

Governance Factors Affecting Citizens Participation in District Performance in Rwamagana District, Rwanda Local Government

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to assess the persistent reasons behind limited participation of citizens in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the performance contract in the local government of Rwanda

The study also has investigated the factors and actors contributing and influencing citizens participation as well as causes for low levels of citizen participation. A total of 97 respondents from among the citizen's members were interviewed through questionnaires. Others were local leaders; Executive secretaries of sector and District Executive members and Councillors were also interviewed and involved in the FGD.

Data were analysed, interpreted and presented the results using tabulations, figures and graphs. The analysis showed that the citizens were participated in the performance contract in the local government and people were participating through budget consultation meetings, performance contracts planning, monitoring and evaluation though at appreciable level using various citizen participation channels that government of Rwanda initiated.

The analysis also showed that, the government of Rwanda is politically willing and committed to work transparently and make accountable all leaders including both at central and local through provision of various citizens participation channels including community outreach's (*Inteko z'abaturage*), community work (*Umuganda*), parent's evening forums (*Umugoroba w'ababyeyi*) to mention but a few.

The study showed the benefits of citizen's participation in the performance contracts implementation as well as speed up the implementation of the government programs and policies towards, middle income country as per Vision 2020. Among the benefits of engaging active citizens participation in the local government performance contracts includes increase of citizen ownership, transparency, accountability and social, economic development, which doesn't leave anyone behind.

The study also indicated that there is significant relationship between active (strong) citizen's participation and the local government performance contracts implementation and this towards good governance.

It noted that, participatory governance as a subset of good governance since it consists of state- sanctioned institutional processes that provide effective avenues to citizens to exercise their rights to voice their ideas, to vote constantly, directly and indirectly, and to contribute to the formulation and implementation of performance contract in the local government which in turn, produce substantial changes in their lives.

Despite the government efforts, study showed some weaknesses to be fixed in the local government layers (Village to Districts) being the incidence of low citizens participation, ineffective implementation of performance contracts, decrease of ownership and unsustainable development which were mentioned to weaker citizen's participation in local government performance contract. It was therefore recommended that, people is the first owner and partner of local government success that influencing the good governance principles which contribute positively the active citizen's participation in performance contracts.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In May 2000, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) adopted the National Decentralization Policy. The main thrust of the policy is to ensure political, economic, social, managerial, administrative and technical empowerment of local populations to fight poverty by participating in the planning and management of their development process (MINALOC: 2012)

Though decentralisation policy deepened and sustained grassroots-based democratic governance and promotes equitable local development by enhancing citizen participation and strengthening the local government system, while maintaining effective functional and mutually accountable linkages between Central and Local Governments entities.

Over the last decade, Rwanda has concurrently implemented all forms of decentralization, from deconcentration, to delegation and devolution of responsibilities depending on the nature, sensitivity and complexity of the function, and progressively as Local Government entities became stronger.

Local government entities through political decentralisation, which is implemented along two related perspectives: (1) the power of citizens to elect their leaders (vote power) and on the other side of the spectrum (2) the right of citizens to participate, either directly or indirectly through representation, in decision making (voice). These rights are entrenched in the supreme law, the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, June 20015.

Citizen's participation aspect of political decentralization empowers the local communities and enables them to receive and utilize the powers that are transferred to them especially in problem analysis, priority setting, planning, budgeting and constantly demanding accountability from their local and national leadership or any governance actor at the local level. Local governments have the obligation to facilitate and promote the participation of citizens in setting priorities, planning, budgeting and making implementation decisions regarding the services they provide.

This research will highlight factors that affect and weaker citizen participation to engage in the performance contract of the local government and its effects on social, economic development, discusses existing citizen participation channels or mechanisms. Particularly, it focuses on citizen's mobilization strategies as an increasingly important tool to engage and encourage active participation towards, speed up implementation of government policies and programs and Rwanda to become middle-income country, where development don't leave anyone behind.

Community in this case refers to self-organized network of people living in a common location with common agenda, causes, values, cultures, language or interest, who collaborate by sharing ideas, information, and other resources. To this, the consequences and effects of ineffective citizen participation in the performance contract of local government is poor socio economic development while effective citizen participation in this case refers to the involvement and strong engagement of the local people in the community provision of their needs, priorities, decision-making, planning, monitoring and evaluation so to speed up the government programs and policies to achieve vision 2020 and becoming middle income-country.

From planning consultation where citizens are consulted and provide their needs, priorities and monitoring and evaluation of the performance contract, citizen participation has to be encouraged and involved in their local government affairs to attract and motivate them towards, increase of their ownership and supportive implementation of the government policies and programs (People's voice account). It also helps to sustain and maintain the local government social, economic development built in the performance contract and promote values, dignity of self-reliance, and therefore, build a strong foundation and partnership between the citizens and leaders. In fact, if you involve the local community in a program, which is developed for them, you will find they will gain from these benefits and develop sense of ownership (Chitambo et al, 2002).

In Rwanda particularly, political centralism, dominant top-down leadership style and the political culture of submission (blind obedience) to authority largely contributed to the massive participation tragic history that Rwanda went through and that culminated in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi (NAR: 2016). Globally, the concept of governance has

attracted particular attention in the debate on international development for the past three decades. The World Bank defines it as a "complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and mediate their differences" (The World Bank, 1997, P. X).

A number of institutional reforms have been undertaken in order to enhance citizens' participation and achieve sustainable development. Drawing from its history and culture, different homegrown initiatives have been established in a bid to enforce the policies. Such initiatives include Umuganda (community work), Itorero (cultural mentoring and leadership training), Ubudehe (social support mechanism), Ubwisungane mu kwivuza (medical insurance), Girinka (a cow for every poor household) and Agaciro (giving oneself dignity) (UNDP, Government of Rwanda, 2015, NAR, 2016 and Ibrahim N, 2018).

Initially, to govern implied the existence of a leader to manage/rule people, a country or a state. With time governance, evolved towards good governance, which requires involvement of the citizens, thereby, giving more opportunities to an individual or community members to play a major role in the decision-making process. The guiding principle is no longer who manages/leads but how the community manages through its representatives (IRDP:2010)

Ultimately, good governance can only exist when a culture of citizen's participation is well entrenched and effectively practiced. The main components of good governance include: accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness as well as the rule of law. All these principles empower citizens to participate in the management of public affairs. Therefore, the concepts participation and good governance are closely related (IRDP: 2010)

For Rwanda, President Paul Kagame, compares the president's role with that of a Managing Director of a private company where Rwandans are shareholders cited in IRDP: 2010. From this statement, one notes the importance he attributes to the social pact between a leader and the citizens in a joint management of public affairs. In practice, this principle hardly works because there are other factors, which influence the exercise of power, especially the specificity of each context and the inevitable conflicts attributable to the exercise of power.

For most of the African Countries, citizen participation is rooted in African socialism and Nyerere's concept of self-reliance (kujitegemea) as cited in (Jackson Estomih Muro et al: 2015) in which citizens are obliged to contribute their labor and resources in a community effort to build the nation (kujenga taifa).

There are many forms of public participation. Nevertheless, ideally involving citizens in decision-making processes might result in general education, social learning and thereby changed attitudes and behaviour, empowerment and self-

determination of citizens (Mansbridge 1995; Florida 2013). Based on these characteristics, citizen participation could help to create more active, common good oriented, participating and motivated citizens that are supporting a sustainable future development and organizational performance.

1.2 Research Objective

The overall objective was to examine, assess the effects and correlations between citizen participation and district performance contract in Rwandan local government, specifically in Rwamagana District.

Specifically, the study objective is to proposing innovative ways of motivating and attracts citizens to participate in their affairs as exercising their powers. This research intends:

1. To examine and assess the relationship between citizen participation and district performance contract in local government of Rwanda;
2. To enhance the spirit of involving local community (Citizens) in the local government affairs towards District performance
3. To identify and analyze the factors that hinders effective citizen participation in the local government affairs (Rwamagana District)
4. To propose an innovative ways of attracting people in the decision-making that will lead to effective citizen participation in the district performance (Rwamagana District)

1.3. Research Questions

In addition, this study attempted to answer the main question: What are the effects of citizen participation on district performance contract? Or, how does citizen's participation (low) influences district performance in Rwandan local government, specifically in Rwamagana District? From the main question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

1. What are the effects or relationships between citizen participation and district performance?
2. To what extent the identified citizen participation channels attract effective citizens in the local government affairs towards local government performance?
3. What are the factors that hinder effective citizen participation in Rwamagana District performance?
4. What can be done (proposed strategies) to improve on current practices?

1.4. Scope of the Study

Geographically the focus of this study is limited to Rwamagana District, Eastern Province.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM/PROBLEM STATEMENT

“Without partnership between citizens and government, we cannot achieve development. People did not believe in our ability to develop. We had to lost faith in and we have seen

what we are capable of....” HE Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda, 2018

The research problem concerns sustained citizen participation in the implementation, execution and achievement of performance contract in Rwamagana District, a local government of Rwanda. Despite the motivated potential benefits of citizen's participation in the local government performance, the execution of this government policy with sustained citizens participation, faces numerous challenges to both central and local leaders.

Rwanda being a both developing and decentralized country has its legal frameworks provision according to the Prime Minister's Order No 238/03 of 08/12/2016, the Ministry of Local Government role's are to ensures the coordination of good governance and high quality territorial administration programs that promote economic, social and political development throughout the nation while it adopted the Decentralisation Policy in May 2000 and revised it in 2012 with aim deepening and sustaining grassroots-based democratic governance and promote equitable local development by enhancing citizen participation and strengthening the local government system, while maintaining effective functional and mutually accountable linkages between Central and Local Governments entities.

Particularly, the policy could not be achievable unless government enhances and sustains citizens' participation in initiating, making, implementing, monitoring and evaluating decisions and plans that affect them by transferring power, authority and resources from central to local government and lower levels, and ensuring that all levels have adequate capacities and motivations to promote genuine participation through No 87/2013 of 11/09/2013, Law determining the organisation and functioning of decentralized administrative entities.

Despite the different laws, strategies, policies, programs and channels that Government of Rwanda has put in place in order that, citizen's enjoy their rights in participating in all decision making at all level, their effective participation is still problematic as the below tangible facts from NAR (2016-2017), RALGA (2017), IRDP (2010), RGB (CRC: 2015-2017), Rwanda Civil society Platform (2011) to mention but a few.

In addition to this, a relatively clear system of accountability and transparency in local government of Rwandan context, the performance of active citizens participation mechanisms or channels remains problematic and questionable though government initiated various ways that local people can exercise their powers using mechanism such Umuganda (Community work), Inteko z'abaturage (Citizens assemblies), Umugoroba w'ababyeyi (Parent's evening forum), Inama Njyanama (Councils) to mention but a few.

According to RALGA (July, 2017), the reasons behind as cited to explain the poor performance of this key element of

governance includes: the absence of a regulatory framework.

The law determining the functioning of Local Councils/Councillors is silent as to how Elected Local Councillors should interact with their respective constituencies. The absence of a regulatory framework on councillorship interactions was found with negative implications for accountable local governance. This fact is likely to make it very difficult, even impossible, to hold Elected Local Councillors accountable for their responsibilities.

Citizen participation in local government is usually considered to be an important mechanism for achieving development gains, strengthening local accountability, and empowering citizens (Ganesh Prasad Pandeya: 2015). Thus, in a democracy, participation depends, to a large extent on the functionality of the state and non- state institutions. Additionally, it depends on the particularities of a given context and the role of the citizen in the decision-making process (IRDP: 2010)

In addition to this, various research's findings revealed and confirmed the persistent low citizens in participation in the local government affairs as cited by RGB (CRC: 2015, 2016 and 2017), NAR (2016-2017), IRDP (2010) and LARGA (2016-2017), lack of active citizen participation in these processes contribute to further undermine accountability, lack of popular understanding of the role and responsibilities of council leaders, lack of understanding of the planning and budgeting processes are additional challenges facing accountability at local level, therefore good governance might be doubtful.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Good governance is understood as the process by which the leaders manage the economic and social resources of a country, a community or an institution for its development. The management is governed by a set of principles such as respect of laws and human rights, transparency and effectiveness of affairs conduct, fight against corruption, promotion of democracy as well as participatory and sustainable development. Good governance is considered as a priority by the international organizations. Rwanda opted for good governance because it is a policy, which enables leaders to meet citizens' expectations and to speed up their participation in the development of the country (Tito RUTAREMARA: 2011)

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) defines good governance as: "the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage the nation's affairs and the complex mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions as well as leadership behaviour through which citizens' groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations and mediate their differences".

According to the World Bank (2011) good governance entails sound public sector management through efficiency, effectiveness and economy. In addition it relies on accountability, exchange, transparency and legal framework for development while Surendra Munshi (2004) argue on this definition, and to him, good governance means a participative manner of governing that functions in a responsible, accountable and transparent manner based on the principles of efficiency, legitimacy and consensus for the purpose of promoting rights of individual citizens and public interest, thus indicating the exercise of political will for ensuring the material welfare of society and sustainable development with social justice.

Based on six dimensions of governance used by the Worldwide Governance Indicators are as follows:

- **Voice and accountability** captures perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media.
- **Political stability and absence of violence** measures the perceptions of the likelihood that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism.
- **Government effectiveness** captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies.
- **Regulatory quality** captures perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development.
- **Rule of law** captures perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence and
- **Control of corruption** captures perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as (captures) the state by elites and private interests.

In addition to this, some scholars nominated 8 characteristics of good governance "principles of good governance", most of which are quite similar to the above-mentioned indicators of governance: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus oriented, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and accountability. The

successful leader in any country is the one who allow and encourage active citizen participation in the public affairs management and who is accountable to his/her people who is inspired by democratic values, otherwise, the skills and his/her well intended are not helpful.

In fact, governance is “good” when it ensures that political, social and economic priorities of the communities who aspire for development change are based on citizen’s voice, views and opinions while they are exercising their powers in

decision-making. On the other hand as a factor that affects citizen participation, lack of trust on side of community, unaccountable bureaucracies, corruption or injustice. All these aforementioned can negatively affect the district performance.

Recalling of the research topic of factors affecting citizen’s participation in district performance, the independent variables were identified as governance and dependent variables as citizen’s participation (figure 1).

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

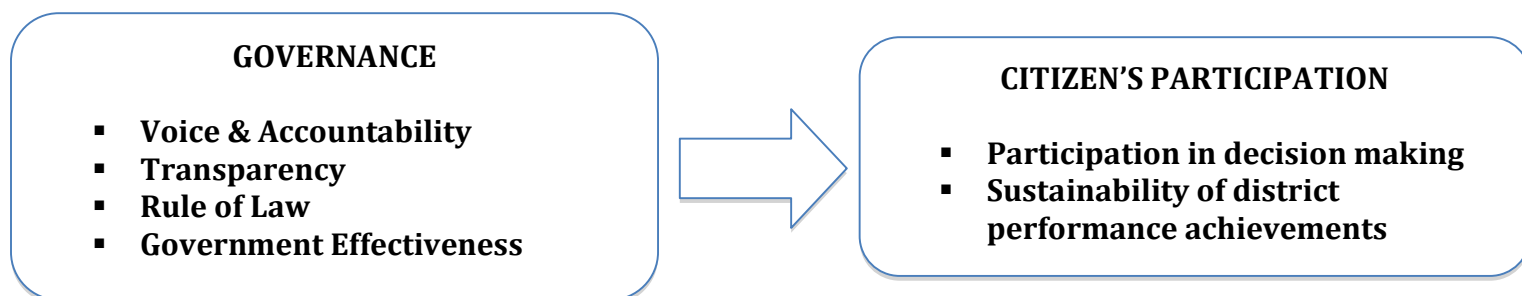


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the effects of citizen participation on District Performance in local government of Rwanda, Rwamagana District.

The preconditions to have good governance in any Institution much more in the Local government are accountability and transparency to their citizens. This because, accountability improves citizens participation in their public affairs, increase ownership and awareness of various government programs and policies towards common objective and sustain the district performance and its achievements in different forms of the projects (Infrastructures...) completed.

In fact, accountability and transparency enhance community participation in public sector agencies, community participation in management and public hearings (Cummins 2007).

Not only that, rather both improves; greater attention to the needs and priorities of citizens at all layers, increased citizen participation in planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation and speed up the implementation of government programs and policies.

Citizen’s participation in governance especially in the local spheres thus becomes a crucial determinant of effectiveness of local governments. Good governance is the foundation of participatory development inasmuch as it provides the government functions needed to promote participation and create the environment in which participatory processes take place.

In fact, it is widely argued that increased citizen participation in government decision- making produces many important benefits. Dissent is rare: It is difficult to envision anything but positive outcomes from citizens joining the policy process,

collaborating with others, and reaching consensus to bring about positive social and environmental change.

The greater the participation levels in communities, the more likely council decisions and actions will match short and long-term community objectives. In addition, as Stewart (2003) puts it, there exist two modes of citizen participation, that is: (1) the opportunity to engage in policy making directly and (2), the opportunity to engage in policy making indirectly and the direct participation happens when citizens are personally and actively engaged in taking decisions that affect their lives, while indirect participation occurs when work through representatives who make decisions on their behalf. These two channels exist in Rwanda. The direct channel includes meetings with local leaders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the media, while the indirect channel involves Councils (Njyanama) and institutional representatives at local and national levels.

Therefore, citizen Participation is another key element for good governance whereby the people are allowed to be part of the decision- making process in their public affairs management. With globalization, the today’s world, good governance is defined and assessed in terms of the degree of transparency, accountability of decision-making and government policy implementation.

Participation is a fundamental principle of democracy. According to Held (2006) democracy generally means a mode of government in which the people rule, but with the addition that it often varies who the people are, and what ruling actually means. Nonetheless, democracy implicates some kind

of political equality among the people of a political community. Hence, public participation can be defined as “the involvement of ordinary citizens in both decisions about and the implementation of social and economic change” (Bulkeley & Mol 2003) as cited in (James L. Creighton: 2005).

Citizen participation is a process based on mutual exchange of the information’s or a dialogue between so called leader and citizen with aim o identify own challenges, gaps or problems that affect their daily lives and all together, find possible solutions, here is to empowers citizens. To sustaining a high level of citizen participation and meaningful requires at any cost, adherence of good governance principles as explained and failure to this which may result from poor governance which lead to non performance of district in the local government and at the end, will lead to poor social, economic, development.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design adopted in this study is a case study. This design was chosen due to its flexibility in terms of data collection and analysis, also due to its depth study variables. The targeted population included civil servants at different layers (District, Sectors and Cells), Elected Leaders (Council members and District Executive Committee), government officials including extension officers from other Government agencies and District development partner’s both national and International.

Sampling frame therefore is the set of source materials from which the sample is selected (Krishnaswami, 2002) as cited by Jackson Estomih Muro, G. S. Namusonge (2015). The sample frame for this study therefore encompassed citizens, civil servant in the local government at various layers, District Officials, extension workers in other government agencies, national and international organizations dealing with citizen participation,. From these groups data were collected basing on the level of awareness and involvement of citizens and ward leaders, political leaders and District officials on the governance factors affecting citizen’s participation into district performance.

The reason for opting to conduct study through sampling is that it uses less cost, less field time and its more accuracy. Data collection methods employed were interviews through questionnaires, observations and documentary reviews. Through interviews, data were collected using unstructured and semi-structured interviews. This was categorized into two; primary and secondary methods of data collection then proceed with data analysis and summary of the findings and interpretations of data.

V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

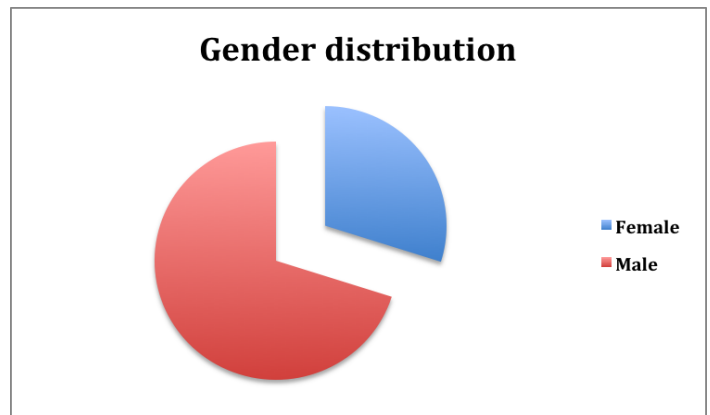
5.1 Introduction

The study sample size was 97 respondents in selected Rwamagana District. Analysis of data was done with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Quantitative

variables been analysed using descriptive statistics and results displayed in tables. Descriptive statistics allow the researcher to explain the results using few indicators (Mugenda 2003). The qualitative information was presented using tables, pie chats or graphs. Quantitative method was used to generalize and identify prevalence from the data provided by the informants.

5.2. Demographic Analysis

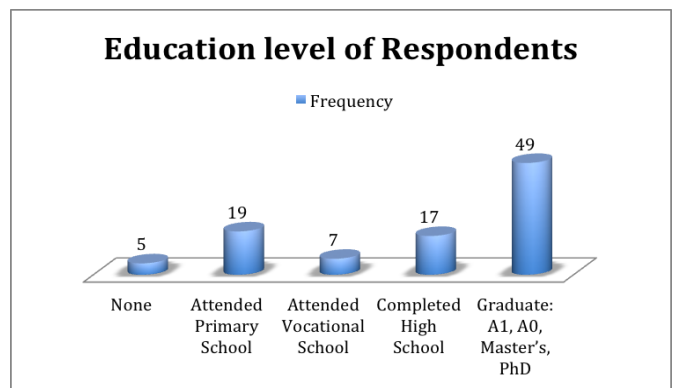
The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondent involved in the study were sex, gender, age, marital status, level of education and professional experience. The findings show that the biggest number of respondents was a male (70.1%) while the smallest numbers of respondents were female (29.9%) as table below shows.



Source: Researcher’s field findings 2018

The researcher further considered also educational levels of respondents in order to check their levels of understanding and competence with regard to the study and the results are presented in figure below:

Figure 2: Showing Educational Levels of Respondents



Source: Researcher’s field findings 2018

The analysis shows that education level of the respondent is vital to engage in the citizen participation since at lower level, strong ideas and opinions are needed in terms of social, economic development aspects and other matters related to local and democratic governance.

50.51% of the respondents graduated either A1, A0, master's or PhD, 19.58% attended primary school, 5.15% none while 17.525 completed high school.

5.3. Governance style in Local Government of Rwanda

For Smith (1983), as cited by A. F. Chikerema (2013), Citizens must actively participate in its operations at all levels, but especially in the local government system. Local officials have both a responsibility and a stake in keeping citizens fully informed about local programs and activities and giving them clear opportunities to play meaningful roles in determining and implementing local public policy.

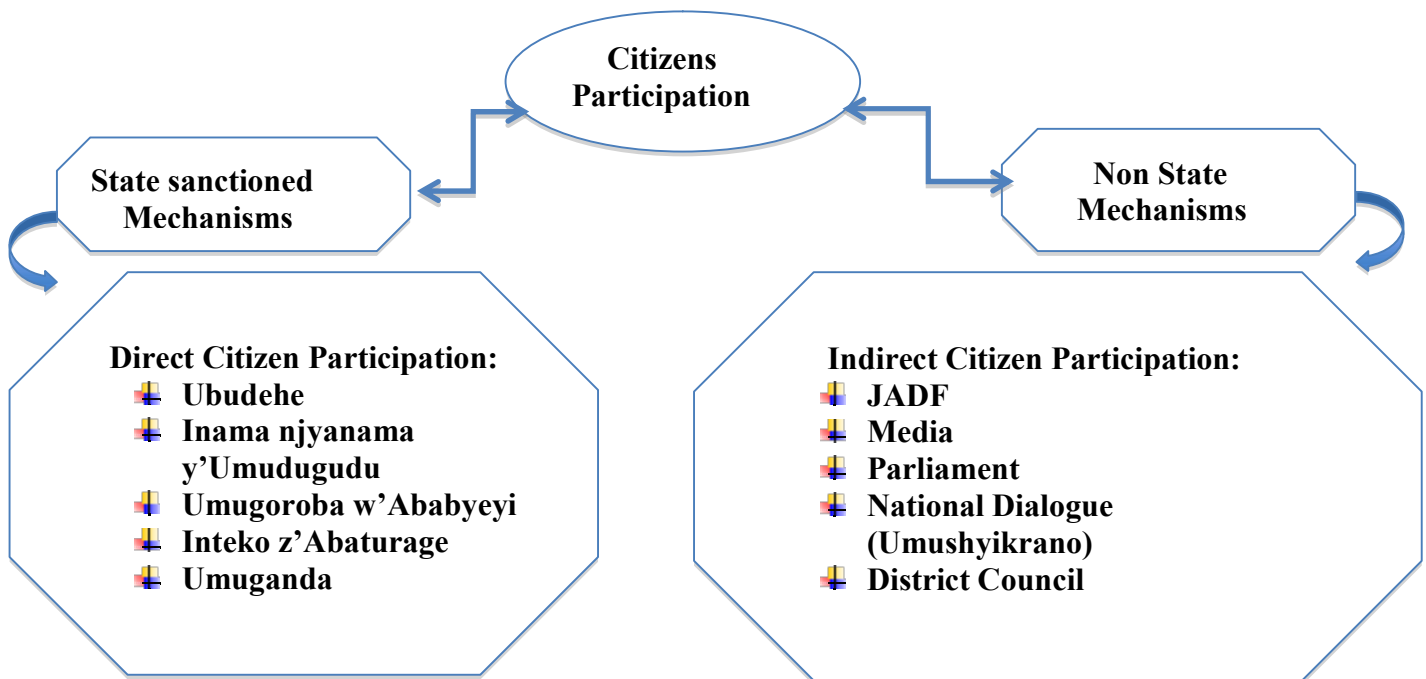
However, the concept of citizen participation is being related to rights of citizenship and to democratic governance. Nowhere is the intersection of concepts of citizen participation and citizenship seen more clearly than in the multitude of programs for decentralized governance that are found in both central and local governments. Linking citizen participation to the state at this local or grassroots level raises

fundamental and normative questions about the nature of democracy and about the skills and strategies for achieving it.

In fact, citizen participation in district performance in particular, depends largely on how people are governed and leads in their respective layers (Communities). This means, the level of democratic governance has direct link with citizen's participation in the district performance and its sustainability, therefore not inseparable.

5.4. Mixed forms of democracy in Local Government of Rwanda

Particularly, Rwanda applies a mixed form of democracy which involves, on the one hand direct participation of citizens (Presidential election, citizens assemblies, parents evening forums... and, on the other hands, citizens' representatives acting on behalf of the voters (District Councils, Members of Parliament both the lower and upper chambers). For representative democracy to work, elected and appointed leaders should be accountable to citizens (MINALOC: 2012)



Study findings realized that effective citizen participation in the local government affairs has direct relationship with citizen's participation in district performance and the sustainability of the activities performed by the district.

To this, 69 % of respondent appreciated Umuganda (Community work) as an important tool for them, to participate in different government programs and policies, 22% participate through inteko z'abaturage (Citizens

assemblies), 5% through Councils and 4% using parents evening forum.

Contrary to this, 7.2% of respondents confirmed that, channels that are being used by Rwamagana District leaders are not proper to stimulate citizen to participate, in our observation and analysis, we found that channels may be good and effective but the challenge remain at how it being used as aforementioned explained while 5.1% of them, revealed that, Local leaders don't value the role of citizen in the

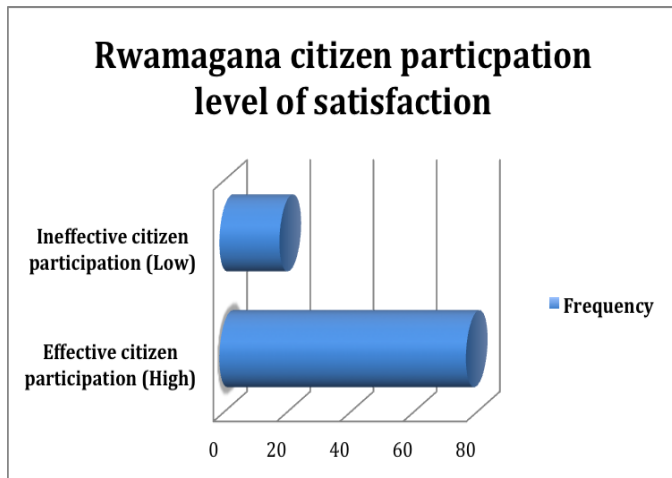
Rwamagana affairs.

5.4. Relationship between Citizen participation and District performance

The majority of the respondents 98% confirmed that there is a close relationship between citizen participation channels and the district performance because with these channels citizens can express themselves their issues and needs to their elected leaders which could help them to acquire them or including them in the district planning either short or long term planning and some of their needs are taken into consideration through annual imihigo (Performance contract).

5.4.1. Citizen participation in the District performance

From the below figure, a high number of citizens in Rwamagana District revealed that, they are relatively satisfied with their participation in the district affairs.



Source: Researcher’s field findings 2018

The reasons behind the ineffective citizen participation, findings revealed that, a big number of respondents (58.7%) affirmed that local leader imagine the citizen priorities on their behalf since they don’t consult them before any district planning and yet there are many channels to be used that government initiated, this is too dangerous and its against democratic principles where by, citizen voice has to be considered and thus, some Rwandan policies and programs might not be fully implemented once low citizen participation persistent. 15.4% of the respondents said that they participate low due to Limited time and local government environment where by unplanned activities and shortcoming take more time than planned activities, 13.4% of the respondents spontaneously participate low in the district affairs since Local leaders don’t motivate them to participate actively or sometimes don’t have communication about the events.

5.4.2. Cost of ineffective citizen participation in the District performance

Local government or district cannot achieve and sustain performance without involvement of its citizens and various partners’, because performance measurement in the local

government of Rwanda is the performance contract. 35.5% of the respondents confirm that though District may be ranked as best performer or have a good scores but at the end, the final evaluation and appreciation is done by citizens therefore, local leaders have to keep in mind that, citizens are those who elected them and they are working for them, this means that, citizens are those who have final world to the performance of their District. 26.8% of the respondents confirmed that even if district may be among the performing district across the country, but as long as citizens are not involved and supportive to district performance, it will always results the unsustainability of activities achieved through imihigo (social, economic development).

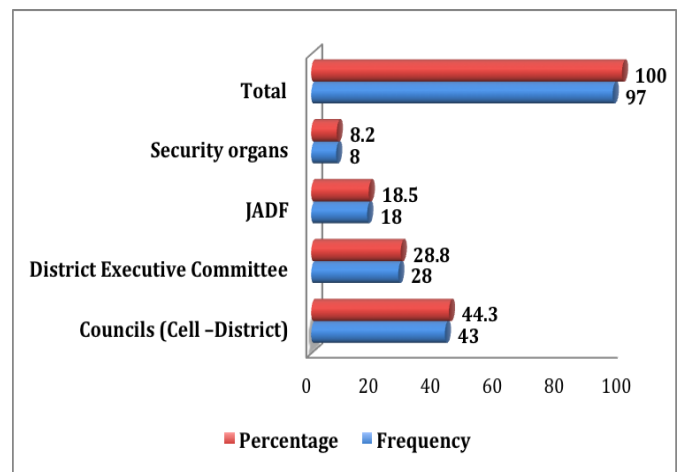
14.4% revealed that, the low citizen participation in district performance increase the chances of inappropriate decisions, 12% of respondents revealed that, among the effect of low citizen participation to district performance is the decrease of accountability and transparency and 8.2% of them, added the effect of less ownership of citizens while 3% of the respondents freely expressed their view that, same local leaders do technics (This to mean, to use fake news or data on related performance).

Contrary, 36% of respondents know that, once they participate actively in the district affairs as their leaders motivated them to do so, the result is the speeding up the monitoring, evaluation and the implementation of government policies and programs that district implement towards successful implementation of the district performance contract.

VI. ORGANS STIMULATING DISTRICT PERFORMANCE IN THE DISTRICT

Most of respondents indicated that council members at all layers would stimulate better than others the district performance since are the ones which has power of decision making, to evaluate and to monitor the District Executive Committee as below detailed:

Figure: Organs that stimulate & contribute to district performance



Source: Researcher’s field findings 2018

44.3% of respondents confirm Council to be the most reliable organ to hold accountable and stimulate district performance since council is the powerful organ in the district, so there is more chances to stimulate performance.

28.8% agreed that, District Executive Committee remain responsible to the district performance as an organ which has all powers to sign performance contract with His Excellency President of the Republic of Rwanda, while 18.5% précised JADF organ as them have responsibility to support district in the implementation of government policies and programs while support also citizens to play their key role and finally, security organs 8.2% also been considered by citizens since district alone without security organs can not performing.

VII. CONCLUSION

Basing on the study findings, we can conclude that citizen's engagement and active participation is key for a successful and sustainable district performance. However, local and democratic governance are essential influential and ingredients for citizen participation into district performance. On the other hand, none can doubt on the direct link between local and democratic governance and levels of citizen participation in district performance despite of persistent decrease of low citizen participation emanating from leadership and planning and implementation of district performance contract. Local leaders are highly essential in the success of the performance contracts. In general where the leadership involves citizens in government programmes, performance in such districts is very good and mutual understanding between district leaders (Councils and Executive committee or between them), avoiding any nature of conflict and leaded by a culture of trust, transparency and accountability.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

As we mentioned early, the performance of the local government is measured through district performance contract and district alone can not achieve anything unless a strong partnership between its development partners including citizens, joint action development forum, central government and others.

In fact, the triangle success factor (**Citizen- District- Partners**) in the district in an important tool for any district performance and the condition is to promote the performance contracts "Imihigo" process as a mechanism that assures citizens' engagement in planning, implementation and evaluation of development programs, we propose the following recommendations to various key stakeholders:

- i. Reformulate and re-develop a comprehensive Imihigo policy to guide the planning, implementation and evaluation of Imihigo process as well as citizen participation in the process,
- ii. Increase number of central and local government consultation meeting on specific

imihigo/performance contract with clear indicators, outcomes, inputs and feasible even smatter targets.

- iii. A clear guideline or regulation that oblige councils and other organs that represent groups from cells to Districts to interact on regular basis with those whom elected them or represent them to ensure their needs are taken into consideration and provide with them, a feedback.
- iv. Increase a frequency and proper channels of communication between central and local government especially, provide budget support timely, since this affect directly the district performance and effectively intervene in the coordination meeting with local government when district performance matters.
- v. Fix and adjust the citizen's participation channels to enable citizens to participate in the local government affairs effectively so, to be more productive.
- vi. Allocate enough time to discuss performance contracts that are initiated from higher levels for the local communities to increase ownership, understand and appreciate them
- vii. Districts partners specifically JADF should be involved in all district planning processes and play a key role in the district performance, therefore, design a memorandum of understanding towards delivery (Signed MoU's to the joint imihigo) for easy tracking and systematic monitoring and evaluation.

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