did not know if the county government involved citizens in projects prioritization. Those who said yes confirmed that prioritization of projects is normally done during the project identification sessions, especially where citizens identify two or more projects. Those who said no, argued that after they identify the project, it remains the work of the county government to prioritize based on the funds available. Those who said that they don't know, cited the fact that it is because they had not even been involved in identification of projects.

From the interviews, there was an indication from both the ward administrators and village elders, that the projects identification and prioritization are done concurrently, where after the public identifies the different projects, they agree on the projects that are to be implemented in short term, midterm and in long term.

CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT TO HOLD COUNTY GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE ON IDENTIFIED PROJECTS:

The researcher sought to find out if citizens are empowered to hold the county government accountable on identified project. The respondents were asked questions related to citizens capacity to critique the county government actions or inactions on identified projects, if there are automated processes for government – citizens interactions, and if there exists checks and balances that foster accountability on identified projects.

CITIZENS' CAPACITY TO CRITIQUE COUNTY GOVERNMENT:

The study sought to find out whether, according to the respondents, if the citizens have the capacity to critique actions or inactions of the county government on projects identified. Their responses are as shown in Table below.

Table : Citizens' capacity to critique county government

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	67	51.6
No	12	45.1
Don't know	3	3.3
Total	91	100.0

From the Table, 51.6% of the respondents indicated that indeed the citizens have the capacity to hold the county government accountable, 45.1% felt that the citizens don't have the capacity, while 3.3% was not sure if the citizens have the capacity to hold the county government to account.

From the interviews, the 87.7% of village elders and the ward administrators indicated that the public had the capacity to critique actions or inactions of the county government on projects identified only for the fact that there is no institutionalized way of critiquing and giving feedback. Nevertheless, 12.3% indicated that the public doesn't have the capacity to critiques, this is because they are either less concerned or they are not willing to formally give their points of view and end up complaining.

AUTOMATED PROCESSES FOR GOVERNMENT - CITIZEN INTERACTIONS:

The study sought to find out whether, there is an automated process for government - citizens' interactions during the project identification. Their responses are as shown in Table below.

Table: Presence of government - citizen automated interaction process

Presence of government – citizen automated interaction process	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	1.1
No	87	75.8
Don't know	3	23.1
Total	91	100.0

From Table below, 75.8% of the respondents indicated that there was no automated interaction process between government and citizens during the project identification, 1.1% indicated there was, while 23.1% did not know if there was, where they largely indicated that they were not sure if it indeed existed.

From the interviews, the ward administrators and the village elders indicated that there was no automated process of interaction between the government and the citizen in project identification. However, there is a proposal on publishing information on a variety of open data platforms to enhance virtual participation of public in identification of development projects.

Existence of checks and balances to foster accountability

The study sought to find out whether, according to the respondents, if the county government involves citizens in project identification and the projects in which they have been involved. Their responses are as shown in Table below.

Table : Presence of checks and balances to foster accountability

Presence of checks and balances to foster accountability in project identification	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	1.1
No	87	75.8
Don't know	3	23.1
Total	91	100.0

From the Table, 75.8% of the respondents indicated that there was no checks and balances to foster accountability in project identification, 1.1% indicated there was, while 23.1% did not know if there was checks and balances to foster accountability in project identification. From the interviews, the ward administrators and village elders indicated that there were checks and balances to foster accountability in project identification, entrenched within the rules of citizen participation that calls for representation of all, meaning gender representation, the youth, people living with disabilities, minority and other vulnerable groups. All the same 37.5% of the interviewees said that the public participation fora had no good representation of communities/regions because self-interests of certain people and population plays a big role and some communities are left out due to their small numbers.

APPROACHES TO IMPROVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT IDENTIFICATION:

The study sought to find out which would be the most effective way to involve the citizens in project identification. Responses from the public, village elders and ward administrators were varied and included:- Awareness creation amongst both duty bearers and citizens on what citizen participation is and its importance in projects identification; The county government need to designate funds to facilitate the process of citizen awareness creation, publish and widely disseminate any information of public significance in accordance with the relevant legislation and explore alternative methods of disseminating information. Besides, there is need to give sufficient notice of meetings to enable communities adequately prepare to attend and participate effectively in consultations. Majority of the respondent 95% felt that capacity building of the citizens to empower them to participate effectively in formulation of projects and plans, implement projects and ensure their sustainable management.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN BUDGETARY PROCESS:

The researcher sought to find out how citizen participation in budgetary process influences performance of the devolved government. The respondents were asked questions related to citizens involvement budget making process, how they are involved, accessibility of county budget and plans to citizens for scrutiny, means of budget dissemination to public and approaches to improved citizen participation on in budgetary processes.

CITIZENS INVOLVEMENT IN BUDGET MAKING PROCESS:

The respondents were asked if citizens are involved in the budget making process. Their responses were as indicated in the table below

Table: Citizens involvement in budget making process

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	1.1
No	87	75.8
Don't Know	3	23.1
Total	91	100.0

From the Table, 75.8% of the respondents felt the citizens are not involved in the budget making processes, while 23.1% were not sure if the county governments involves citizens in budgeting. Only 1.1% said that the county government involved citizens in budget making process. This was attributed to the fact that budget making process requires technical input. The graph below indicates the responses regarding their involvement in the budget making process.

There was a concurrence between the respondents from the public, and the village elders and ward administrators interviewed, where 90% of the interviewed respondents said there was almost no involvement of citizens in the budget making process, due to complexities of the process.

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Role of citizens in project identification in devolved government performance

The first objective sought to analyze the role of citizen participation in project identification on devolved government performance in Laikipia county government and the results showed that 83.7% of the respondents indicated that indeed the county government involved them in project identification while 12.9% of the respondents said they have never participated in project identification. It was noted that 72.3% of the respondents rates the county government highly in performance, having been involved in project identification, while 24.3% rated the government lowly.

However, it was noted that the county government did not involve the citizens in project identification in all its functions. 45.1% of the respondents indicated to have been involved in water provision related projects (such as water pans), followed by health provision related projects such as health centers and dispensaries. None of the respondents had been involved in some of the county government functions related projects such as Lands, physical planning, housing and urbanization; and Trade, tourism and co-operative development.

On the other hand, there was very little citizen participation in project prioritization, with 5.3% of respondents indicating to have been involved in project prioritization. However, there was an indication from the respondents of the interviews that the projects identification and prioritization are done concurrently, where after the public identifies the different projects, they agree on the projects that are to be implemented in short term, midterm and in long term.

Regarding citizens level of empowerment to hold the county government accountable on identified project, it was noted that 51.6% of the respondents felt the citizens have the capacity to hold the county government accountable, 45.1% felt that the citizens don't have the capacity, while 3.3% was not sure if the citizens have the capacity to hold the county government to account. Besides, 75.8% of the respondents indicated that there was no automated interaction process between government and citizens during the project identification, 1.1% indicated there was, while 23.1% did not know if there was, where they largely indicated that they were not sure if it indeed existed. In addition, 75.8% of the respondents indicated that there was no checks and balances to foster accountability in project identification, 1.1% indicated there was, while 23.1% did not know if there was checks and balances to foster accountability in project identification.

Finally, it was noted that citizen participation in project identification can be improved through:-Awareness creation on what citizen participation is and its importance in projects identification; The county government designate funds to facilitate the process of citizen awareness creation, publish and widely disseminate any information of public significance in accordance with the relevant legislation and explore alternative methods of disseminating information. Besides, there is need to give sufficient notice of meetings to enable communities adequately prepare to attend and participate effectively in consultations. Majority of the respondent 95% felt that capacity building of the citizens to empower them to participate effectively in formulation of projects and plans, implement projects and ensure their sustainable management.

The computed Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was 0.703 which depicts a strong positive correlation between citizen participation in project identification and performance of the county government. This means more citizen participation in project identification lead to better performance of devolved government performance.

INFLUENCE OF THE CITIZENS IN THE BUDGETARY PROCESS IN DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE:

The second objective sought to assess the role of citizen participation in budgetary process on devolved government performance in Laikipia County Government and the findings showed that, 75.8% of the respondents felt the citizens are not involved in the budget making processes, while 23.1% were not sure if the county governments involves citizens in budgeting. Only 1.1% said that the county government involved citizens in budget making process. This was attributed to the fact that budget making process requires technical input. There was a concurrence between the respondents from the public, and the village elders and ward administrators interviewed, where 90% of the interviewed respondents said there was almost no involvement of citizens in the budget making process, due to complexities of the process.

On accessibility of county budget and plans by citizens, though the county government has been publishing the budget, the majority 87.8% felt than the budget was not transparent and they didn't know if it is done on time. However, for those who had accessed the budgets, only a few,

12.0% were of the opinion that it is not done in a language citizens understand and not easy to understand, while the majority, felt it was done in a language that citizens can understand and easy to interpret. The rest, 12.2% had not accessed the budget, so they didn't know if it is easy to interpret and understand. In regard to the means of budget dissemination 87.8% had accessed the budget, and all had accessed it through public baraza. 12.2% had never accessed the county budget

From the interviews, such public information like county government spending and budgets, is not known to many respondents. 62% of the respondents don't know while 38% of the respondent are aware. This shows that there is big gap between those who know and those who lack basic public information in the county.

Finally the researcher sought to find out which would be the most effective way to involve the citizens in budgetary process. Majority of the respondent (95%) felt that capacity building of the citizens to empower them to participate effectively in budget formulation was important; Technical personnel from relevant government ministries such as finance, water, roads and public works need to be incorporated in the planning stages to provide guidance on the identified needs and the requisite financial and technical resources of projects; and the need to have a legal framework to actualize citizen participation in budget making at the county level. The researcher asked respondents to indicate what they thought the county government should do to improve its budget communication to the citizen. A number of responses were floated by the respondents and the researcher sampled a number of the responses which were relevant to the question. They proposed that the government can improve its communication by calling public barazas using posters and also calling members using phone, by using radios, phones and pamphlets. They should also have a schedule of meeting with specific dates and times every month rather than calling for a meeting on immediate, urgent and emergency basis

The computed Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient is 0.606 which depicts a strong positive correlation between citizen participation in budgetary processes and the performance of the devolved government. This means that the more the citizens are involved in budgetary processes, the better the performance of the devolved governments.

ROLE OF SOCIAL AUDIT BY CITIZENS' ON DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE:

The third objective sought to determine the role of citizen participation in social audit on devolved government performance of Laikipia County Government. The majority (97.3%) of the respondents didn't know if the county government involves citizens in social audit of development projects, while 2.7% said the county government did not involve citizens. None of the respondents said that there was citizen participation in social audit. There was a concurrence between the respondents from the public, and the village elders and ward administrators interviewed, here 90% of the interviewed respondents said there was almost no involvement of citizens in the social audit.

Regarding the access to county government transactions by citizens for social audit of development projects, the majority (97.3%) of the respondents didn't know if the county government transactions were accessible for social audit, most citing having never been interested, while 2.7% said the county government transactions were not easy to get, and where available, not easy to interpret. From the interviews, there was a concurrence with the respondents from the public, where 92.3% of the interviewed respondents said that the public was not very interested in

the transactions of the county, thus explaining the high percentage not knowing if the transactions were actually easy to assess. Nevertheless, 7.7% of the interviewees felt it was easy to access government transactions for social audit.

In addition, the respondents gave their views on how social audit influences performance of the county government, as follows: - a majority (87.3%) felt that it would help improve service delivery, increase citizen trust in government, and expose grand and petty corruption in public spaces. However, 81.6% said that social audit would not increase participation in an organized effort to solve problems, this was attributed to the fact that there are other factors that influences citizen participation in solving a common problem. Nevertheless, 27.9% felt that social audit would lead to improved access to county public officials as well as promotes responsiveness, effectiveness and accountability of county government to its people.

In regard to the most effective way to involve the citizens in social audit, majority of the respondent (97.8%) felt that capacity building of the citizens to empower them to participate effectively in social audit was important; Awareness creation was also rated highly, as most people are not even aware that they have a right to participate in social audit. A few (16.3%) felt that there is need to have an institutional legal framework which is appropriate and workable, and provides for citizen participation in social audit. This would include a comprehensive system for compiling and distributing reports, and information used for decision making. Further, 56.9% felt that there was need for the county government to designate funds for social audits facilitation.

The computed Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient between citizen participation in social audit and performance of the devolved governments was 0.688. This depicts a strong positive correlation between citizen participation in social audit and performance of the devolved governments. This means more citizen participation in social audit may improve performance of the devolved governments.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the Citizen participation in project identification, budgetary process and social audit has an influence on performance of the devolved government and to a greater extent more involvement in the three, leads to a better performance of devolved government. The study also concludes that the citizen participation in devolved government processes is not just “a nice-to-have” thing, since it is provided for in the constitution, but is a core requirement of effective service delivery.

Further, capacity development of citizens helps and/or influences the effectiveness of the citizens in their participation in project identification, prioritization, budgeting and social auditing of development projects.

Most of the respondents reiterated the fact that access to information was a factor influencing the level of citizen participation. They proposed that the government should improve communication by calling public barazas using posters and also calling members using phone, by using radios, phones and pamphlets. There should also be a schedule of meeting with specific dates and times every month rather than calling for a meeting on immediate, urgent and emergency basis Further, most respondent were in agreement that citizen participation helps improve service delivery, increase citizen trust in government, and expose grand and petty corruption in public spaces.

The findings of the study will assist policy makers to understand how to better involve citizens in project identification, prioritization, budgeting and social auditing and as such help in development of a framework through which the citizens are actively and effectively involved in the devolved governance processes, for enhanced service delivery.

It is also imperative for the devolved governments to develop a capacity needs assessment tool and a citizen capacity development plan, if they are to leap the optimum benefits of citizen participation. This is due to the fact that an informed citizenry will be in a position to effectively participate in projects identification, budgeting, social audit as well as participate in policy formulation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above findings, the following are the recommendations of the study:

Citizens should be trained and empowered on how to go about participating in project identification, prioritization, budgeting and social auditing of development projects. This will require a concerted effort between the civil society and the devolved governments. Further, the devolved governments should improve on their interactions and

communications with the members of the public through the means that is accessible to all. Proposals were given among them open data platform, where citizens can access information online. Besides, there is need to give sufficient notice of meetings to enable communities adequately prepare to attend and participate effectively in consultations.

In addition, citizen participation should be an all-inclusive exercise, where all stakeholders and different categories of citizens are represented, to include the minority, PLWD, the youths as well as regional balance among others.

Besides, to facilitate effective citizen participation in budgetary process, technical personnel from relevant government ministries such as finance, water, roads and public works need to be incorporated in the planning stages to provide guidance on the identified needs and the requisite financial and technical resources of projects

Finally, for effective citizen participation in social audit, there need to include a comprehensive system for compiling and distributing reports, and information used for decision making. The devolved government also need to designate funds for social audits facilitation.

AREAS OF FURTHER STUDY:

Future research should seek to establish best practices within different county governments with an intention to share them with other devolved governments. Further, it is recommended that further studies to be done to establish the role of different actors in the performance of devolved governments; Relevance of the concept of citizen participation and how it is being implemented in the devolved governance structures; as well as to determine the imperatives of an effective framework of Citizen Participation in County Government.

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