

Effectiveness and Usage of Various Modes of Public Participation in Kericho County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, devolution that is now around ten years old, gives a voice and a means to the population to participate directly in their affairs. The 2010 Kenyan Constitution prescribes public participation in public policy processes but the practicality of its implementation is complex and needs to be understood by research. This paper focused on the modes of participation available to the public in the development projects in Kericho County, Kenya. The study utilized a concurrent mixed research design. Quantitative data analysis was done using frequencies and percentages; while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study established that public participation in various modes was low. The various modes of public participation were; participation in budget preparation, attending diverse fora, scrutinizing records, electing project leaders, and attending seminars. The public- viewed through the lenses of the public choice theory- did not readily embrace the various modes of public participation to input into the political system- especially in this realm of development. This study recommends that the County Government of Kericho and non-state actors should develop strategize to overcome constraints imposed by the public choice theory on the public as the public input into the political system- and in particular- on the public development processes.

Keywords: Public participation, Modes of participation, and devolved governments.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of public involvement in government decision-making has been in existence for long. In Kenya, public participation has influenced policy discussions on planning and development for more than three decades. The most recent development was the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution which saw devolution of power and resources to the counties (Nyaranga, Hao and Hongo, 2019). The constitution of Kenya, 2010, directs the national and county governments to ensure that they institute means through which citizens can participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes. For example, Chapter 11, Article (174) (c) and (d) of the Constitution provide for the power of self-governance by the people to enhance their participation in decision-making. Kenyans enjoy the use of several avenues or methods for citizen participation because of this liberal constitution. However, the avenues are only effective when the people are aware of their rights.

For example, people participate through voting in an election as the first and most fundamental input process in politics. After leaders take over their positions in public offices, the public can then demand accountability from them through various means. According to EIPP (2009), a clearly defined constitutional framework is a prerequisite for effective public participation. Only through an explicit and shared understanding between politicians and the citizens can confidence be developed and democracy realized. EIPP (2009), further emphasize a systematic approach to public participation methods to help organizers of

public participation processes choose the most suitable and effective methods or modes.

There are various modes of participation which can be used by the public. Kauzya (2007) for instance, categorizes participation into two, participation through voting and voice. Voting represents a perfect example of participation and plays a fundamental role in politics. The most understood form of citizen participation which is also the most common is voting in elections and referenda. It is through voting that the views of most people are represented more than any other activity. Aklilu, Belete and Moyo (2014), note that voting alone may not solve the problems of public participation. As the initiatives increase, the public ends up voting on things they do not clearly understand. Besides, voting often oversimplifies problems and does not give priority to the most pressing needs. For example, a national referendum often raises a question that requires a yes or a no answer. The most effective referendum may need to raise multiple-choice questions, which unfortunately renders the process complex.

King, Feltey and Susel (1998) noted that both citizens and politicians have realized that traditional participation through the institutional channels of elections has a very small impact on how policies are made. For example, elected leaders are rewarded or punished after a specified period by voting them in or out. The process is however so indirect and hardly effective as an accountability mechanism because it fails to provide the public with a means to evaluate government performance regularly (Aklilu, Belete and Moyo, 2014). Elections cannot therefore be of use in transforming a regime that tolerates poor performance. Elections do not also provide a means to give feedback.

On another side, Kauzya (2007) states that voice participation allows the public to influence the decisions on development needs, in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. That includes demanding accountability from the local leadership. Lederach (2005) explains that voice centers on conversations that are inclusive, and that are grounded on understanding, mutuality and accessibility. He further explains that when people have a voice, their thoughts, feelings and viewpoints receive a hearing, and are recognized. Such groups or individuals in society possess the capacity to create an impact both in their situations and even in group struggles.

Kauzya (2007), explains voice participation to include: When members scrutinize written documents, magazines, newspapers and other materials to judge the accuracy of information; When citizens are provided with opportunities to participate in public and private political discussions or debates on issues; it includes citizens lobbying for an issue by convincing their Member of Parliament to vote in a particular manner or for proposals they support. Additionally, this is realized when the citizen signs a petition on a desired government action or policy or one meant to sanction a leader. Others are: when individuals or groups write to elected officials to try and express their opinions on issues of concern. Citizens can also contribute money to political parties or candidates they would like to see elected because of the values they hold. Furthermore, citizens can attend rallies and other public meetings to listen and contribute to issues they are concerned with. Finally, citizens, based on a manifesto, can also participate by campaigning for a candidate of their choice during elections. Other means of participation include vying in an election, volunteering to serve the state, serving the country through military or other service to the country, and conducting peaceful civil disobedience of laws or policies that are seen as unjust. Kauzya's categories are however not exhaustive. There are other modes of participation including; lobby groups, public hearings, peaceful demonstrations, social audits, and citizen action groups that may bring out desirable results (Haste and Hogan, 2006).

For instance, one way of pressuring the government when it fails to heed the demands of the electorate is through the formation of civil society movements and organizations in different regions of the country. Civil societies include all institutions, corporate bodies and voluntary organizations that are not part of the state or smaller than a state but are greater than the family. It also excludes business organizations. Civil societies

have a variety of avenues to input into the political system, which include; lobby groups, public hearings, peaceful demonstrations, social audits and citizen action groups (Uraia Trust & International Republican Institute, 2012).

Other modes of participation can be used to pressure the government, to listen to individuals or groups of individuals. For example, people can organize public fora or locally organized barazas (public meetings), protests and riots. Some modes of participation can be more aggressive and sometimes violent- and may have adverse effects on society. Cogan and Sharpe (1986), give five benefits of providing for public participation in every planning process: the process provides information and important ideas on public issues; it gains public support for planning decisions; it helps to avoid protracted conflicts and costly delays; it helps to cultivate goodwill from the public which can ease future cooperation and decisions; and it helps promote trust between the public agency and the public.

There are identifiable shortcomings in the literature on forms of public participation. Even though the modes can yield a lot of helpful information and desirable results, the downside is the slow and sometimes costly processes involved (Irimie?, 2017). The law however requires that the due process should be followed to the latter. Individuals have the right to be served and when those bestowed the duties as government officials fail to act, people have the right to exploit all possible means. Effective public participation is only possible when all the legally permitted means are put into practice while being supervised by strict oversight authorities (Zhang, 2012). Any breaches by government officials on the steps and procedures involved in public participation can end up in protracted conflicts and costly court procedures.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

The Rational Choice Model

This theory borrows the same principles used by economists to analyze people's actions in the marketplace and then applies them to explain people's actions in collective decision-making. Economists, in explaining people's behaviour in the marketplace place assume that people are motivated mainly by self-interest. In the pursuit of the said interests, there are a range of alternatives that require individuals to make decisions. This theory when applied in explaining collective decision-making in this study, serves to show that self-interests guide the behaviour of voters, politicians, lobbyists, or bureaucrats. One of the chief underpinnings of public choice theory is the missing incentive for a voter to monitor government effectively and hence the low public participation. A rational man will always find enough reasons to pursue the outcomes of such a process as elections, demonstrations, lobbying, scrutinizing documents or monitoring of government projects. In the process of making choices, it is assumed that there are subjectively conceived elements leading to constraints and therefore limiting alternatives. In this study, the theory in the collection of data aimed at explaining the attitudes, constraints, alternatives, utility and social outcomes of participation using the various modes of governmental development activities (Callahan, 2007).

Conceptual Framework

This research study presents a conceptual framework of factors affecting public participation in development projects, in Kericho County. The relationship between the independent and the dependent variables is depicted in a diagram. This is presented in Figure 1, where the independent variable public participation depends on modes of public participation to achieve outcomes on county development projects- which is the dependent variable. There is however the effect of intervening variables, which is explained by the Rational Choice theory. The effect on the dependent variable, namely, county projects is being examined in the context of the devolved system.

Independent variable (Public participation)

Dependent variable

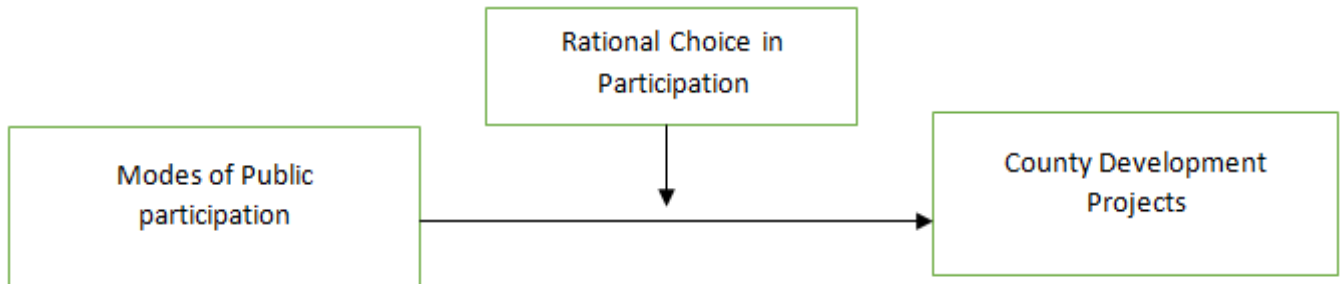


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Modes of public participation include Attending seminars, the election of leaders, attending for a, and providing labour in county projects.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a concurrent mixed research design. The design facilitates a more complete understanding of the research problem because it combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2012). The focus was to establish the effectiveness of the various modes of public participation in County Government development projects. The target population comprised all people of Kericho County who are above the age of 18 years and are approximately 375, 668 (IEBC register 2017). This population is made up of all those who are eligible to participate in decision-making in the County.

This research selected 250 respondents for questionnaires and ten (10) for interview schedules. The respondents selected were to be as representative of the total population as possible, to give a miniature cross-section (Kothari, 2004). The data was collected in four sub-counties Kipkelion-East, Kipkelion-West, Soin-Sigowet and Kericho East (Ainamoi) randomly. The sub-counties were stratified into clusters represented by ward boundaries. The method served to provide more precise estimates for each Ward that make for a cluster in this study. By employing cluster sampling, the researcher arrived at results that were more reliable and with detailed information (Sharma, 2017)). The researcher chose randomly where to collect data.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2009), explained that generalizations about populations from data collected using any probability samples are based on statistical probability. To be in control of circumstances that could affect the reliability of data, the desired sample size was determined using the formula of Fisher et al (1991)

Fisher et al gave a formula for calculating samples in a population above 10,000 particularly when it is infinite.

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where-:

n – Is the desired sample size (assuming the population is greater than 10, 000). For this study, population is approximately 901,777(KNBS, 2019)

z – The standard normal deviation, set at 1.96, which corresponds to 95% confidence level

p – The proportion in the target population estimated to have a particular characteristic. If there is no reasonable estimate, then use 50 percent. For this study those above 18 years are approximately 375, 668 (IEBC register 2017) (the study therefore used 0.58).

$q = 1.0 - p$ (For this study 1.0-0.58)

d = the degree of accuracy desired, here set at 0.05 corresponding to the 1.96.

In substitution, $n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.58 \times (1-0.58)}{0.05^2} = 381.9648$ (rounded off to 382 for the whole county)

For this research therefore the researcher decided to use 250 respondents to reduce the effect of non-responses on the suitability of the sample. Data collection was done in only four sub-counties out of the total six, which was slightly more than half the county.

This study made use of questionnaires with both closed-ended and open-ended questions and interview schedules, to obtain the primary data. Secondary data was obtained by analyzing documents and records on various activities related to public participation. The sampling procedure for the present study employed multi-stage sampling.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VARIOUS MODES OF PARTICIPATION AVAILABLE IN KERICHO COUNTY

The responses on the participation of individual respondents through the various modes were cross-checked with the opinions on the effectiveness of each mode.

Table 1: Effectiveness of modes of participation

Effective participation mode	N (%)
Attending budget reading	27(11.6)
Scrutinizing records	40(17.2)
Participation in demonstration	56(24.0)
Attending fora	74(31.8)
Others	36(15.5)

Results suggest that 74 respondents which correspond to around thirteenth per cent (31.8%) stated that fora were the most effective mode of participation. A forum is a public deliberation meeting where people come together face-to-face in a discussion aimed at solving a problem or collecting feedback (Bone, Crockett and Hodge, 2006). The Forum in the case of this study is a meeting between officials from the County Government of Kericho and members of the public. Fora are usually organized by the Office of the Governor with the help of Sub-County administrators and the Member of County Assembly to address issues of development, solve problems and seek the contributions of the public in terms of ideas.

Table 2: Participation in a public forum

Mode of participation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Attend fora where the Governor or other county executives are addressing issues of development around our area.	72(30.9)	53(22.7)	29(12.4)	56(24.0)	19(8.2)

When asked whether they have attended any forum aimed at public participation, seventy-five respondents- or about thirty-two per cent (32.2%) either agreed or strongly agreed. This therefore means that about thirty-two per cent (32.2%) have attended at least one forum in the past compared to about the same percentage (31.8%) who thinks the forum is the most effective.

The results suggest that low participation in the forum – about 125 respondents that are about fifty-four percent (53.6%) had never attended a forum. There may be many reasons why people are reluctant to attend public forums. One of the respondents explained that forums are not effective because very few people get to know when the forums are held. The respondent further claimed that the views collected in the form were not representative of the overall public views. Some of the views collected include:

“Workshops. They are only held in halls far from us” (Interview schedule respondent 3)

“Baraza’s. The baraza’s are very dormant” (Interview schedule respondent 4)

“No. Not all people can manage to attend them” (Interview schedule respondent 7)

“County meet the people tour. Lack of awareness or knowledge on such forums” (Interview schedule respondent 9)

“No. I haven’t been invited to one or get any information related to forums or meetings”. (Interview schedule respondent 10)

The responses are in line with Burkhalter, Gastil and Kelshaw, (2002), who claimed, that people have left forums disappointed and discouraged on many occasions because of deficits associated with the forum.

Participation through demonstrations is the second mode of participation according to the results of this study. The results indicated that twenty-six respondents (26) respondents- about eleven per cent (11.2%) strongly agreed to have taken part in demonstrations and fifteen (15) others- about six per cent (6.4%) – strongly agreed to have participated. Thus in total, around seventeen (17) percent of the respondents had taken part in the demonstration. Those who thought the demonstration was an effective mode of participation in government projects were more than those who had taken part in such demonstrations. The results from the data indicated that forty- seven (147) or about sixty-three (63.1%) per cent had never taken part in a demonstration.

Table 3: Participation in demonstration

Mode of participation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Participate in demonstration to protest against specific county government plans and projects	82(35.2)	65(27.9)	42(18.0)	26(11.2)	15(6.4)

From the results, both those who disagree and those who neither agree nor disagree form a significant part of the participants in the present study. This can be interpreted to mean the members of the public are not sure whether demonstrations can serve as a way of solving grievances. This can be understood from the perspective of the Rational Choice Theorist so in this study, participation comes at a cost. An individual's choice to participate in the demonstration is subject to constrain and social outcomes. For instance, if demonstrations could receive social approval, then it could increase the psychological benefits of participation. In Kericho County, some people have perceived demonstrations to be a method used by idlers, thieves and other perverts in the society.

The difference in participation can also be attributed to the nature of activities involved in demonstrations that do not favour the old, the physically challenged and those who fear violent activities. Some of the so-called peaceful demonstrations, on many occasions, have ended up being violent and with casualties. Also, most demonstrations take place in urban areas because they are meant to capture the attention of senior government officials and the media. Another way to understand this is that, there has never been any history or memory of demonstrations as a mode of pressurizing government in the area.

Scrutinizing records came third as a mode of public participation. When the respondents were asked whether they had participated in scrutinizing records, thirty- two (32) of them or about fourteen (13.7%) per cent did affirm their participation in such an exercise. A further thirteen (13) or about six per cent (5.6%) strongly agreed to have participated in scrutinizing the County records on development projects. Thus about nineteen percent (19.3%) affirmed that they participated in scrutinizing records. Scrutinizing records involves going through the County documents to check them against what one knows or expects. It is a way of finding out information which may not be readily available to the public but is accessible through the County offices or the County website.

Scrutinizing records may not be effective across the population in this study because of the technicalities involved which make it difficult to understand such records as can be found in the County Government. Applying the rational choice theory therefore implies that the method may not be embraced by all members of the population. The inability to meet the cost of participation in this mode automatically creates a limitation on the use of the mode. It requires one to be trained or to be an expert in a given field or even more, to receive an explanation.

Table 4: Participation in scrutinizing records

Mode of participation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Participate in scrutinizing records to seek for information about a particular project	91(39.1)	70(30.0)	21(9.0)	32(13.7)	13(5.6)

Those who have participated- about nineteen per cent (19.3%) and those who thought it was the most effective- about seventeen per cent (17.2%) – indicate a difference that can be explained. Not all of those who participated, think the exercise provided them with the information they needed and therefore only about seventeen per cent (17.2%) found value in the exercise. Not all who are literate can understand County Government records. As Kauzya (2007) explained, scrutinizing written documents by members of the public is to judge the accuracy of the information provided. The researcher notes that some records are complex to understand and unless one gets the required assistance, the records can be of little significance. Levels of understanding differ and may very well be the reason others thought the method was not effective in providing the much-desired information about a given project. Another possible reason is that access to such records may have financial implications. Some records may be accessible only through buying copies from cybercafé, for example, tender documents. Some require internet access which also needs one to pay.

One respondent explained that, scrutinizing records can be the best but there is no motivation to spend on such a course.

“Print media. Not effective because not all people can manage to afford them”. (Interview respondent 2)

The fourth mode of public participation was attending the budget reading. Twenty (20) respondents or about nine per cent (8.6%) agreed that they regularly attended budget readings; an additional 3 or about one per cent (1.3%) strongly agreed. Thus around ten percent (9.9%) of the respondents had attended budget reading. Budget reading takes place at the County Headquarters annually at the start of the Government financial year. At the budget reading forum, a breakdown of all County activities and allocations to various ministries are unveiled to the public. The process is aimed at promoting transparency on the use of public funds by the County Government. The public is then able to demand accountability and monitor the projects to ensure the prudent use of county government resources for the public good. The rational choice is based on the level of education of individuals and understanding of financial records which allows them to participate effectively and demand what is due for their government expenditure.

The fact that budget reading takes place at the County Headquarters can cause inconveniences to people living in far places hence a higher cost of participation. Utilizing the Rational choice theory, individuals are likely to attend or ignore such budget reading functions depending on how much it costs or the benefits they draw from the process. For example, some of the rural dwellers could be willing to participate but due to their far distance to the County Headquarters, they are not able to attend. For instance, a cumulative, 179(76.9%) disagree with the opinion of having ever attended the budget reading. These results suggest that attendance of budget reading is not a popular mode of participation among the residents of Kericho County. Those who indicated that they neither agree nor disagree with the opinion could simply mean they are not able to determine the relevance of such an exercise. This could also be attributed to the fact that; County budget reading is not well-popularized as a mode of participation and therefore people think their attendance is of little significance.

The respondents for instance were asked a question on whether they could tell the budget allocation for road projects in their area. The results from the data were tabulated as follows:

Table 5: Knowledge of budget allocation for road projects

		N	%
Awareness of budget allocation for roads projects	Yes	33	(14.2)
	No	189	(81.1)

Those who know the budget allocation for road projects in their area are 33(14.2%). A significant number of 189(81.1%) don't have any idea about the number of allocations for road projects in their area. The explanation provided on why the participants could not tell allocations for the particular roads around their area was captured in the following narratives:

“Because they are done by few individuals” (Survey respondent 17)

“Haven't come across the county budget to check on that” (Survey respondent 28)

“I know there is amount set aside for road project but I don't know the amount” (Survey respondent 29)

“The County Government is not transparent enough” (Survey respondent 32)

“I have never had time to attend” (Survey respondent 58)

” I Have no information on budget allocation for roads because there is no access to the allocation source or information source” (Survey respondent 61)

“No source of information about the budget allocation for roads” (Survey respondent 63)

“Budget proposals are never made public” (Survey respondent 64)

“Most of the budgets are read in the assembly only and not brought to the people to make or to allow them to know” (Survey respondent 70)

“Because I have not attended a budget reading forum by the county government” (Survey respondent 104)

“expenditure not discussed. No accountability” (Survey respondent 148)

“We mostly see contractors come and work without our knowledge” (Survey respondent 167)“No information reaches me” (Survey respondent 229)

“I have no information concerning budget allocation for road projects” (Survey respondent 232)

From the above responses, the researcher found out that, many people do not have information about County allocation on roads. Different reasons can explain that. For instance, in some of the respondent’s sites accessibility to such information is the main challenge. That information is however public and should be easily accessible for all the residents of Kericho County. Some of the responses also point out the inefficiency of the County officials in communicating information concerning County developments. For instance, instead of reading the budget at the County Headquarters, the budget unveiling process can be further delocalized to the Sub-County level. That will promote participation on the side of the public and help avoid invalid claims of corruption on the side of public officials. An informed population is an empowered population, and that can ensure effective public monitoring of County projects.

A keen analysis of the qualitative responses from all the participants reveals among other possible reasons that the distance to the County headquarters from where most people live is likely to affect attendance. There is limited information reaching the public either intentionally or because of some barriers. Other reasons may include, the fact that most of the information released during such forums is technical and may not be presented in simple language. There is no motivation for individuals with limited knowledge of financial matters unless the County works to ensure information is presented in the simplest manner possible. All these reasons border on the efficacy of budget reading as a mode of public participation.

Table 6: Participation in budget reading at the County headquarters

Mode of participation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Regularly attend budget reading at the county headquarters	119(51.1)	60(25.8)	28(12.0)	20(8.6)	3(1.3)

There is a small difference between those who think attending budget reading is effective as a mode of participation in government projects- for these were about twelve per cent (11.6%) of the respondents and those who attended- who were about ten per cent (9.9 %). This can be interpreted to mean that some of those who did not attend had no misgivings about this mode of public participation.

The respondents indicated that there were other modes that they thought could yield some results if used. These included election of representatives in projects, organizing seminars, partnerships, workshops, signed petitions and operating through elected leaders (Members of the County Assembly). The results of the question on individual respondents’ participation in the modes listed are tabulated in Table 7.

Providing labour in development projects is a means of public participation. Fifty (50) respondents or about twenty-two per cent (5%) agreed and strongly agreed to have provided labor in government projects in the past. One sixty-two (162) respondents or about seventy percent cent5%) did not agree with the opinion on having provided labour the Kenyan Government recommends that workers and public infrastructure be sourced from the area of the project. That is to ensure the locals benefit and at the same time own the project. Only technical or skilled labour that cannot be found in the particular area of the project can be sourced from outside. In areas where contractors have been perceived to outsource labor especially those available locally, it has elicited negative reactions both from the public and local leadership. For example, road project contracts from the County Government of Kericho are expected to source manpower locally to open opportunities for the people around the area where the project is being implemented.

Table 7: Other modes of participation

Modes of participation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Participated in providing labor in county government projects	93(39.9)	69(29.6)	18(7.7)	38(16.3)	12(5.2)
Participated in election of leaders to serve in particular projects funded by the county government.	75(32.2)	37(15.9)	14(6.0)	65(27.9)	41(17.6)
Attended seminars/workshops that provide education on participation in county government plans and projects	79(33.9)	65(27.9)	44(18.9)	44(18.9)	21(9.0)

Election of leaders in projects funded by the County Government as a mode of participation was also assessed. One hundred and six (106) respondents or around forty-six per cent (45.5%) of respondents agreed that they had participated in the election of leaders for some county projects. One hundred and twelve (112) respondents- about forty-eight per cent (48.1%) of the respondents disagreed that they had participated in this activity. The high numbers of residents who did not participate in elections echo the ideas of Aklilu, Belete and Moyo, (2014) that some members of the public do not view elections as an effective accountability mechanism. Elections alone are not adequate in transforming the culture of public performance – elections have no means of giving feedback. This outcome confirms the postulations of the Rational Choice Theory that self-interest motivates individuals to participate only if it is rational. In this case, if casting an informed vote does not guarantee maximum benefits then the process is not worth the cost.

Seminars and workshops are meetings between trainers and participants in a given area. Both seminars and workshops are aimed at the dissemination of knowledge to achieve a desired level of understanding. Sixty-five (65), or about twenty-eight (27.9%) of the respondents, agreed to have attended at least a seminar or workshop in the past. These results reveal that seminars may not be popularly used as a mode of public participation in Kericho County. Due to the vast nature of Kericho County, seminars may only be organized in a few areas.

Respondents stated the reasons why they never attended training. Many did explain that they had never heard of such a meeting, seminar or forum aimed at training on public participation. From the results, it is

evident the provisions of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya (GOK, 2010) – on the right of the public to access information may not have been fully implemented. This is a key ingredient to active and effective citizen participation. Kenya’s national and county assemblies are directed by the constitution to perform their roles openly and transparently. Article 118 (1) (a) specifically directs the national and county assemblies respectively to hold public meetings and function openly to the full view of citizens.

The results also served to prove that maybe the County of Kericho has not implemented fully the provision of the Kericho County Government Act (2012) which was meant to solve problems of public participation. The Act stipulates how public participation will be carried out effectively in every department within the County; the act further establishes an office that will oversee the implementation of the Act by the constitution. The Governor of the County is required to facilitate citizen participation in the development of plans and policies and in the delivery of services in the County. The following narratives were recorded from participants in the interview schedule;

“The County Government does selective public participation depending on the level of implementation of the project” (Survey respondent 38)

“The participation organizers do not mobilize participants in advance. The same organizers do not give the low living standard people to express their issues during forums” (Survey respondent 43)

“The County Government has not educated the public on their rights including those of public participation” (Survey respondent 103)

“In my opinion, the County Government has a long way to go in public participation. The first step must be educating the public that they have a lot to do by participating in each project in the county that concerns them” (Survey respondent 153)

There are a few however who indicated that the County has done their work of educating the public properly. For example;

“They have done some projects but some are not completed. They inform us”. (Survey respondent number 131)

“The county has constantly conveyed a plan of action”. (Survey respondent number 215)

From the responses, the County Government of Kericho has to improve on their training, seminars and meetings to ensure more people are reached. It could be true however that the County Government does not invest much time and resources on face to face-to-face meetings for fear of criticism from those who oppose the regime. Kauzya (2007) explained that those who attend public hearings tend to be mostly the critics of government. This affects government engagements with the public because it ends up reflecting the nature and extent of the opposition. Such challenges notwithstanding, Bone, Crockett and Hodge, (2006) point out that, public forums or face-to-face meetings are not about winning or losing, rather they are about listening to individual experiences, concerns and what they value regarding issues as well as hard facts. The nature of meetings is such that, they build on the existing capacity of the public to think, articulate and act together for a common good. The choices are then made considering values, and divergent views of people.

The results of the study showed that Eighty-five (83) respondents- about thirty-six per cent (35.6%) stated that they had lobbied for development projects through politicians. One hundred and Forty-eight (148) or about sixty-four per cent (63.5%) had never done such lobbying. The results can be interpreted to mean, that lobbying through the elected leaders is not a popular form of public participation. There are a few reasons that can explain this. First, it could be that the political leaders make it difficult to reach them. Some

participants responded by pointing out the particular issues they were lobbying. Responses received include, “Reconstruction of damaged roads and supply of tap water to the community” (Survey respondent 31)

“I have sent MCA to make a follow-up Kenya power last mile electricity supply in our area, to also improve our ward rural roads” (Survey respondent 61)

“The issue of feeder roads in my village to be upgraded, water pipes to enable members of the public have clean water in their homes” (Survey respondent 71)

Many of those who responded confirmed there is some level of lobbying that goes on in Kericho County. Some of the projects they lobbied for have been accomplished; while others await future actions. The fact that some of the projects are already done, confirms Irimie?, (2017), postulations that, lobbying allows the decision-making processes and institutions to achieve higher accuracy in the control of interests, priorities and the orientation of representative groups. The representatives can respond to demands and issues and respond in a timely and accurate manner

The results indicated that only twelve (12) or about five (5.2%) of the respondents had participated in petitioning against an initiative by the County Government. Two hundred and seventeen (217) or about ninety-three per cent (93.1%) had never petitioned the County Government. This may be a preserve of a few with technical knowledge or are driven by specific interests. The following narratives signify that petitions address only technical issues and may not be popular as a means of participation for the general population.

“Construction of technical colleges” (Survey respondent 14)

“Construction of airport by the County Government” (Survey respondent 26)

“When a road was poorly constructed in our area” (Survey respondent 56)

“Petition of impeaching poorly performing governor in his first term” (Survey respondent 97)

“I have led a delegation to the clerk of the assembly to petition the assembly to have Londiani Sub-County residence to air their views on the 2019-2020 budget estimates” (Survey respondent 155)

Further analysis of the level of education of those who provided the above narratives confirms that they were highly knowledgeable in different fields. For example, all five have university-level education. Survey respondent 14 did not indicate his/her occupation, 26 were Medical officers, 56- were teachers, and 155- were retired high school principals. As the elite in society, the participants in the petition may feel obliged to participate in areas where other people could not help.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that public participation activities are present in Kericho County- but at below below-average level. Members of the public cannot tell when to participate, where and how. This study therefore calls for the Kericho County Government and non-state actors to build the capacity of the members of the public to participate through the various modes. Such capacity building will strengthen rationality that privileges active citizens and can bring demands and support into the public development process.

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