

Towards citizen led governance through devolution in Makueni County, Kenya

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Abstract

Governance in Kenya has historically been top-down with the central government deciding on policies and programs with minimal involvement of the people after elections. This has meant that decisions on resources, beneficiaries and sustainability have denied the people an active role. Since the advent of devolution it is critical to find out whether the people have taken initiative to influence and lead the governance and development agenda. The research questions were: what is the role of public participation in citizen led governance through devolution in Makueni County? ; which workable strategies towards citizen led governance through devolution exist in Makueni County?; how can stronger advocacy to enhance citizen led governance through devolution be built in Makueni County?. The significance of this study will be to shape the theory, policy and practice of citizen led governance through devolution; contribute to evaluation of devolution and add onto the knowledge on citizen led governance. The study examines the literature review to understand citizen led governance and its practice globally, regionally and in Makueni County. The theoretical framework is anchored on the citizenship theory, decentred theory and participation development theory which imply that citizens are able to lead their governance. The research was located in Makueni County and through purposeful sampling had one case study of development committee. The data was collected through a focus group discussion, documents and audio visual materials.

Key words: Citizen led governance, Participation, Devolution, Development

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to discuss; towards citizen led governance through devolution in Makueni County of Kenya. Working in Makueni County the author has come to discover that the citizens do not take initiative in self-governance. This is because despite the existing community governance set up by the County government the citizens have maintained apathy, fatigue and disillusionment toward engaging actively in governance and expecting incentives when they participate. Literally they maintain that they finalized their civic duty after voting their representatives. Participation is cyclic and voluntary in nature yet the citizens have expressed fatigue in engaging continuously in governance and walking together with the County government in holistic development.

While the government has enhanced its capacity to govern by developing closer relations with the citizens, the question arises whether the citizens have embraced their role in governance. It is expected that citizen led governance allows the voices of ordinary folk to shape government work by the citizens recognizing their legitimacy to inhabit the governance space not through invitation but through initiative. This study argues that the citizens have to lead governance by moving past information sharing to dynamic and interactive engagement with government.

Since its advent in 2013 the Government of Makueni County institutionalized citizen engagement through participatory planning and budgeting. This momentum of civic duty was demonstrated in 2014, when the citizens and residents of Makueni county petitioned the President of Kenya to suspend the government of Makueni citing that the Makueni County Executive and the Makueni County Assembly were operating at extremes and were clearly at loggerheads. The Makueni County Government had irretrievably broken down and was completely dysfunctional (Kenya Law, 2020).

This demonstrated that the citizens could lead their development and spurred the structuring of development committees and project management committees (PMCs) as strategies to engage the citizens in governance. These structures provide citizens with opportunities to participate in policy formulation, project planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and sustainability of development. The people come forward to share knowledge and concerns with public managers and representatives to develop a holistic effort for

achieving best outcomes from development programs and projects. The recurring question remains; do they have a clear conception about their role in government affairs, which consequently will help them to take lead in development programs?

The democratic environment has shaped beliefs that the role of the citizen is to vote their representatives to government who should in turn undertake development for them. My argument is that citizens have to embrace their civic duty and governance as well and not expect handouts, allowances, and trickle down development from whatever quarters but instead be the protagonists to shape their development by taking the lead in governance. As Maathai (2009) argues that Africa's masses are a disempowered lot. They tend to "leave (their) life in the hands of third parties, whether government, elected leaders or, in some cases, aid agencies and faith-based organisations". Hence they are unable to participate in their own development, including expansion of their democratic space.

An analysis of the participation framework in Makueni County shows that its government led and the engagements are usually through government invitation, so the citizen has lesser initiative to organize for collaborative governance forums except where they are soliciting for funds for "harambee". This study posits that the citizen led governance is possible through gradual change in citizen attitudes towards leading in governance and development and not being passive rather proactive. There has been a tendency to focus on government institutions and "to exclude and ignore all those wider relations of governance through which individuals and groups are subjected and constituted as actors and political agents" (Dean, 2018).

This study examined the citizen perspective in governance as most initiatives in citizen engagement are government led. Further, limited information exists to understand the local people perspectives on citizen led governance in Makueni County. This paper was guided by these questions:

1. What is the role of public participation in citizen led governance through devolution in Makueni County?
2. Which workable strategies towards citizen led governance through devolution exist in Makueni County?
3. How can stronger advocacy to enhance citizen led governance through devolution be built in Makueni County?

II. BACKGROUND

In all indigenous African societies Kenya included, political organization began at the lineage or village level, sanctioned by a founding myth. Each lineage had its head, chosen on the basis of age, maturity, and relation to ancestors where religion defined moral duties and controlled conduct. More important, customary African laws were subject to full public debate and scrutiny; infact kings and chiefs could not promulgate laws without the consent of the councils. The political systems were democratic in many respects; first they were based on elaborate checks and balances with such institutions such as inner or privy council and the council of elders; second political succession was carefully institutionalized; third, the basic political unit was the village assembly, where major decisions concerning the society were adopted and ordinary people were able to express their opinions, have their voice heard, and actively participate in a political decision making process (Martin, 2012).

At independence in 1963, Kenya adopted a devolved system of government comprising of a central government and eight regional governments. Each regional government was comprised of the executive and the legislature. The powers of the regions were protected by the constitution, a senate, and exclusive functions and funding. The design of the independence constitution was informed by the experience and the desire to deconstruct the colonial state that had systematically discriminated along racial and ethnic lines, impoverished large sections of the population and denied the people, particularly Africans, a chance to be responsible for their affairs. Between 1963 and 1990 there were over 30 amendments to the constitution and in 1964 regional governments were removed. The majority of these amendments had the effect of strengthening the executive at the expense of the other arms of government (Ministry of Devolution & Planning 2016).

In an attempt to address regional disparities, Kenya experimented with various decentralization strategies in the form of de-concentration, delegation, and privatization which included: local Government authorities, Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP), Rural Development Fund (RDF), Regional Development Authorities (RDAs), District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) Strategy, Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF), Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) and Constituency Development Fund (CDF). These initiatives occurred within a limited democratic space occasioned by the 1982 Constitution amendment that made Kenya a de jure one party state. As the space for public participation in governance shrank, the struggle for constitutional change intensified. The struggle resulted in the repeal of the Constitution by re-introducing multiparty democracy.

The outcome of the multiparty elections of 1992 increased the demand for further legislative reforms which culminated in the referendum held on August 4, 2010 following which the Proposed Constitution of Kenya, 2010 was adopted. This Constitution ushered in the devolved system of governance (Ministry of Devolution & Planning 2016). Citizens expect the devolved system to improve their social, economic and

political welfare. This permitted Counties to identify problems, make policies, plan, and collect revenue, execute budget, accounting, auditing and monitoring and evaluation and citizen participation in decision-making (Busolo, 2019). Devolved governance expanded space for citizen engagement and participation which promotes transparency and accountability.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first stage involved conducting a documentary analysis and defining key words related to citizen led governance and devolution. The search paid attention to public participation by understanding participation as an enabler for citizen led governance. The attention was given to governance at local levels and which was understood as the entire range of activities of citizens as they engage elected representatives and public professionals as they create and implement public policy in communities.

The second stage was to review key documents on the practice of citizen led governance in Makueni County, Kenya. A review of the structures and mechanisms of citizen led governance was carried out. Further, a review of how citizen led governance happens nationally, regionally and globally was done. The historical background to this study looked at the transition of Kenya from a centralized top-down government to a devolved citizen participatory government that repositioned citizen led governance. This brings out the importance of devolution in advancing citizen led governance so that citizens can govern their communities and as a core concept in lifting those marginalized to positions of power, authority and control.

The research used the Tangaza University OPAC bibliographical search engines for the most important collections and databases. Mendeley reference manager and JSTOR provided the main online bibliographical documentation work. The online search engines connected with Sage Publications, Taylor & Francis Online Journals, SAGE Journals, Taylor & Francis, SpringerLink, Wiley Online Library, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Emerald Journals (Emerald Group Publishing), Oxford Journals (Oxford University Press), Cambridge Journals (Cambridge University Press). The Google Scholar and Google Books guided in accessing current empirical data. After making an extensive review of these materials, there was a careful selection of those documents that deal specifically with citizen governance in general and what scholars have written on the subject. The compilation and analysis focused only that information which was relevant to the aims of the research. The headings that guided the literature selection and review were as follows: role of public participation in citizen led governance; workable strategies towards citizen led governance; and advocacy for citizen led governance.

Further, the study applied qualitative approach through case study design through a focus group discussion. The Makueni county community governance structure comprises of development forums and their elected development committees at various levels (3643 Areas/Villages, 377 Clusters, 60 Sub-wards, 6 Sub-counties, 1 County level entity). Maximum variation sampling was used to have one cluster committee sampled for the study to gain a deeper understanding of the citizen's opinions and views in regard to the objectives. The committee comprised ten members with eight men and two women. They were inclusive of PWDs, youth, elderly, and faith based groups.

IV. FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of public participation in citizen led governance

The question asked was; what is the role of public participation in citizen led governance through devolution in Makueni County? These were the findings:

While governments make efforts to increase the opportunities for political participation where richer and more meaningful conversations with citizens are held, citizens are increasingly frustrated by the world of push, where governments send information to be consumed by citizens rather than discussed (Bevir, 2011; Lindquist, 2020). Citizen governance is anchored on the citizenship theory which supposes that citizens enjoy the status of an individual as a full and responsible member of political community through actively participating in a society's political institutions. Aristotle, Machiavelli and Rousseau emphasize the active involvement of citizens in governing their polity through a two-way relationship between individual and the state (Kymlicka, 2002).

In Kenya, governance has historically been top-down with the central government deciding on policies and programs with minimal involvement of the people after elections. This meant that decisions on resources, beneficiaries and sustainability denied the people an active role in their development. This resulted in political patronage, deepened divisions along ethnic lines and prevented active participation of citizens contributing to a culture of a domicile citizen who only absorbs whatever the government is able to deliver.

Devolution is meant to give local communities powers of self-governance, address regional disparities in development, provide equitable access to services, and address marginalization of some communities (Kanyinga, 2016). This has meant a more active role for the citizen in choosing and coproducing services and a more responsive bureaucracy that is interested in listening to them. More voice implies including citizens in

decision making and allowing them to represent their interests. Citizen governance is not just about individual representation, but gathers together the users and other affected interests for voluntary involvement in decision-making forums (John, 2009). It is critical for poor people to participate in the definition and the evaluation of anti-poverty policies as studies indicate that with participatory governance an additional 1 per cent of gross domestic product in aid translates into a 1 per cent decline in poverty and a similar decline in infant mortality (Waheduzzaman, 2010; Saha, 2008).

Democracy is more than the right to vote and the vesting of power in citizens through popular sovereignty where ordinary people get involved in their own governance. It is this recognition that brings public participation into the center of citizen led governance (Corrigan, 2017). Bingham (2005) agreed that affording citizens an independent voice enhances the legitimacy of decision making and improves trust and perceptions of government. This provides public administrators with a unique opportunity to become the direct conduit for the public's voice in policy making, implementation, and enforcement by establishing and maintaining horizontal relationships of authority with citizens and seeking 'power with' rather than 'power over' the citizenry.

While citizens wish to be informed, consulted and engaged in governance activities, they are not exclusively self-interested and sometimes work for the public interest. There could be ignorance about local political issues, sense of apathy and a predisposition to free-ride hence endangering citizen led governance. Further, citizens are not always eager activists, relatively homogenized, rich in social capital, well organized and led by capable leaders to engage in governance processes (Hindmoor, 2009). This agrees with the Eurobarometer study which indicated that citizens do not know through which channels to make themselves heard (Denters & Klimovsky, 2016).

A study by Porio (2017) in the Philippines demonstrated that decentralized and democratic governance practices like consultation, public hearings, participation and consensus-building have really transformed the hierarchical and bureaucratic relationships of local officials with citizens. Citizens have been incorporated into the formulation of local regulatory frameworks, policy-making and the implementation of their flagship programmes.

The focus group discussions revealed that citizens of Makueni County know their role in governance is spelt out in the Constitution and devolution laws. They alluded that their key roles are to ensure their resources are well utilized and accounted for. They also indicated the citizen has to be involved in the whole development process for the local needs to be planned for and implementation to be well done.

They observed that it is crucial especially for the people with disability (PWDs) and youth to be more engaged so that their concerns are well articulated and part of the development framework. They mentioned that it was the citizens to create and embrace their roles in governance. The roles include involvement in project design and implementation; law and policy formulation and raise concerns when shortcomings happen.

They said the challenge to self-governance is the citizens waiting until the government calls them for participation and the citizens not convening either citizen only forums or inviting the government to join them. They also expect facilitation for the forums which includes; allowances, meals and transport and in cases where it not provided it inhibits public participation. They also identified the challenge where the public officials were reluctant to embrace citizen led governance owing to their fears of a capable citizenry than can take up their roles.

Workable strategies towards citizen led governance

The second question was which workable strategies towards citizen led governance through devolution exist in Makueni County? The findings were:

The Government of Makueni County Vision 2025 and CIDP (2018-2022) links with the Kenya Vision 2030, the Constitution and other National laws and policies to emphasize citizen governance. There is commitment to ensure participatory development at the county level and community level happens. The county government rolled out a public participation framework with an aim of ensuring ownership of governance among the people, promoting social and economic development and bringing government services "closer" to the people. The governance model is one where decision making is done by the people and the county government is an agent and is accountable to the people (Government of Makueni County, 2017).

The county government has a structured and coordinated way of organizing the people of Makueni County to facilitate their inputs in decision making. It is designed to give voice to the diverse groups and marginalized, promote expertise and learning from all members of the society towards the development and governance of their county. Public participation is not meant to convey decisions already made at the County head quarter. It enables the inclusion of all people from the village to County level and diaspora in efforts made to generate, formulate and confirm transformational decisions. Further, it is aimed at enhancing equitable distribution of development and pro-poor policies (Government of Makueni County, 2017).

The community is represented through development committees, project management committees and organized thematic groups. The structures include: people are organized geographically from the village to the

county level, that is, Village, Cluster, Sub-Ward, Ward, Sub-County, County (territorial framework); people are organized thematically into groups of common characteristics such as Youth, Women, FBOs, NSA, PWDs, Farmers (thematic framework). These thematic groups are coopted from the sub ward level to the County and at the CBEF; Pictorial representation of information on bill boards and white boards (actorial framework) and special fora of people organizations such as professional groups, technical departments and other specialists (technical framework) (Government of Makueni County, 2017).

Escobar (2019) advanced five workable strategies towards citizen led governance in the world which include: mini-publics; participatory budgeting; referenda and citizen initiatives; collaborative governance; and digital participation. The strategies are anchored on participatory theories that advocate for bottom up planning, and people-centered development. They maintain that ordinary people have the capacity to manage their own development. This theory encourages the involvement of all stakeholders in the process of development. Paulo Freire advanced participatory models with a human-centered approach that valued the importance of interpersonal channels of communication in decision-making processes at the community level while Robert Chambers advanced Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) where local people undertake data collection and analysis, with outsiders facilitating rather than controlling which allows for shared learning (Dinbabo, 2003).

Studies in rural Bangladesh showed that the participation in local development programs were not effective for the achievement of good governance as the local people were not mentally ready to participate in local development programs. According to the findings, local villagers could not assess the value of their own engagement in local development programs, and thus they did not participate in such programs. The researchers argue that the traditional approaches towards people's engagement need to be changed to customer-oriented approach to achieve success in governance reform initiatives (Waheduzzaman, 2010).

In a study by Muriu (2014) he observes that first there should be a separation of functions between the executive and legislative functions by officials in the local government. The elected representatives should not be in charge of the participation process but should play a policy formulation and oversight role. Second, participation cannot be left to chance and convenience of the actors involved. It needs to be planned for in terms of time and resources. Third, capacity of citizen to participate effectively should be enhanced through awareness raising and enhancing their capacity. Fourth, participation should be premised on a long term development framework. Fifth is citizen involvement in overall planning of the local government services to give them a clearer picture of what is happening in their local government. This could lead to their willingness to meet the costs of service delivery and reduce of opportunities for corruption.

In a research of the local political system in West Africa the findings show that citizens who view local government as transparent are more likely to engage in the local political system, as are citizens who are recent victims of corruption. These findings suggest that the current emphasis on good governance, with its goals of increased transparency and reduced corruption, can contribute to more engaged citizens who exhibit deeper levels of democratic citizenship. This has practical implications for in increasing local citizen engagement through building local capacity and creating a more democratic society through the implementation of good governance principles (Krawczyk & Cushman, 2017).

A study by John (2009) to find out the nature of citizen governance in England and Wales established that social biases on citizen governance were well entrenched. Patterns showed that the variations of involvement vary across different types of people largely according to age, income and education. The study recommends to shift the balance of participation the less conventional forms of engagement with direct connection to citizens are encouraged. The social structures that give rise to these differences of the actual participants need to be addressed.

Afonso (2017) undertook a study on participatory budgeting in North Carolina and realized that the lesson for citizens is for them to identify and ask the right question and to persevere throughout the governance process. When reflecting on the process, organizers recalled the slow communication from officials, low levels of enthusiasm, loss of interest among advocates, and lack of follow-through. She called upon the citizens to commit time, be involved and stay involved in governance so that their voice and will is manifested.

The focus group discussions established that in Makueni County the community governance structure is working and the citizens suggested institutionalization through registering them as self help groups and community based organizations. They need to be legislated through a law to give the citizens a formal voice and credence. The development committees have customized action plans which serve as their development blueprint. They maintained that voluntary engagement is tasking since they have to forego their economic pursuits which in most instance take priority over initiatives towards community governance.

They emphasized on free flow of communication from government to citizens and vice versa and moving beyond the sharing of information by government to having open channels where questions can be asked and clarifications provided. It was evident that the county assembly also engages citizens in their oversight roles where they provide crucial information in the process and offer opportunities for learning. They highlighted the project management committees which work alongside the contractors and technical staff as

practical and workable in that they enhance transparency, ownership and sustainability. The main challenge remains politicization of the citizen involvement and also poor feedback linkage with the departments.

Advocacy for citizen led governance.

The third question was how can stronger advocacy to enhance citizen led governance through devolution be built in Makueni County? The findings were:

Governance seeks to share power in decision making, encourage citizen autonomy and independence, and provide a process for developing the common good through civic engagement (Bingham, 2005). Citizens have superior information about their preferences and resources, and through devolution responsibility for public services is given to village committees (worldbank.org/cdd, 2020). Citizen led governance includes the locals having a meaningful role in local government decisions that affect them as well as holding the government responsible for how that decision will affect them (Blair, 2000). This means the construction of new relationships between ordinary people and government which is people-led function (Waheduzzaman, 2010).

The expectations about better connecting governments to citizens have increased with elected leaders and officials keen to lessen the distrust of citizens in government and build constructive support through better policy and higher quality services. Governments at all levels have been taking greater interest in measuring citizen satisfaction, and finding ways to work with citizens and communities to design services. The motivations and aspiration behind more citizen-centred governance and government connote some impatience and urgency, implying inertia and possibly government resistance to these ideas (Lindquist, 2011).

A myriad of resistance includes: first politicians feeling that community engagement is too time-consuming to undertake in situations where there are economic or political pressures to make – and be seen to be making – immediate decisions. Second, politicians or officials may believe that community engagement processes would upset or contradict broader strategies or standards. Third, government officials may be reluctant to concede authority where they believe that engagement processes are likely to be dominated by unrepresentative local elites. Fourth, governments may be reluctant to concede authority where they believe that community engagement is unlikely to result to in a deliberative consensus. There may be limits to what can be deliberatively handled, thrashed out or agreed upon in community engagement settings (Hindmoor, 2009).

This resistance has to be handled through building stronger advocacy for citizen led governance. This advocacy is anchored on the decentered theory which creates a space to think creatively about different ways of understanding contemporary social and political life, and so to devise different responses to them. As governance is constructed differently, contingently, and continuously, there is no defined tool kit for managing it then the possibility of learning by telling stories and listening to them should be explored (Bevir, 2013).

It reminds on the significance of democratic participation and accountability by emphasizing the extent to which people make patterns of governance through political contests is to encourage creative thinking about how to conceive of and respond to the relevant issues. This means there is a time when states will be less concerned to control through laws and regulations and more concerned to persuade through all sorts of interactions with groups and individuals. Governance provides more active and continuous opportunities for political involvement to citizens (Bevir, 2013).

From the focus group discussions, it was evident that advocacy for citizen led governance was necessary in order to achieve equitable development; enhance the citizens voice and encourage them to express themselves. They identified advocacy that includes civic education to build citizens governance capacity and confidence to be in the lead. Further, citizen led governance has to advance beyond the County government and to National government where citizens will work with the public official in planning, implementation and review.

V. DISCUSSION

Existing literature argues that citizen governance occurs simultaneously with citizens' expectations of rewards or recognition through the very act of participation or through the opportunity to contribute to public policy, satisfactory experiences, and for influencing the planning process. Additionally, citizens participate when some aspects of their way of life are threatened and they feel committed to ward off the threats (Caparas & Agrawal, 2016).

Government officials and planners have likewise realized that citizen governance enhances the quality of governance and planning process and products as well as personal satisfaction. Citizen participation promotes transparent, inclusive, and fair decision-making processes that entail some degree of power sharing between government agencies and members of the public. It enhances the sensitivity of government toward citizens' values and interests and improves and legitimizes government institutions and the quality of their decisions.

Citizen led governance has participation that ranges from nonparticipation and tokenism to total citizen participation. It is also established that citizen participation can enhance the state effectiveness because it provides a platform for citizens to make their needs known and hold public institutions to account. Citizen

participation can be encouraged by stressing its benefits: psychological gains like empowerment and sense of community, promotion of an individual's dignity and self-sufficiency, tapping of energies and resources of individual citizens, provision of special insight, information, knowledge, and experience (Tahvilzadeh, 2015).

Citizen governance gains, at the individual level, consist of empowerment and opportunity to break away from a dependency mentality, promotion of self-confidence and self-awareness, increase in tolerance and empathy, awareness of the reality and realization of capacity to transform it, development of a sense of ownership and self-reliance, opportunity to share and meet individual needs skill development, individual well-being, and social learning.

Additionally, citizen governance can promote self-development, citizenship, and commitment to the public good; increase citizens' trust in public institutions; raise public awareness of local issues; and increase social inclusiveness and social capital. Despite the fostering of participation, citizens may focus only on narrow issues that affect them directly and may be unwilling to make trade-offs and determined to exclude some groups. Another reason to exclude citizen participation at the grassroots level is selective bias— involvement of experts, resourceful and well-connected officials, and those with sufficient resources to participate. Potential conflict between citizens and government officials due to citizen participation may be avoided if the conflict source is in opposing expectations rather than opposing demands.

From the foregoing it is clear that through devolution, the citizens have a greater mandate in steering and initiating their own development and not waiting for handouts. The people are sovereign and exercise their power through functions vested in government. This poses the question; who is holding the power? Ideally power has always been with the people but practically governments have for a long time viewed citizens as clients. It therefore means there is need to advocate for more organized involvement, engagement and participation of citizens.

The citizen governance approach potentially reconstitutes the relationship between the citizen and public officials. This proactive measure allows citizens themselves to frame the issues, thereby lending legitimacy to the endeavor of governance. It is a power-sharing, control-easing, trust building approach to government -citizen relations. With citizens framing the agenda, it would then be plausible to claim that a more authentically democratic conceptualization of the public interest has been met. This approach is a radical departure from the non-active or reactive administration. It expresses an unstated doubt about the democratic efficacy of electoral politics and, moreover, expresses a hope that government and citizens can learn to share power (Miller & Nunemaker, 1999).

Citizen governance is the adopted by the United Nations (UN) through the 1992 Rio Declaration which promotes citizen participation. They suggest that local authorities should engage in dialogue with citizens, local organisations, and private enterprises. The objective is to address ecological, social and economic issues in a local context. The sustainable development discourse defines citizen participation and community involvement as fundamental grounds for a just and sustainable society. The argument that 'citizens must be able to influence the development of society if we are to speak about reaching sustainability goals that include not only the public but also the private spheres. Most studies share the idea that consensus-oriented governance increases awareness, responsibility and acceptance of necessary policy decisions. Furthermore, they understand participation as a means to support citizens' orientation toward the common good, their sense of belonging to a community and their willingness to take part in collective action (Haikio, 2012).

As Hindmoor (2009) observed communities may not have the organizational resources or capacities to engage effectively with government; when engagement processes are dominated by unrepresentative local elites who use engagement procedures to pursue their own interests. The community sector comprises a shifting range of unorganized, partially organized and well organized stakeholders. Their capacity and interest in interaction and engagement will vary widely. Accordingly, governments must continuously develop the capacities of weaker groups through programs that provide training or resources to encourage people to recognize and defend their mutual interests.

VI. CONCLUSION

The uniqueness of Kenyan constitution is that it derives its power from the people, leadership, and various institutions of governance should only exercise that power on behalf of the people. People also exercise their power directly or indirectly through their chosen leaders. Kenya's adoption of the devolved system of governance places citizens at the core of governance and with elevated hopes for improvement in the delivery of public services. A fundamental principle of democracy is that citizens have the right to exact accountability and public officials have a duty to be accountable. Devolution is purely social transformation and community development at work.

After governments and development partners implement programs/projects, it's the citizens who are supposed to be the users and sustain them hence they have to be actively involved in governance by taking an

interest in all matters that affect them, having inclusive representative in all such matters, holding the actors accountable, undertaking M& E and where the development is successful then they sustain and replicate it.

The advent of devolution provided the citizens at all levels an opportunity to be engaged in matters that affect them and not as beggars, tokenism, handouts or persuasion but as a right. For these rights to be attained, a close governance mechanism among governments, development partners, other community groups and citizens have to exist. The African governance system was consultative and consensus seeking and this ensured a harmonious society. Amartya Sen advocates for societies where everyone's capabilities are realized and this can be accelerated through the citizen led governance.

The main challenge to citizen led governance remains governments being afraid of an informed and capable citizenry so that they can keep on exploiting power to benefit a few elite. This will be mitigated by establishing clear lines of responsibility in the devolution space with the local units charged with specific functions and responsibilities. In other words, governments must devolve specific and clearly articulated parcels of authority to local participants.

In sum, citizen governance is a worthy aspiration though more evidence of functional community governance models is required to promote democratic practices. This new way of going about the business of serving the public is emerging. It requires support as citizens have a more engaged role and are important in policy formation and implementation and generating proposals that form the basis for public action.

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