

INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN SIAYA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Leadership and economic empowerment are factors that have been associated in Leadership is a complex process by which persons in power influence their followers, civil society and wider public to accomplish societal goals. Political leaders are necessary for initiating as well as for hastening the process of change in any society. It may be social and/or economic change, constitutional change or political change. In all these processes of change, political leadership plays an important role. Political leaders carry out the process of change by applying their leadership attributes like politically relevant beliefs, socially adored values, generally approved character, wide knowledge and wisdom acquired through learning and experience. This study therefore sought to establish the influence of political leadership on economic empowerment in Siaya County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to: Assess how decision making by the leadership influence economic empowerment, Establish the influence representation of leadership has on economic empowerment, Determine the effect of democratic leadership on economic empowerment, and to Identify challenges faced in the leadership of Siaya County. A descriptive survey study design was used. The target population for this study was 166,460 households in Siaya County. The study employed a multi-stage random sampling with a sample of 400 participants. The study used primary data obtained from

participants through a semi-structured questionnaire. Quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS which generated frequency distributions, percentages and mean scores. The analyzed data was presented using charts, graphs and tables. Qualitative data was analyzed through thematic summary analysis and presented through prose form, and quantitative data has been coded and analyzed by SPSS tool. The researcher obtained consent approval from NACOSTI and approval from the subjects before interviewing them. The information obtained is confidential and the identities have been made anonymous. The study findings indicate the need for leaders to uphold honesty, accountability and transparency as key qualities to leadership positions. Effective representation by the leadership demands that the community needs to be engaged in the implementation of the County agenda, including in decision making which has been strongly highlighted as a major issue of governance as depicted by Siaya residents. The study concluded that Representation of leadership and leadership control or democratic leadership have some impacts on economic empowerment. The economic development of any country is highly dependent on good leadership. The study recommends that there is a need for communities in Siaya County to actively participate and be involved in the decision-making processes of the County.

Key Words: *political leadership, economic empowerment, Siaya County, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

The notion of a leader is divided into ordinary, innovative and visionary (Tuulik & Alas, 2009). The line between innovative and visionary is not so easy to determine. Visionary leadership is far more readily achieved in specific domains (e.g. particular arts or sciences), or in specific institutions like universities or corporations than in the guidance of an entire society. Leadership must not be confused with status, power and official authority. High status given to somebody does not guarantee the ability to lead (Tuulik & Alas, 2009). The same is true with power – leaders always have some measure of power rooted in their capacity to persuade, but many people with power (derived from money or from the capacity to inflict harm, or from control of something or somebody, or through military power, or from access to the media) are without leadership gifts. Leadership requires major expenditures of effort and energy more than most people care to make (Raison, 2017).

Political leaders are supposed to understand the hopes and aspirations of the people and identify the goals of the society (Ghani, Mani & O’Connell, 2013). They are then expected to work on the hopes and aspirations of their followers through passing legislation, mobilizing resources and inspiring them to work towards their vision. Political leaders are also expected to formulate a vision of the country’s future and specifically the region they represent (Gopal, Kadekodi, Kanbur & Vijayendra, 2008). They acquire or develop the capacity to mobilize the people to achieve the common societal goal. Further, it is observed that political leaders are expected to have certain attributes in order to be effective as leaders.

According to Ghani, Mani and O’Connell (2013) who studied on “Can Political Empowerment Help Economic Empowerment?” there is a relationship between political leadership and economic empowerment. In India, for instance, there is a significant contribution of political leadership on its economic empowerment. They stated that by use of representative household level employment data, longer exposure to political representatives increased their chances into labor force participation. Directly, this was through political representatives allocating more employment opportunities to women in public works; and indirectly, women leaders at their constituents encourage women to join labor force through the public goods they provide.

The economic condition in Kenya is influenced by poor leadership by the previous government regimes since independence; and sustained by the prevailing neo-colonial support system to the leadership (Mwambazambi & Banza, 2014); who also state that GDP per capita for Singapore in 2013 was \$56,033 against Kenya’s \$1,322. Despite Kenya being endowed by numerous natural resources, the country still lags behind in economic empowerment in comparison to Singapore; currently a vibrant economy that had been at the par with Kenya two years’ difference since independence (Qmante, n.d). This implies that there is poor harnessing of economic resources which hinders economic empowerment. Kenya’s political arena has been characterized by historical injustices and skirmishes associated with poor leadership and abuse of power, high levels of corruption, a more than two decades long process of constitutional review and post-

election violence. The approval of the new constitution of Kenya in 2010 and relatively peaceful elections in March 2013 are milestones constituting steps forward in Kenya's transition from political crisis. It is therefore expected that the economic empowerment will improve if good political leadership prevails in the country (Michael & Kearns, 2005).

Leadership plays a very important role to cause meaningful change in the society. Since independence Kenya has experienced successions of economic and political changes. This has been witnessed with the shift from central government to county government, cities to farms, agriculture to industries. However, these changes have had little impact if any in the life of the larger population (Dias & Vaughn, 2006). Those in power and the well-connected have benefitted with multiplicity of riches, while the ordinary citizens struggle to make ends meet. In other words, majority of the population is still languishing in poverty despite the economic growth experienced in the country (Stogdill, 1950). Kenya requires committed Leadership to attain progress in economic and political development. The citizens of a country have the power to choose the leaders they need, this is an important role which most people take for granted (Michael & Kearns, 2005). Especially the voters who are easily swayed by politicians. Unless the leaders take fore front in making sacrifices, it will be difficult to have commitment by the masses to root out evil practices in the government and empress good governance in public offices. Kenyans should at all times elect people of integrity to manage the issues of this country (Kruse, 2013).

In their essay *Contemporary Kenya and Its Leadership*, Kwaka and Mutunga (2013) indicated that at the exit of the colonialists, the African educated elite who took over seemed to have assumed the superior position the white man had occupied in the mind of the ordinary Kenyan. His assumed actions and behavior were unquestionable. Indeed, anyone occupying a position of power or had a lot of wealth, like the white man, was held in awe, no matter the legitimacy or otherwise of his epaulettes and affluence. It is not any wonder, therefore, that the contemporary Kenyan politician can mislead his people, grab public resources, and get away with it as the ordinary citizen cheers him as a smart hardworking heroic leader (Jobling, 2014). It is under this state of disempowerment of the citizenry that Kenya's successive presidents and their cohorts have been able to emasculate, oppress and impoverish their people unchallenged. The devolved system of governance could bore more fruits as resources are intended to reach grass roots, where needs exist. However, with the new structure of leadership that include members of County Assembly who develop and pass laws at the County, could mean more diversity in ideas and representation of the most marginalized (Kwaka & Mutunga, 2013). This could mean better things for the local communities in counties empowering them socially, politically and even economically. This study in particular sought to establish the influence of political leadership at county level on economic empowerment of the society in Siaya County.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Leadership is a complex process by which persons in power influence their followers, civil society and wider public to accomplish societal goals. Political leaders are necessary for initiating as well as for hastening the process of change in any society. It may be social and/or economic change, constitutional change or political change. In all these processes of change, political leadership plays an important role. Political leaders carry out the process of change by applying their leadership attributes like politically relevant beliefs, socially adored values, generally approved character, wide knowledge and wisdom acquired through learning and experience (Odhiambo, 2016). The Constitution has brought about many changes in the political, economic and social environment. It has brought about devolved type of government system where counties have their own leadership and generate their own resources. The county represents the unit of devolution and consists of a county assembly, the legislative arm, and a county executive, vested with executive authority. Devolution aims at ensuring equal distribution of resources to rural areas. The people elect county governments for the benefit of them all (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Siaya is a County well resourced, and development of the population is expected at its optimum. However, despite economic resources well-endowed in Siaya County, it remains one of the underdeveloped counties (Odhiambo, 2016). The past political regimes in Nyanza have not utilized the resources at its optimum, and as a result, the county as well as the region lags behind in development. The current regime, of a devolved system, which brings closer accountability of leaders to the people, may help drive the development agenda at a faster rate. Various studies have conducted in relation to political leadership and economic empowerment. For instance, Mukeke (2016) conducted a study on the relationship between change in political leadership and economic development in Africa focusing on a case study of Kenya and Auko (2013) did a study on effects of political leadership on economic empowerment in Kenya. However, none of the reviewed studies focused on influence of political leadership on economic empowerment in Siaya County, Kenya. Hence, this study seeks to bridge this research gap by establishing the influence of political leadership on economic empowerment in Siaya County, Kenya.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess how decision making by the leadership influences economic empowerment in Siaya County.
2. To establish the influence representation of leadership has on economic empowerment in Siaya County.
3. To determine the effect of democratic leadership on economic empowerment in Siaya County.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Governance and Economic Empowerment

Good governance and democracy are not simply desirable but essential conditions for economic empowerment in all societies (Burnell, 2017). Put together, democratic good governance refers generally to a political regime based on the model of a liberal-democratic policy, which protects human and civil rights, combined with a competent, non-corrupt and accountable public administration. Such political systems are functional for competitive, free market economies and vice versa (Marwan & Romano, 2012). Moreover, such capitalist systems promote a prosperous and peaceful world because they are able to generate economic growth and do not often go to war. It further denotes that democracy is a necessary prior or parallel condition of economic empowerment, not an outcome of it. As a whole, the formula has universal economic empowerment relevance for all cultures and societies in the modern world (Leftwich, 1993).

Mutua (2015) examined the effect of political leaders on economic growth through institutional change and established that institutions have an effect on the leader's decisions, indirectly influencing economic performance –, on the other hand, a great deal of the literature has been dealing with the opposite effect as well. This means that the leaders are capable of manipulating institutions, as long as these are compatible with their visions or desires which results in a step change not only in the institutions but also in the economic performance either. The “dictator effect” also has an importance to apprehend what sort of role the political leaders have in the economic growth.

Leadership Personality and Economic Empowerment

Upon discussing leadership in public safety organizations, it is considered a contentious somewhat alarming subject. Among reasons given for this assumption is on account that leadership and management are elements usually thrown side by side. This though, is untrue. What makes leadership and management uniquely distinct is the indisputable fact that, “Leaders are a group of people that do the proper thing, managers do things right” (Thiel, 2012). Moreover, having an appropriate education throughout a public sector-related study or structural leadership education are very important factors that produce robust leaders in a public sector employment. However, before a leader amends the way a public safety organization works, he/she should begin a change in culture by first correcting his/her own false assumptions, as well as providing opportunities for others to follow (Mayanja, 2013).

Additionally, if a change in culture proves to be effective, it should first meticulously evaluate what is currently in service, and what is not in service. Simply because a program works in one department, does not mean it works within the alternate department effectively. For short-term growth of the organization, there is a crucial need to scrutinize the existing culture for mechanisms that work, as well as bring value, seeing as it is to work out mechanisms that don't

seem to be adding value. An effective modified culture consists of your time, political capital, competence, as well as financial resources (Munyua, 2019).

Moreover, effective leadership skills additionally consist the ability to know, work with, ask for recommendation, and listen to people that are educated for sensible expertise, have a formal education, beliefs, structured learning and leadership categories, also inquire from professional institutions that teach courses, and publish articles and books on leadership. Effective leadership is additionally passed through communication skills that are an integral element of being an efficient leader. Moreover, a leader should recognize their mistakes and correct them as soon as possible while proficiently apologizing for harm caused by his actions, that maintains the trust of the leader within the eyes of their subordinates (Carillo, 2010).

A study by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) (2004) disclosed that organizations that cultivate a culture of integrity in their leaders and structures increase their performance and outcome. In their study, PWC, (2004) indicated that organizations that rank high on integrity of their leaders had improved their reputation by 23%, enhanced their worker retention by 10% and improved their revenue by 8%. The study further disclosed that leaders who possess high integrity perceive risk, place measures to manage risk, manages the reputation of their organizations and overall improve performance. This is often because leaders who have integrity make sure that structural finances are solely invested in ventures that meet the specified threshold. Leaders who possess high levels of integrity further make sure that sensible governance is resolute in their organizations and each stakeholder has high levels of integrity too. This ensures that the organization deals with compatible organizations, who value sensible relationships, respect the rule of law and do not experiment in unethical practices (Brown, et al, 2005).

In a democracy, accountability is the ability of a leader to be answerable to the citizens for his/her actions. The citizens on the other hand ought to possess the flexibility to penalize or reward the leader in political elections. Accountability in leadership has been found to be of utmost importance in predicting whether or not the leader can deliver. Being accountable in line with a study by Forgie and DeRosa (2010) has a powerful impact on the results. Forgie and DeRosa established that demonstrating accountability builds trust between the leader and subjects and therefore resulting in success. The study further disclosed that leaders at all levels ought to demonstrate actions that make them effective and topping the list was accountability.

Grimshaw, et al. (2006) established that leaders become accountable if some factors are present in their positions. The leaders do what is expected and what is required if the expectations from the stakeholders are clear, affordable and credible. In some cases, stakeholders of a corporation or community might give unreasonable expectations that the leader perceives to be unimaginable.

Commitment in leaders was found by Hassan, et al. (2013) to be positively associated with effectiveness of the leader and their organizations in meeting objectives. Effectiveness and key quality interactions are expected once leaders are committed to the welfare of their followers. In

a corporation, the leader ought to be positively committed towards the welfare of the staff and different stakeholders to adequately deliver the objectives of the organization. Within the public sector, a politician has to be committed to the welfare of the citizens to be able to effectively and positively influence their social and economic wellbeing.

A study by Erkutlu (2008) disclosed that committed leaders gain acceptance from their followers and, therefore, the relationship between the leader and their subjects become projects and a catalyst for performance. Hassan et al, (2013) determined that committed leaders enhance follower motivation and commitment that ends up in prudent work relationships.

Alando (2016) noted that Good Leadership is paramount to the growth of any economy. The economic development of any country is highly dependent on good leadership. This is particularly so because the core values of a nation are directly linked to equality and equal distribution of resources. Leadership plays a key role in sustainable economic growth as it involves providing opportunities for growth and progressive developments. Therefore, good leadership becomes a visible aspect through, for instance well developed infrastructure and the ability of a country to provide basic amenities especially to the most vulnerable.

Democratic Leadership and Economic Empowerment

Community involvement or participation in keeping with Rowley and Moldoveanu, (2003) is taking into account the views of the staff in the case of a corporation and also the voters in any democratic society. Their study discovered that failure to include the views of the voters in any democratic method can breed a sagacity of exclusion on the part of the voters and this can bring disharmony, disagreements and even public outcry and displays of rebellion. The level to which the general public participates in economic empowerment projects and various societal affairs is seen to have an effect on how effective the leadership is in bringing social and economic empowerment to the public.

According to Vigoda (2002) on stress- related aftermaths to workplace politics established that involving the voters and different stakeholders in designing, deciding and economic empowerment multiplied the trust of the voters in the leadership. The study found that job distress was an immediate response to organizational politics across the three types of organization, and job distress proved a possible mediator between organizational politics and aggressive behavior as enacted by the employees themselves. This trust may be a smart catalyst for the cordial and effective relationship between the leadership and the followers which might have an effect on the effectiveness of the leadership to achieve their obligations (Cellar et al., 2001). Political leaders though, have several instances where their individual and partisan political affairs cause them to dettach from their voters and hence making them unable to deliver on their mandate. The leaders' incentives, their political parties, and different stakeholders have an effect on what proportion the community is involved.

The voter is sometimes unhappy with lack of involvement in economic empowerment and finance allocation (Peters & Williams, 2002). This makes the voters to indicate their disappointment through an election (Vigoda, 2002). Involvement of electorates' views is affected by several factors like the leader's orientation, the political context, strategy, plan of action factors and also the national political scene. However, involving the voters in political selections has been found to be useful in empowering the communities socially and economically (Schafer, 2010). This is often as a result of paying attention to public views making the political leaders to concentrate the restricted monetary resources on the schemes that the voters perceive to be of importance to their social and economic wellbeing. There could also be some disconnect between what the leader thinks to be necessary and what the public finds necessary (Huque, 2011). It is thus necessary for political leaders to involve their voters in any projects or legal processes they want to undertake. This ensures that any project or method being undertaken has the backing of the society being affected by the project. Community involvement in deciding economic empowerment projects and different aspects of social and economic life have also been found to give the voters a sense of importance and motivation to participate in such projects.

Mukeke (2016) examined the relationship between change in political leadership and economic development in Africa focusing on a case study of Kenya. The main argument in this study is centered on the contention that good political leadership is a universal phenomenon that is not tied to prevailing and/or fashionable development traditions such as capitalism and socialism, or both. What it suggests is that what a country's political leaders want to achieve for their citizens is what counts and not structures or institutions.

Contrary to the emergence of ethnic violence that followed the presidential and parliamentary elections of December 2007, plus other adverse effects of global economic crisis' in 2008 and 2009 and a sequence of poor harvests put paid to the early year targets laid out in the vision and now there is very little chance that these intermediate milestones will be met. The post-election violence which was rooted in historical ethnic tensions within Kenyan society, many of which surfaced only with the emergence of competitive politics in the early 1990s did severe damage to the economy and was not just in the short run. The intermediate effects were seen in the collapse of tourism earning and escalating fears about personal security which weakened domestic markets and interrupted the regular planting and harvesting cycle in the traditional agriculture. It also affected the foreign direct investment (FDI) and other short term capital inflows dried up (Adhiambo, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory was developed in the late 20th century by Burns (1978) in his analysis of political leaders. Prior to this time much attention had been given to the examination of the approaches of leaders who successfully transformed organizations or society. Burns

characterized transformational leadership as that which occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (p. 20).

Bass (1985) refined and expanded Burns' leadership theory. Bass said that a leader is the one who motivates us to do more than we originally expected to do (p. 20). He said that this motivation could be achieved by raising the awareness level about the importance of outcomes and ways to reach them. Bass also said that leaders encourage followers to go beyond self-interest for the good of the team or the organization.

An expanded and refined version of Burn's transformational leadership theory has been utilized in organizations since the 1980s (Bass, 1985; Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). The use of this theory concentrated on exchanges between leaders and followers inside the organization. Transformational leadership serves as a means to create and sustain a context for building human capacity by identifying and developing core values and unifying purpose, liberating human potential and generating increased capacity, developing leadership and effective followership, utilizing interaction-focused organizational design, and building interconnectedness (Hickman, 1997).

Transformational leaders work to bring about human and economic transformation. Within the organization they generate visions, missions, goals, and a culture that contributes to the ability of individuals, groups, and the organization to practice its values and serve its purpose (Hickman, 1997). These leaders are reliable leaders who generate commitment from followers which results in a sense of shared purpose (Waddock & Post, 1991). The leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and foster commitment to a shared purpose is crucial (Bass, Waldman et al., 1987). Several studies have documented important connections between transformational leadership and organizational operation. Transformational leadership has been linked to an array of outcomes, such as employee commitment to the organization (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996) and job satisfaction and satisfaction with a leader (Koh, Steers, & Terborg, 1995; Lowe & Kroeck, 1996). Bryman (1992) discovered that transformational leadership is positively related to a number of important organizational outcomes including perceived extra effort, organizational citizenship behaviors, and job satisfaction. According to Trice and Beyer (1993) and Schein (1985), leadership can change and sustain the culture of the organization by generating new or reinforcing established sets of beliefs, shared values, practices, and norms within organizations. Trust in the workplace is another outcome that is developed through the organization's leaders (Creed & Miles, 1996; Shaw, 1997).

The researcher found this theory useful in this study as it showed the relationship brought about in transformational leadership and economic empowerment. This theory was therefore adopted to show the values set by leaders and assessed by community members in Siaya County and how it influences their economic empowerment.

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership involves an exchange process that results in follower compliance with leader request but not likely to generate enthusiasm and commitment to task objective. The leader focuses on having internal actors perform the tasks required for the organization to reach its desired goals (Boehnke et al, 2003). The objective of the transactional leader is to ensure that the path to goal attainment is clearly understood by the internal actors, to remove potential barrier within the system, and to motivate the actors to achieve the predetermined goals (House & Aditya, 1997).

Transactional leaders display both constructive and corrective behaviors. Constructive behavior entails contingent reward, and corrective dimension imbibes management by exception. Contingent reward involves the clarification of the work required to obtain rewards and the use of incentives and contingent reward to exert influence. It considers follower expectations and offers recognition when goals are achieved. The clarification of goals and objectives and providing of recognition once goals are achieved should result in individuals and groups achieving expected levels of performance (Bass, 1985).

Active management by exception refers to the leader setting the standards for compliance as well as for what constitutes ineffective performance, and may include punishing followers for non-compliance with those standards. This style of leadership implies close monitoring for deviances, mistakes, and errors and then taking corrective action as quickly as possible when they occur. This study aimed at understanding the leadership style that will be effective when adopted in Siaya county, so that it may positively impact on the economic empowerment and improve the quality of lives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used a descriptive study design. The design was used in the households in Siaya County. The study involved a description of how leadership in Siaya County has contributed to the economic empowerment of lower income households. The descriptive design is applicable when the study involves giving an account of the state of affairs in relation to the variables under study (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2002). In a descriptive design, the researcher has no control on the research variables. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) also advocated the use of descriptive design in social science and business research since it portrays an accurate profile of persons, events or situations.

Study Site

Siaya County is located in Nyanza region, Kenya. Siaya covers an area of 2,530km squared, and a density of 392.6km squared. It borders Busia County to the North-West, Kakamega County to the North-East, Vihiga and Kisumu County to the East and Lake Victoria to the South.

Target Population

Population refers to the total number of units from which data can be collected (Parahoo, 1997); Burns and Groove (2003) describe population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. Cooper and Schindler (2006) describe a population in statistics and research as the total collection of elements about which a researcher wishes to make some inferences. The population of interest in this study was 842,304 including the community members, selected leaders in county Ministries, local leaders and County assembly members in Siaya County. Siaya County has a population of 842,304 and 166,460 households (KNBS, 2009). The 166,460 households were the target population for this study.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling is a process of selecting a group of people, events or behavior with which to conduct a study (Burns & Groove, 2003). The basic idea of sampling is that by selecting some of the elements from a population and gathering information, the researcher was able to draw conclusions about the entire population. A population element is the unit of study. A sample is a representative unit of the population. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) suggest that at least 10% of the accessible population is adequate to serve as a study sample. The study employed multi-stage random sampling with selected sub-counties in Siaya County having an equitable share of sampled people depending on the number of households. Siaya County has 6 sub counties, and 26 County Assembly Wards. The first stage was to randomly sample three sub counties. The researcher thereafter, determined a strata that was used to calculate the participants to be interviewed. The number of people was then randomly selected to participate in the study. The number of people who participated in the survey was drawn from the study population of 166,460 households. Based on the cluster samples through sub-counties and the vastness of the county, the researcher defined a stratum (0.001% or 1/1000), where sample households were picked (participation after every 1000 households in a specific direction) that was used across the sub-county populations, and calculated a sample frame which formed the elements for the study; 168 people were targeted, they included leaders at different levels including key position holders in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Trade, Labour, Cooperative Development, Public Administration and Governance, Energy, Industrialization, Public Works, Roads & Transport and Communication. The researcher selected the households as respondents from three sub-counties selected by multi-stage simple random technique. The researcher was blindfolded and was made to handpick papers that included Sub-County names. Ugunja, Siaya (Alego Usonga) and Bondo sub counties were chosen and participants were selected by random sampling technique. Eighty-seven people participated in answering the structured questionnaire. Sixteen people participated in the focus group discussions in two different groups of seven and nine (both local leaders and community members). These were FGDs formed by randomly selecting 16 people from the target population and dividing them into two groups. In addition, eight people participated in the key informant interviews (these were leaders at different levels; administration leaders (chiefs, Dos etc.) in Ministries, communities and political positions).

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

The study used primary data which was collected by use of questionnaires, interviews and FGDs. The questionnaires were self-administered through drop and pick later method. The researcher delivered the questionnaires and gave the selected respondents a maximum of 3 days after which the researcher collected the completed questionnaires for analysis. The interviews were conducted by trained research assistants while the Focus Group Discussions were directed by the researcher to obtain the qualitative data. The study involved collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to attain the research objectives and answer the research questions. Quantitative data collected included socio demographic data and the use of Likert scale on factors that can be quantified (attached in appendix). Qualitative data was collected on the variables that could not be quantified and it included democratic and servant leadership, personality and traits of leaders and good governance and their perceived effect on economic empowerment. This data was collected through self-administered, semi-structured questionnaires. These questionnaires were administered to the selected participants at their places of residence through organized Baraza's.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25.0). All the questionnaires received were referenced and items in the questionnaire were coded to facilitate data entry. After data cleaning which entails checking for errors in entry, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean score and standard deviation was estimated for all the quantitative variables and information presented in form of tables. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions, interview guides and FGDs were analyzed using thematic content analysis and presented in narrative form.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In assessing how decision making by the leadership influences economic empowerment, the results from this study underscored the succinct effects of political leadership as a factor of economic empowerment in Siaya County. The findings have confirmed a fair community involvement and participation in decision making in regards to development projects. Outcome of the study shows that the desired requisite leadership personal traits among the political leadership is a factor that is contributing to the slow economic achievements.

A leader is a person who influences his followers through words or action, to support his/her ideals for positive results, however, the study established that the influence the representation by leadership has on the Community in Siaya for economic empowerment is minimal. This gap was identified to be caused by lack of proper meaningful engagement with the community. The study further confirms that the leadership and community engage on development agenda but to a very small extent, and this rare level of engagement disassociates the community from the leaders, resulting in non-implementation of the community's desired projects which leads to retardation in economic empowerment at the County.

In determining the effect of control by the leadership on economic empowerment, the study found out that the level of control leaders have on the community when it comes to economic empowerment is quite significant. This was done in three (3) focus points, financial allocation, leader-community engagement and accountability by the leaders. The report found that the leadership controls the County's budget and the county development agenda, and also dictates financial allocation to a great extent. The engagement between the leadership and the Community was rare, and it emerged that the leaders are accountable for their actions though to a small extent, as they are more loyal to their political parties.

From the study it became clear that both the leadership and the community face challenges in their contribution to the economic empowerment of the County. The respondents identified some challenges that they face as a result of their leadership as lack of transparency, accountability, corruption, incompetency, inequality in resource distribution and nepotism, equally the leadership cited the challenges that they face while performing their leadership roles and duties, that included; lack of participation by key subjects in development agendas, lack of political good will from the National Government, and lack of sufficient funds for project implementation.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that leadership needs to involve and engage the community in the County development projects. In Siaya County the level of engagement is still low and does not mostly include the technical stakeholders. Leaders in the County do not really focus on making the best use of individual strengths of the electorate in pushing the County forward economically. There is lack of an effective connection between the community and the development projects in the County due to the low involvement by their leaders when making the decisions.

The study also concluded that Representation of leadership and leadership control or democratic leadership have some impact on economic empowerment. The economic development of any country is highly dependent on good leadership. This is particularly so because the core values of a nation are directly linked to equality and equal distribution of resources. Leadership plays a key role in sustainable economic growth as it involves providing opportunities for growth and progressive development. Therefore, good leadership becomes a visible aspect through, for instance well developed infrastructure and the ability of a country to provide basic amenities especially to the most vulnerable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that Kenyans should actively seek involvement in project planning and implementation and not just seek participation passively. Leaders on their part should have a sincere, conveyed interest in their subjects, their wellbeing, personal growth, physical and emotional needs and the value of their contributions. When leaders involve their people in

development projects, this brings loyalty and commitment towards the leader. It creates followers who appreciate, support, consider and respect their leaders.

The study also recommends that political leaders should be accountable to their followers and electorate. The electorate should also demand accountability from their leaders. This can be done through having proper channels of communication between the leaders and electorate and also ensuring that best practices are always followed. Leaders should be transparent and open in their dealings. They should also have the ability to consistently exercise good and clear communication.

There is a need for community leaders to ensure that community members actively participate and are involved in the decision-making processes of the County. They should be invited to attend and be involved in the meetings of the County and take part in projects identification, budgeting, planning and implementation, and not just participate passively as it is currently. Leaders on their part should deliver to the electorates by taking into consideration and prioritizing the Community's preferred development agenda when making decisions regarding the County.

The political leaders need to identify stakeholders from all the administrative wards in the County, who have influence at the grassroots, and also possess some technical knowledge in projects planning and management, then appoint them as their point men/women to represent their wards at the County. The appointed people should then champion their specific wards development agenda for economic empowerment. The community in turn should elect leaders with past development records irrespective of the parties they represent, and keep the elected leaders on check.

The study also recommends that leaders need to show commitment by engaging with the community towards a vision articulated by both the leader and the community, and informing them frequently on County decisions. Commitment can be demonstrated by the leaders through being accountable to the community in ensuring that the funds allocated for specific development projects are utilized prudently. The community should also demand accountability from their leaders by coming up with mutually agreed proper accountability structures that ensure that the best audit practices are always employed.

The study further recommends that the challenges facing the leadership and the Community need to be addressed. The challenges that the Community faces with their leadership can be managed through frequent open discussions at the County barazas with their leaders, while the challenges that the leadership face with the National Government on inadequate financing can be channeled through the requisite forums. Both the leadership and the Community can also come up with mechanisms to raise income after a mutual agreement, to supplement the funds received from the National Government.

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