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### **Abstract**

Public participation is critical when undertaking county functions such as resource budgeting and utilization and often determines the success or the failure of county development projects. The implementation of public participation in the utilization of public resource in Mandera West Sub County is still very low. In addition, utilization of public resources remains a significant challenge in Mandera West Sub County. The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of public participation on allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County. The specific objectives of the paper entailed; determining the effect of stakeholder engagement and public communication strategies on the utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The study also tested the moderating effects of legal requirements on the relationship between public participation and utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The theories adapted to guide this study included the new public management theory and ladder of Citizen Participation Theory. The study employed mixed approach methodology by combining quantitative and quantitative data collected through semi structured questionnaire and interview template. The target population was 5 ward representatives and 16, 701 members of the public. A sample size of 376 residents was calculated using Krejcie and Morgan sampling table whereas a census of all the 5 ward representatives was conducted. Data analysis entailed descriptive and inferential statistics and was conducted by use of SPSS Version 23.0. Results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County ( $\beta=.474$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). Public communication strategies was positively and significantly related to the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County ( $\beta=.428$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). The model further showed that adhering to legal requirements in the relationship between public participation and utilization of public resources was satisfactory since the coefficient of determination of the model summary before moderation was 61.7% but after moderation the coefficient of determination improved to 74.2% implying that adherence to legal requirements enhances utilization of public resources. Based on research finding it can be concluded that stakeholder engagement and public communication strategies positively affects the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County. It can also be concluded that legal requirements moderate the relationship between public participation and utilization of public resources. There is need to engage all stakeholders including county officers, national government officers and community whom may give their views and opinions through open forums and seminars on how resources are utilized. The study recommends for clear mechanism on how opinions are raised by stakeholders are incorporated so as to improve utilizations of public funds. The mode of communicating and holding public events may be enhanced by conducting rotational public meetings across the wards. There is need to promote civic education on the use of public resources among the members of the public.

**Keywords:** *stakeholder engagement, public communication strategies, legal requirements, utilization of public resources, Mandera West Sub County*

## **1.1 Introduction**

The general public has always yearned to be involved actively and meaningfully in distribution and utilization of resources of the society (Neshkova & Guo, 2011). However, the window of opportunity to involve the public in resource utilization was overshadowed by the emphasis of technical expertise in identifying and prioritizing needs for resources allocation (Martineau-Delisle & Nadeau, 2010). Public resource utilization remains a key pillar that anchors devolved units of government in Kenya. According to the 2010 constitution, the national government is required to provide financial resources to all counties in Kenya for them to be able to provide devolved services to citizens at county level (Kinyanjui, Bulitia & Machogu, 2017). However, utilization of public resources remains a significant problem in public institutions. To enhance proper resource use, public participation is important (Ansell & Torfing, 2016).

Public participation is a process whereby individuals, governmental and non-governmental groups play a major role of influencing decision making (Freeman, 2010). It is a robust process that creates interaction between the state and non-state entities that are responsible for informing and providing information access, capacity building and the real interaction in the processes of county governments (Wacera, 2016). Public participation may involve stakeholder engagement and or community engagement. However, it should be noted that stakeholder engagement might not necessarily be from the community but do make critical decisions partitioning resource use in the county (Simonsen, 2018). On the other hand, community engagement involves the local people from the community and their constitutional requirement in the utilization of public resources. Empowering the public should entail placing final decision-making authority in their hands (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006). There are a number of public participation methods that have been adopted by various counties which include working together with the people and coming up with a common desired solution, including the people in the process of decision making especially on matters development, getting public views with an objective understanding their preferences or decisions and providing them with information that will assist them to be effectively involved in governance (Wakwabubi & Shiverenje, 2003).

In Kenya, the Constitution, under article 174(c), stipulates that county government's role is provide self-governance powers to the citizens by enhancing means of participation as appertains to the powers conferred by state and in decision making that affects the citizens. The 2010 Constitution confers powers and responsibilities that will make sure that capacity building is among the people is facilitated and capacity of the people is developed for them to be able to participate fully in public governance and county governments functions as provide for in section 14 (Schedule 4 Part 2). Therefore, county governments are needed to perform the subsequent functions; develop a means through which consultation can take place by making sure that coordination of communities in place of governance and resource use is enhanced (CoK, 2010).

According to Muiro (2014), the key pillar that ensures proper utilization public resources in devolved governments is participation. One of the most important ways of getting rid of disparities in access to services and resources in the county government is through public participation (Ajwang, 2017). Low public participation inhibits effective utilization of the funds (Minayo, 2012). The constitution clearly spells out the importance of public participation in devolved units of governments. The Article 196 of the 2010 constitution of Kenya recognizes that importance of public participation and underpins the importance of transparency in public

financial management. Devolved governments in Kenya, offers the community a right to certain quarter Agenda of the Establishment, the County Administrations Act 2012 and the Public Economics Administration Act 2012 (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Hence, it expected that the management of devolved public participation in their administrative counties by taking services close to the people (Ndubi, 2013). Well established public participation is effective in public governance since it appreciates the contribution of the public in planning and utilization of county resources.

Devolution is a new concept of governance in Mandera West Sub County in Mandera County and at large in the whole country. A lot of resources are being disbursed into the county in a bid to have the livelihood of common citizenry change positively. To achieve this, disbursed resources must be managed prudently (Muriu, 2014). Efficiency and effectiveness are major elements when it comes to proper assessment and implementation of critical success factors (CSF). Efficiency and effectiveness in any organization have to be sought in earnest. Enhanced public involvement is one of the key critical success factors in devolved systems.

The essence of involving the public in the utilization of resources serves many purposes in that people will always feel part of progress that takes place in counties. Citizen engagement enables the policy and project implementer to put the resources where it is most needed and is in line with the public expectations (Bastidas, 2014). The moment resources are dispersed to the counties the expectation of the local citizens is that there is going to be an improvement in service delivery. Therefore, in order to minimize conflicts people should always be on the forefront in deciding how their resources should be used (Neshkova & Guo, 2011). Citizen's engagements forums need to be conducted by the local administration at various locations within the county so every local citizen has a chance to participate and provide the views on how the resources should best utilized. The leaders should always spearhead the process because they are the representatives of the people.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

It has been ten years, following the adoption of devolution as an alternative governance strategy, Mandera West Sub County is still grappling with a myriad of problems including poverty, low mean household expenditure, low access to education, inadequate access to safe drinking water, poor sanitation, and inadequate access to cooking fuel, electricity and better housing. The problems could be attributed to poor resource utilization in the in Mandera West Sub County (MCIDP, 2018). Cases of resource mismanagement, misappropriation, unaccountability to public resources have been reported in Mandera West Sub County undermining service delivery to the people as reported by MCIDP (2018).

Public participation in the utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County is very low. According to Ministry of Devolution and Planning (2016) report, public participation in the utilization of public resource in Mandera West Sub County is very low at 27% compared to 47% in other sub counties within Mandera County and average public participation of 53% nationally. The participants were community members and ward representatives as stakeholders.

Overall, Mandera West Sub County is in the list of counties consistently mentioned as the most deprived of adequate resources. However, the little resources channeled through devolved governments are not utilized optimally. Moreover, utilization of public resources remains a significant challenge in Mandera West Sub County. The question of whether devolution is



adequately responding to citizens' needs through strengthened institutions, improved service delivery and citizen engagement still lingers on. Mandera West Sub County having received devolved funds to the tune of hundreds of millions to date, public participation in resource use is low. Public participation is critical when undertaking county functions including resource budgeting and utilization as per the County Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (2016).

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To determine the effect of stakeholder engagement on the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County.
2. To establish the effect of public communication strategies on the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County.
3. To examine the moderating effect of legal requirements on the relationship between public participation and allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Empirical literature**

#### **2.1.1 Stakeholder Engagement on Utilization of Public Resources**

Otieno and Mumo (2017) in a study they carried out in Nakuru Sub-County which focused on community participation on water and sustainability of sanitation projects indicated that, there was a significant positive relationship between community participation and sustainability of WASH projects in Rhonda slums Nakuru County. Community participation is enlightened about the importance of their engagement in identifying and resolving matters that affect them which are geared towards sustainable development. According to the study, when projects are executed in partnership with different agencies, it is crucial for sustainability that agencies have an agreement and that there are elaborate channels for giving out resources and receiving feedback. The study focused on the role of community participation on the sustainability of projects. The role of public in the utilization of public resources was not discussed.

Stakeholder engagement in public participation is essential since it not only encourage the public to appreciate what is being done by the local administration but is also essential in ensuring that there is social acceptance of all the projects that are being undertaken hence fostering peace and developments in counties. Further, well designed strategy for stakeholder engagement promotes accountability, cultivates trust and reinforces commitment among various stakeholders towards good governance and reduces the likelihood of corruption.

Usang (2016) argue that native citizens have been completely sidelined from the community which they ought to be engaged in resource management the process of gradually handling of harvesting and management activities of their natural resources. Through their inclusion in the management of resources, environmental resources will be safe guarded. The study concluded that, community engagement and involvement in the management and conservation of natural resources are vital instruments in environmental resources management. It was recommended that, community members should be involved in planning and conservation of natural resources. Empowerment programmes to provide alternative means of livelihood to be made available for the local people to reduce over dependence on environmental resources. Government should create incentives to boost resource conservation and management. The study focused on the role of community engagement on resource management of natural resources.

Jami and Walsh (2014) in a study to determine the influence of public involvement in resource distribution in New Zealand indicated that the key objective of public participation is ensure that that the member of the public have a say in the process of decision making. Public participation hence creates opportunities that will allow the community to communicate amongst various agencies responsible for decision making and the public. The established communication is likely to become the first point that public concerns are detected and issues addressed based on the feedback. It is an avenue through which correct information can be relayed within the shortest time possible which is likely to contribute to sustainable decision making. Public participation is an important task that must precede any undertaking, it must take into account the views and opinions of the individuals; any other interest party who is likely to be affected by the decisions being undertaken. According to Ronmark (2013), public participation must involve various stakeholders where they can share decision making. It is imperative that all stake holders take part in equal measure the role that various officials and technical experts in resource distribution.

As per Kubai (2015), county governments ought to come with legislations that would ensure that promotion of resource mobilization that are available in the local county so as to grow its income revenues. Additionally, county assemblies needs to fast track the process of legislation so that it can motivate public participation in resource usage. In the study little is discussed on the role of public participation in the utilization of resources. The study only mentioned the need to develop laws that encourage public participation in resource use presenting conceptual gap.

Ime (2014) conducted a study to establish the level of engagement in the Conservation of Natural Resources in Akamkpa Local Government Area, Southern Cross River State, Nigeria The result of these findings revealed that community engagement significantly influences forest resource management. The result of the study support the assertion of Bhaff (2014) which maintain that, the participation of local community in natural resources management is the integration of local people to mobilize themselves to make decisions, manage their resources and control the activities that affect their lives. However, the study focused on the role of community engagement on environmental conservation.

### **2.1.2 Public communication strategies on Utilization of Public Resources**

Gruing (2011) in his study of public relation and strategic management went further to find to find out how institutionalization of public relations in a society could take place in a contemporary society. The presentation of public relations model that has been adopted in in strategic management considers various factors that include environmental setup, stake holders and the public. In addition, the study looked at various scenarios that can be utilized to build relationships as well challenges and issues that are likely to take place in the society. Digital media can also be used to promote strategic management process and that public relations can strengthen and made part of the organizations process that underpins the strategic management activities.

In another study by Shamsam and Otieno (2015), the study established that strategic public relations had significantly affected the performance of organizations. The findings were arrived at after an extensive research study that involved the participants from Kenya Red Cross society. The focus of the study was on the effect that strategic public relations have on organizational performance. The research findings were conclusively done after a descriptive process of data analysis was conducted.

Kim and Cha (2013) led an examination on the impact of advertising and organizational image on rate of return. This examination endeavored to recognize the informal connections among factors, for example, association size and multifaceted nature, advertising office size and convention, and corporate notoriety, and how these factors influenced monetary ROI. The main 300 South Korean enterprises were overviewed and their reactions were examined utilizing auxiliary condition displaying. Sizes of advertising divisions and associations were the most significant factors influencing ROI. Both advertising and corporate notoriety decidedly influenced ROI. There was a positive connection between the multifaceted nature of an association, and the size and custom of an advertising division. This proposed even a littler partnership could improve its notoriety and subsequently ROI by having an entrenched advertising or key correspondence office.

Nduta, Shisia, Kamau and Asienga (2017) led an investigation on impediments affecting the management of public resources in county governments in Kenya, using Machakos County as a case study. The study was descriptively carried out with a target population being various members of staff working in the county who are in charge of various departments. The data collection for the was successfully done using questionnaires upon which the data was analysed and the conclusion that was arrived at showed that communication was one of the challenges that was facing the county while conducting the process of public resource management.

### **2.1.3 Legal requirements on the relationship between public participation and utilization of public resources**

Wolf, Wohlfart and Brown (2015) in a study pointed out that, matters that have been raise by the public and are genuine and appropriate for making decision at that moment should considered while making final making the final decisions. It is therefore imperative to make sure all stake holder as well as public participation is equally the same as that of administrative staff and experts in technical issues confined within the legal framework. The contribution of the public in DOCs legal arrangement procedure can't go beyond or next to decision making because of the challenges. Public participation is concern with facilitation of people's engagement, or groups which are likely to be affected or may be concerned with decision. Sourcing of participant's contribution aims at identifying how they would like to participate. For instance agencies alone cannot provide input. The all approach offers fair balances opportunities to all stakeholders to take part in decision efficiently. Unbiased and independent approaches are commonly used.

Adedoyin (2017) in another investigation presumed that the involvement of the public in EIA process in Nigeria is obligatory as provided for in the legal Act that governs EIA process. Be that as it may, a number of research activities that have been carried out in Nigeria show that very few less privileged people have been involved in the process of carrying out EIA. Going by the e experience from other nations that have fully integrated public participation in their processes, the outcome has shown that there no conflicts being witnessed during the implementation of development projects.

## **2.2 Theoretical literature Review**

### **2.2.1 Stakeholder's Theory**

This theory argues that any one affected by the activities of an organization is a stakeholder. They may be a group of people or individuals who benefit from the organizations activities in a positive way or are affected negatively by the activities of the same organization. The composition of stakeholders according to the theory may include worker, suppliers, shareholders, creditors, clients, government bodies, competitors and the entire community. The most powerful way of understanding an organization is through its stakeholders (Oakley, 2011). This is an approach meant to widen the managements horizon as it focuses on its vision and responsibilities without necessarily focusing so much on maximizing on profits as a function as well as stakeholders being recognized in input output models of the organization to also include the interest of those who are not stake holders. According to an explanation by Patton (2013), the stakeholder model involves all people or groups with real interests taking part in a venture do as such to get benefits and that there is no pre-set need of one lot of interests and advantages over another (Maina, 2013). Related enterprises, forthcoming workers, imminent clients, and general society everywhere, should be mulled over.

The theory lays more emphasis on the importance of relationship between executive management staff and stakeholders. Therefore, it is important for managers to keep in mind that the success of any project being undertaken can easily be influenced to a large extent by involving several stakeholders. The participation of these stake holders is likely to be influenced by the relationship they have with the executive management and not with staff at lower carders acting on behalf of top managers or executives.

### **2.2.2 New Public Management Theory**

This is the theory that is commonly used in the management and running of government institutions that provide public services at the national and at a local level. The theory is considered as the most appropriate for this study because it focuses on the citizens as the key central feature in service provision. The theory was introduced the late 70s to early 80s by Gruening, (2001). The theory highlights shortcomings and disparities in that is affecting public administrations Kalimullah, Alam, & Nour, (2012). Arora, (2013) points out that theory is the most common theory in public administration. The theory lays forward a distinct relationship that exists between government, publics and service to the public Lane (2012). It explains how the different changes occurs in governments operations, changes in time bound process of transparency and changes in academic activities involving the public sector Hood (1991).

The new public administration (NPM) hypothesis has been depicted as a move towards an administration approach that places accentuation on straightforwardness, execution of the executives and responsibility of public sector workers and directors (Osborne, 2010). The way of thinking has been distinguished as "one of the most striking global patterns in public organization" that is equipped for re-creating government (Cope, Leishman and Starie, 1997). Since the 1980s, the new public administration (NPM) has been settled in principle and administration rehearses. Numerous administrations and a few worldwide associations have held onto the NPM as the system or worldview through which governments are modernized and the public segment re-built to "reinforce the associations among government and the instruments, both in government and common society that is liable for how well government functions



(Andrews & Van de Walle, 2013). As opposed to concentrating on controlling organizations and conveying administrations, public officers are currently reacting to the needs of the people. The essential establishment of the NPM is the utilization of the financial market as a model for political and managerial connections. The institutional parts of the NPM are vigorously influenced by the suppositions of open decision hypothesis, head operator hypothesis, and exchange cost financial aspects (Kapucu, 2006). The NPM development is headed to augment gainful and allocative efficiencies that are hampered by open organizations that are inert to the requests of residents and drove by administrators with the force and impetuses to extend their regulatory domains. Moreover, the NPM makes an inflexible conventional detachment between strategy making and administration conveyance (Simonet, 2011). New public administration depicts an "administration culture that underlines the centrality of the resident or client, just as responsible for results.

This theory is helpful and significant in clarifying straightforwardness, responsibility and the executives in open workplaces. After the recommendation, NPM got basic in open organization the board. This new way to deal with open administration accentuates on decentralization and strengthening, concentrated on administration conveyance, advanced better instrument of open responsibility and institutional improvement. It is additionally worried about the capacity of the open organization to make sure about the financial, productive and compelling arrangement of open administrations, and worry for the proficient force inside open administrations and subsequent debilitation of administration clients.

### **2.2.3 Ladder of Citizen Participation Theory**

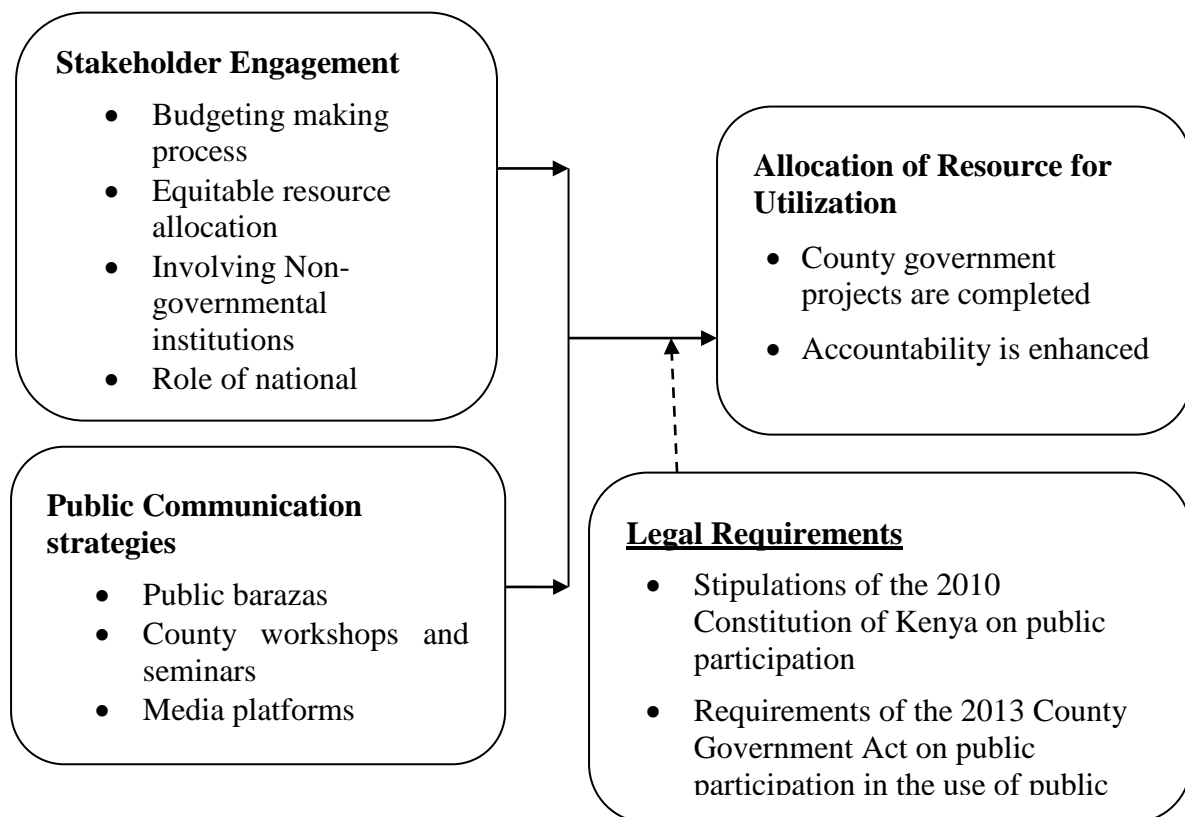
Arnstein (2016), is associated the theory that has influenced a number public participation and citizenship engagement studies. Arnstein (1969) conceptualized and came up with is referred today as ladder of resident contribution of which at the beginning he managed to identify the existence of various levels of public participation. Conceivably the groundbreaking theoretical work on community engagement was theorized by Arnstein (1969). The theory's importance emanates from the understanding that different levels participation exists which are the citizen control and levels of partnership (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006).

Arnstein's (1969) recognition of the existence of different levels of participation capture the summary of the eight levels derived from the three main levels. The three levels include the following; Non-Participation, Tokenism and citizen power. In the level of non-participation also referred to therapy and manipulation participation is not there whatsoever, whereas at level of tokenism, participation only takes place because of the need to fulfill legal requirements or the policy guidelines of a government agency. Arnstein (1969) as cited by Roberts (2004) pointed out several ways through which it could be carried including provision of information, consultations and thorough conciliations. The third level which is the Citizen Power comprises the involvement of the community in the affairs that directly affect by seeking their active engagement. Empowerment of the citizens to chat their destiny by involving them in a number of different activities is what the citizen power advocates for (Roberts, 2004). Their empowerment seeks for inclusion in all spheres of what is under discussion including planning, monitoring, implementation and evaluation (Callahan, 2007). The citizen power recommends that full involvement in decision making takes place at all levels including Delegated Power, Partnership and Citizen Control.

However, there are limitations associated with ladder of Citizen Participation Theory. All individual steps are a representation of a wide category, whereby there is a likelihood of having a broad range of experiences (Cardullo & Kitchin, 2019). For instance, in cases where informing levels may be significantly different based on the information type and quality being delivered. Every sub-level is a representation of a kind that does not deliberate on broad aspects of participation as it should. The theory over comprehensively dwelt on sub-levels (Manetti, 2011). According to the model, Individuals are expected of be responsible for their actions and hence ought to be vibrant making decisions that concern public service. In this context Burns *et al.* (2014) advanced Arnstein's ladder of Participation and put forward a ladder of Citizen Empowerment. The model is wide ranging with extra qualitative division of certain various levels (Ebdon & Franklin, 2006). Burns puts forward a divergent view between skeptical and real discourse recommended a citizen control that is self-governing.

The peculiarities of public participation that was common all through 1990s Harvey integrated it the bottom of the ladders bottom step. This basically provides community participation with a platform for publicizing activities whose end results to serve the public. It is therefore convincingly that participation levels are more likely to depict a more complicated continuum rather than a series of simple steps. The adoption of ladder also means that less control is not as much of better than more control. However, the community may not always desire increased control devoid of the required support may lead to failure.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### 3.0 Research Methodology and Design

The study took place in Mandera West Sub County (Mandera County) comprising of five wards namely Dandu, Gither, Iagure, Takaba South and Takaba Ward. The research has adopted mixed approach methodology by combining quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive research design was employed in this study. The target population of the study was 16,706 members of the public eligible to vote and are aware of public participation in county governance. The sample size was 376 participants according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Data collection happened with use of semi structured questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaires were distributed with the assistance of two research associates to the residents. Interview sessions were held with ward representatives where responses were recorded and transcript for analysis. Qualitative data collected using interview guide and open ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed using content analysis method. Qualitative data was analyzed, presented, in a narrative and prose form. Qualitative results from interview guide supplemented findings from the semi structured questionnaire.

Quantitative data collected by use of questionnaire was analyzed by statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) Version 24.0. The statistics to be generated included descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics entailed percentages, average and measure of variation. Inferential statistics included Person Correlation Matrix and Simple regression model to illustrate any relationship between public participation and utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The interaction between the study variables is predictable to follow multiple linear regression model of the nature;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Allocation of resources for utilization (Dependent variable)
- X<sub>1</sub> = Stakeholder engagement
- X<sub>2</sub> = Public communication strategies
- ε = Error term, β<sub>0</sub> = Constants, β<sub>01</sub>-β<sub>03</sub> = Regression Coefficients

To determine examine the moderating effect of legal requirements on the relationship between public participation and allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County, Baron and Kenny (1986) technique was employed. Moderation takes place when the result of an independent variable on a dependent variable differs according to the level of a 3rd variable, described a moderator variable, which communicates with the independent variable. The change in R<sup>2</sup> was used to confirm moderating effect of legal requirements on public participation and allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County. Therefore, the model estimated was;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_3 X_3 * M + \beta_4 X_4 * M + \epsilon$$

Where;

X<sub>1</sub>, and X<sub>2</sub> = Independent variables

M = Moderating Variable (legal requirements)

ε = error term

## 4.0 Research Findings and Discussions

The number of questionnaires that were administered was 376 and a total of 273 questionnaires were properly filled and returned but some of the respondents returned the questionnaires half-filled while others did not return them completely despite a lot of follow up. Out of the 376 questionnaires administered 273 were filled and returned representing 72.6 percent response rate. This response rate is considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. Bailey (2000) stated that a response rate of 50% is adequate while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. This implies that based on this assertion, the response rate in this case of 72.6% is therefore very good. The high response rate could have attributed to the use of competent research assistants, pre-notification of respondents and voluntary participation by respondents; drop and pick of questionnaires to allow for ample time to fill; assurance of confidentiality and anonymity to the participants.

### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

This section contains descriptive analysis for stakeholder engagement, public communication strategies, legal requirements and utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. A likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree 3 = neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = strongly agree) was used and the mean response rate from the respondents calculated. For the purposes of interpretation 4 & 5 (agree and strongly agree) were grouped together as agree, 1 & 2 (strongly disagree and disagree) were grouped as disagree while 3 was neutral. The results were presented in form of mean and standard deviations.

#### 4.1.1 Stakeholder engagement and Allocation of resources for utilization

The first objective of this study was to determine the effect of stakeholder engagement on the utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The results of this study are as depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1: Stakeholder engagement and Allocation of resources for utilization**

Stakeholder engagement	Mean	SD
I am involved in budget making	2.2	1.4
My views are considered during resource utilization	2.3	1.3
County government invites public to present their opinions	2.4	1.4
There are civic education on participatory governance	2.2	1.3
There are barazas and public meeting to engage citizens in the utilization of public resources	2.3	1.4
Government agencies encourage the stakeholders and community participation in resource management	2.4	1.4
Political leaders are involved in the county public resource management process	2.4	1.4
The county government involves non-governmental institutions in the management of resources	2.2	1.4
Churches and mosques engagement is encouraged in the resources management	2.3	1.3
Business organization are involved in the county public resource management process	2.4	1.4



Table 1 indicates that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents did not agree that they are involved in budget making, with mean score of 2.2 and standard deviation is 1.4 implying that majority of residents are not involved in budget making. The results also showed that majority of the residents did not agree that their views are considered during allocation of resources for utilization with mean score of 2.3 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that public view on allocation of resources for utilization are not adequately considered. The results also showed that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents did not agree that county government invites public to present their opinions with mean score for place is 2.4 and standard deviation is 1.4 implying that county government rarely invites public to present their opinions.

Further, majority of residents did not agree that there are civic education on participatory governance with mean score for place is 2.2 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that civic education on participatory governance is inadequate. The study established that majority of the resident did not agree that there are barazas and public meeting to engage citizens in the allocation of resources for utilization with mean score for place is 2.3 and standard deviation is 1.4 implying that public meetings are rarely conducted. Majority of residents did not agree that government agencies encourage the stakeholders and community participation in resource management with mean score for place is 2.4 and standard deviation is 1.4 implying that government agencies are not actively involved in promoting community participation in resource management.

Further, majority of residents did not agree that political leaders are involved in the county public resource management process with mean score of 2.4 and standard deviation of 1.4. Descriptive results also showed that majority of residents did not agree that county government involves non-governmental institutions in the management of resources with a mean average response of 2.2 and standard deviation of 1.4. Majority of residents did not agree that churches and mosques engagement is encouraged in the resources management with a mean average response of 2.3 and standard deviation of 1.3 implying that religious bodies are not involved in the management of public resources. Finally, majority of the resident did not agree that business organization are involved in the county public resource management process with mean score for place is 2.4 and standard deviation is 1.4 implying that business organization rarely involved in the allocation of county resources for utilization.

#### **4.1.2 Public Communication strategies and Allocation of resources for utilization**

The second objective of this study was to establish the effect of public communication strategies on the utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The results of this study are as depicted in Table 2.

Result findings in Table 2 revealed that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents disagreed that public barazas are effective in communicating public on allocation of resources for utilization in the county, with mean score of 2.3 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying public barazas have not been effective in communicating public on allocation of resources for utilization. The results also showed that majority of the residents disagreed that workshops held by stakeholders have not been effective in communicating public on allocation of resources for utilization in the county with mean score of 2.2 and standard deviation is 1.3. The results also showed that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents disagreed that seminars held by stakeholders are effective in communicating public and engaging public to participate in resource

budgeting in the county with mean score for place is 2.1 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that stakeholders have not been effective in communicating public and engaging public to participate in resource budgeting.

**Table 2: Public Communication strategies and Allocation of resources for utilization**

Public Communication strategies	Mean	SD
Public barazas are effective in communicating public on allocation of resources for utilization in the county	2.3	1.3
Workshops held by stakeholders are effective in communicating public on allocation of resources for utilization in the county	2.2	1.3
Seminars held by stakeholders are effective in communicating public and engaging public to participate in resource budgeting in the county	2.1	1.3
Use of radio sets are effective in communicating public to participate in resource planning in the county	2.3	1.2
Use of televisions have been effective in communicating to the public about public engagement views on resource use	2.4	1.3

Further, majority of residents disagreed that use of radios are effective in communicating public to participate in resource planning in the county with mean score for place is 2.3 and standard deviation is 1.2 implying that use of radio have not been effective in communicating public to participate in resource planning. The study established that majority of the resident disagreed that use of televisions are effective in communicating to the public about public engagement views on resource use with mean score for place is 2.4 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that use of televisions have not been effective in communicating to the public about public engagement views on resource use.

#### **4.1.3 Legal provision, public participation and Allocation of resources for utilization**

The third objective of this study was to examine the moderating effect of legal requirements on the relationship between public participation and utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The results of this study are as depicted in Table 3.

**Table 3: Legal provision, public participation and Allocation of resources for utilization**

Legal provision	Mean	SD
Constitution of Kenya 2010 has influenced the public participation in utilization of public resources	2.0	1.3
County Government Act, Kenya 2013 stipulates that public participation in utilization of public resources is a must	2.1	1.2
Public Finance Management Act encourages public participation in utilization of public resources	2.3	1.3
Public Participation Bill 2016 give directions into public participation in utilization of public resources	2.4	1.3

The findings in Table 3 revealed that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents disagreed that constitution of Kenya 2010 has influenced the public participation in allocation of public resources for utilization, with mean score of 2.0 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that the stipulations in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya have not been adequately been implemented in

regard public participation in the use of resources. The results also showed that majority of the residents disagreed that county Government Act, Kenya 2013 stipulates that public participation in allocation of public resources for utilization is a must with mean score of 2.1 and standard deviation is 1.2. The results also showed that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents disagreed that public Finance Management Act encourages public participation in the allocation of resources for utilization with mean score for place is 2.3 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that public Finance Management Act has not provided mechanisms at which the public is involved in the allocation of resources for utilization. Further, majority of residents were disagreeing that public Participation Bill 2016 give directions into public participation in allocation of public resources for utilization with mean score for place is 2.4 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that public Participation Bill 2016 does not adequately give directions into public participation in allocation of public resources for utilization.

#### **4.1.4 Allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County**

The study determined public participation and utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The results of this study are as depicted in Table 4.

**Table 4: Allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County**

Public Resource Utilization	Mean	SD
There are civic education on participatory governance	2.2	1.3
level of accountability regarding public resource utilization is done well in our county	2.1	1.0
Transparency is practiced by the county government	2.0	1.1
Projects completion rate is on the increase in our county	2.0	1.2
Misappropriation of county funds is on decrease in the county	2.1	1.1
Stagnant and abandoned projects are on decrease in our county	1.9	1.0

Table 4 indicates that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents did not agree that there is civic education on participatory governance, with mean score of 2.2 and standard deviation is 1.3 implying that civic education on participatory governance is inadequate. The results also showed that majority of the residents did not agree that level of accountability regarding public resource allocation for utilization is done well in our county with mean score of 2.1 and standard deviation is 1.0 implying that level of accountability regarding public resource allocation for utilization need to be improved. The results also showed that majority of Mandera West Sub County residents did not agree that transparency is practiced by the county government with mean score for place is 2.0 and standard deviation is 1.1 implying that level of transparency on the use of public resources is still low.

Further, majority of residents did not agree that projects completion rate is on the increase in our county with mean score for place is 2.0 and standard deviation is 1.2 implying that project completions in the county is still low and require improvement. The study established that majority of the resident did not agree that misappropriation of county funds is on decrease in the county with mean score for place is 2.1 and standard deviation is 1.1 implying that misappropriation of county funds is still a problem. Finally, majority of the resident did not agree that stagnant and abandoned projects are on decrease in our county with mean score for place is 1.9 and standard deviation is 1.0 implying that there are many stagnant and abandoned

developmental projects attributed to poor resource use in Mandera West Sub County.

#### 4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 5 shows the correlation matrix of stakeholder engagement, public communication strategies and allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County.

**Table 5: Correlation between public participation and utilization of resources**

		Allocation of resources for utilization	stakeholder engagement	Public communication strategies
Allocation of resources for utilization	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Stakeholder engagement	Pearson Correlation	.648**	1.000	
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000		
Public communication strategies	Pearson Correlation	.674**	.418**	1.000
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation results in Table 5 revealed that stakeholder engagement and allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County have a positive and significant association ( $r=.648$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). In an interview with Takaba Ward Representative said:

“Stakeholders including county officers, national government officers and residents of may give their views and opinions through open forums on how resources are utilized”. [Takaba Ward Representative, 2020]

Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives and policies. Stakeholder engagement in governance involves the direct involvement or indirect involvement through representatives of concerned stakeholders in decision-making about policies, plans or programs in which they have an interest. Stakeholders are persons, groups or organizations that may influence or be affected by policy decisions. Stakeholders may interact with government agencies, political leaders, non-profit organizations and business organizations that create or implement public policies and programs. Deficiency of mindfulness and empathetic of supremacy and radical procedures can stop folks from getting complex but if individuals are mindful and appreciate the courses and the expected results then the successful public participation is achieved. The results agree with Otieno and Mumo (2017) that community participation has a significant positive relationship with the sustainability of county projects. The results also align with Wolf, Wohlfart and Brown (2015) that stakeholder engagement promotes



accountability, cultivates trust and reinforces commitment among various stakeholders towards good governance and reduces the likelihood of corruption.

The study also found that public communication strategies and allocation of resources for allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County have a positive and significant association ( $r=.674$ ,  $p=0.000<0.05$ ). In an interview with Dandu Ward Representative said:

“Residents of Mandera West Sub County are invited through community barazas and workshops to give their views on how resources are utilized. However, communication of upcoming county events on when and where public meetings will be conducted is always not properly communicated”.  
 [Dandu Ward Representative, 2020]

The public needs to be informed on what is happening in the county through appropriate communication platforms. The public can be informed to offer their opinions regarding budgeting and allocation of county resources for utilization through barazas, seminars and workshops. The results agree with Nduta, Shisia, Kamau and Asienga (2017) who led an investigation on impediments affecting the management of public resources in county governments in Kenya, using Machakos County as a case study and showed that communication is one of the challenges facing the county while conducting the process of public resource management. Shamsam and Otieno (2015) also noted that strategic public relations had significantly affected the performance of organizations.

### 4.3 Regression Analysis

This section contains inferential analysis for stakeholder engagement, public communication strategies and allocation of resources for utilization Mandera West Sub County. Inferential statistics in this section include model fitness, ANOVA tests and regression coefficients. The results presented in Table 6 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena.

**Table 6: Model summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.786 <sup>a</sup>	.617	.614	.45411

a. Predictors: (Constant), Public communication strategies, stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement, public communication strategies were found to be satisfactory in explaining allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 61.7% as indicated in Table 6. This implies that stakeholder engagement and public communication strategies explain 79.3% of the variations in the dependent variable which is explaining the allocation of resources for utilization Mandera West Sub County. The ANOVA results are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Analysis of Variance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	89.741	2	44.871	217.593	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	55.678	270	.206		
Total	145.419	272			

a. Dependent Variable: Allocation of resources for utilization

b. Predictors: (Constant), Public communication strategies, stakeholder engagement

Table 7 presents results on analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that stakeholder engagement and public communication strategies are good predictors of allocation of resources for utilization Mander West Sub County. This was supported by an F statistic of 217.5 which was greater than the critical F-statistic of 2.08 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level. The findings for F calculated (105.121) was also compared against the F critical value ( $F_{2, 272}$ ) of 2.08 calculated from the F tables. Since the F calculated was greater than F critical ( $217.593 > (2.08)$ ), the model is significant. Regression of coefficient results is presented in Table 8. To interpret the regression coefficient results, calculated p value is compared with 0.05 level of significance. If the p value is less than 0.05, then the relationship between variables is significant otherwise insignificant..

**Table 8: Regression of coefficient**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.002	.101		.015	.988
Stakeholder engagement	.474	.044	.444	10.715	.000
Public communication strategies	.428	.036	.488	11.785	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Allocation of resources for utilization

The constant vale of .002 means that in the absence of stakeholder engagement and public communication strategies, allocation of resources for utilization in Mander West Sub County is very low. Results are presented in Table 12. The regression modes was;

*Allocation of resources for utilization = .587+.474stakeholder engagement +.428public communication strategies*

The results in Table 12 revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and allocation of resources for utilization in Mander West Sub County ( $\beta = .474$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 10.715 that if stakeholder engagement is increased by one unit, the allocation of resources for utilization in Mander West Sub County by .474 units. This implies that a unit change in stakeholder engagement results to a unit change in the allocation of resources for utilization in Mander West Sub Count by .474 units. In an interview with Didkuro Ward Representative said:

“...Stakeholders including county officers, national government officers and residents of may give their views and opinions through open forums and seminars on how resources are utilized”. [Didkuro Ward Representative, 2020]

Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the organization's actions, objectives and policies. Stakeholder engagement in governance involves the direct involvement or indirect involvement through representatives of concerned stakeholders in decision-making about policies, plans or programs in which they have an interest. The results agree with Otieno and Mumo (2017) that community participation has a significant positive relationship with the sustainability of county projects. The results also align with Wolf, Wohlfart and Brown (2015) that stakeholder engagement promotes accountability, cultivates trust and reinforces commitment among various stakeholders towards good governance and reduces the likelihood of corruption.

There was a positive and significant relationship between public communication strategies and allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County ( $\beta = .428$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 11.785 that if public communication strategies is increased by one unit, the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County by .428 units. In an interview with Lagsure Ward Representative said:

“Residents of Mandera West Sub County are invited through community barazas and workshops to give their views on how resources are utilized. However, communication of upcoming county events on when and where public meetings will be conducted is always not properly communicated. In most instances radio stations and in rare occasions televisions are used to communicate any county functions that require public views”. [Lagsure Ward Representative, 2020]

This implies that a unit change in public communication strategies results to a unit change in the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County by .428 units. The public needs to be informed on what is happening in the county through appropriate communication platforms. The public can be informed to offer their opinions regarding allocation and utilization of the county funds through barazas, seminars and workshops. The results agree with Nduta, Shisia, Kamau and Asienga (2017) who led an investigation on impediments affecting the management of public resources in county governments in Kenya, using Machakos County as a case study and showed that communication is one of the challenges facing the county while conducting the process of public resource management. Shamsam and Otieno (2015) also noted that strategic public relations had significantly affected the performance of organizations.

#### **4.4 Legal requirements, public participation and utilization of public resources**

The third objective of the study was to examine the moderating effect of legal requirements on the relationship between public participation and utilization of public resources in Mandera West Sub County. The results presented in Table 9 shows the model fitness for a regression model after moderation.

**Table 9: Model Fitness**

<b>Model Summary</b>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.862 <sup>a</sup>	.742	.739	.37380

a. Predictors: (Constant), public communication strategies\*M, stakeholder engagement\*M, Public communication strategies, stakeholder engagement

The  $R^2$  before moderation was 61.7% but after moderation the  $R^2$  improved to 74.2% as indicated in Table 10a. This implies that legal requirements enhance utilization of public resources. Further the moderating term has significance with P-value  $0.000 < 0.05$ . The ANOVA results are presented in Table 10 after interacting participation and utilization of public resources with legal requirements as a moderator.

**Table 10: Analysis of Variance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	107.972	4	26.993	193.185	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	37.447	268	.140		
Total	145.419	272			

a. Dependent Variable: Allocation of resources for utilization

b. Predictors: (Constant), public communication strategies\*M, stakeholder engagement, Public communication strategies, stakeholder engagement\*M

Table 10 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA) after interacting participation and utilization of public resources with legal requirements. The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that interacting stakeholder engagement, public communication strategies and with legal requirements results to satisfactory model in explain utilization of public resources. This was supported by an F statistic of 193.185 which was greater than the critical F-statistic of 2.08 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level. Regression of coefficient results after interacting stakeholder engagement, public communication strategies and with legal requirements results to satisfactory model in explain utilization of public resources is presented in Table 11.

**Table 11: Regression of coefficient**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.650	.105		6.204	.000
Stakeholder engagement	.270	.083	.253	3.265	.001
Public communication strategies	.542	.074	.618	7.329	.000
Stakeholder engagement*M	.284	.030	1.225	9.629	.000
Public communication strategies*M	.136	.025	.739	5.360	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Allocation of resources for utilization

M=moderator/legal requirement

*Allocation of resources for utilization = .650+.270 stakeholder engagement+.542public communication strategies +.284 Stakeholder engagement\*M +.136Public communication strategies\*M*

The relationship between stakeholder engagement and allocation of resources for utilization is positive and significantly related both before and after introducing the moderator/ legal requirements.



It was also established that public communication strategies and is positively and significantly related with allocation of resources for utilization both before and after introducing the moderator/ legal requirements. In an interview with Gither Ward Representative said:

“legal specification are vital in guiding how resources are spend in the sub county and also in specifying roles and functions as far as resource utilization is concern. However, majority of residents in Mandera West Sub County perceive that legal specification on allocation of resources for utilization are inadequate and do not explicitly specify how public is involved in the allocation of resources for utilization”. [Gither Ward Representative, 2020]

Legal specification are vital in guiding how resources are spend in the sub county and also in specifying roles and functions as far as allocation of resources for utilization is concern. However, majority of residents in Mandera West Sub County perceive that legal specification on allocation of resources for utilization are inadequate and do not explicitly specify how public is involved in the allocation of resources for utilization. Based on this, study the definition of the term public participation has been adopted to mean engagement with the public. In Kenya, there are clearly and legally established boundaries that that geographically defined and regarded as county administrations. Majority of decentralized administrative units are political and they form the basis for political decentralization. According to Maluka (2011), decentralization irrespective of which kind does not necessarily guarantee that it will create platform for public participation. There is an assumption that by taking devolution to the local citizen’s transparency and accountability will be promoted, however the reality is far from the truth. According to the public participation guidelines of Kenya 2010, information has it that participation among citizens in project execution has been very low in the previous governments because there was no legal framework to guide the all processes in providing information to the public participation.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusions of this study were informed based on the findings of the study. Each objective was reviewed and a conclusion provided that covers theory and practice. The general objective of this study is to assess the influence of public participation on the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County. Based on research finding it can be concluded that stakeholder engagement positively affects the allocation of resources for utilization in Mandera West Sub County. Inadequate stakeholder participation is a barrier to successful allocation of resources for utilization.

It is also concluded that public communication strategies positively influence allocation of resources for utilization in the county. The public can be informed to offer their opinions regarding allocation and utilization of the county funds through barazas, seminars and workshops. However, means of communicating county functions including resource budgeting is not clear.

Finally, it can be concluded that legal requirements moderate the relationship between public participation and allocation of resources for utilization. Legal specifications are vital in guiding how resources are spend in the sub county and also in specifying roles and functions as far as allocation of resources for utilization is concern. However, majority of residents in Mandera West

Sub County perceive that legal specification on allocation of resources for utilization are inadequate and do not explicitly specify how public is involved in the allocation of resources for utilization.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the results of the findings and the conclusions drawn from the study, the various recommendations that focus on public participation and allocation of resources for utilization are suggested. The recommendations are based on the study findings of the study.

The study established that stakeholder engagement is vital in enhancing the allocation of resources for utilization in the public sector. The study recommends for the need to engage all stakeholders including county officers, national government officers and community whom may give their views and opinions through open forums and seminars on how resources are utilized. There should be a clear mechanism on how the opinions raised by these stakeholders are incorporated so as to improve the allocation of public resources for utilization.

It was also noted that communication strategies are essential in conveying any public functions and events. However, communication of upcoming county events on when and where public meetings will be conducted is always not properly communicated. In most instances radio stations and in rare occasions televisions are used to communicate any county functions that require public views. The study recommends for the need to improve mode of communicating and holding public events and these can be done by conducting rotational public meetings across the wards. Civic education need also to be enhanced and used as a tool of communicating to the people of Mandera West Sub County and also in relaying information back to the county government.

Despite the provision of legal requirements on allocation of resources for utilization, the stipulations as highlighted in the 2010 Constitutions are not adequately adhered to. Majority of residents in Mandera West Sub County perceive that legal specification on resource utilization are inadequate and do not explicitly specify how public is involved in the allocation of resources for utilization. The study recommends for the need to adequately implement the legal specifications on public resource use by involving the public.

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