

# Determinants of Leadership and Governance in Marsabit County, Kenya

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**Abstract-** This research sought to identify the impact of governance and leadership in Marsabit County as well as harnessing the challenges and prospects of devolution since its inception in the year 2013. The study area encompassed Marsabit County at large. The County is divided into four constituencies and twenty electoral wards. Two wards were identified in each sub-county for the research study. Data was collected through questionnaires, observation and interviews. The wards in the Sub-county include: Maikona, North-Horr, Laisamis, Loiyangalani, Karare, Marsabit Central, Moyale and Sololo. The research also involved identification of various problems hindering development ranging from poor infrastructure, vastness (geographical features), sparse population that is difficult to reach and neglect by previous regimes. The following factors were identified as a hindrance under the current regimes' leadership and in the new dispensation of devolution: poor administrative capacity to enforce taxes, corruption including embezzlement of revenues, nepotism, clanism, favoritism, inequality in resource distribution and lack of effective and stringent controls leading to misuse of fund. The researcher felt that good governance, servant leadership and proper policy is the only way to development and prosperity in Marsabit county.

**Index Terms-** Governance, leadership, prospect and challenges

## I. INTRODUCTION

Kenya was colonized by the British in 1920. As such the focus of the British was to partition the county regions into economic zones of value is their regime. Thus led to over indulgence and investment in the central Kenya (White Highlands) and the closing off of areas largely considered unproductive and constituting the North-Eastern region of the country amongst others. These areas were closed districts and for one to travel there, you had to have colonial permission. The marginal and arid areas were considered hostile and the communities there in were kept to feed for themselves. The colonial government did not invest in health, any form of infrastructure and education was largely unheard of. This was the context before independence.

Kenya's independence government under the late Jomo Kenyatta sought to concentrate on its predecessors area of investment and agriculture output. After independence in 1963, Kenya adopted a decentralized system by creating local governments known as county council, municipal council and city council. The size of the councils depends on the population.

Marsabit and Moyale County Councils today constitute Marsabit County.

Although authority to make decision and implement is with the county council they still have to report to the national Government and resources remain with the central government. The central government would decide where to allocate resources through national budget. Most districts of Northern Kenya were marginalized as the sessional paper ten (10) of 1967 could not give them opportunity as they are regarded as Northern frontier district which does not add any value to the country (Kenya) the sessional paper sought to invest heavily in agricultural production area identified by colonial government, with the hope that it's would include down to the rest of the country which was not effectively achieved.

Marsabit district was therefore marginalized and left out of development by successive regimes since independence until the new constitution (2010) gave it an opportunity through devolution. Marsabit County borders the Republic of Ethiopia to the North, Tukana County to the west, Samburu County to the South, Isiolo and Wajir County to the East.

It has an approximate area of about 66,000km<sup>2</sup>, which includes 4,956km<sup>2</sup>, covered by Lake Turkana making it the largest County in the country covering about 11% of the total area of Kenya. It generally receives very low, unreliable and unevenly distributed rainfall. The major economic activity in the county is livestock production. Like other counties to the North and North Eastern parts of the country, Marsabit suffers recurrent drought quite often severe which decimate upto 50% or more of the livestock in each severe occurrence.

The infrastructure is inadequate, poor and in bad shape. The county is underdeveloped and marginalized by several regimes dating back to independence. Most areas are inaccessible due to poor road network. Health facilities are unavailable in most centers. Child mortality rate are quite high with pregnant mothers delivering at home under a very harsh condition often leading to death.

Illiteracy levels are as high as 90% with most of the county population living below poverty line of a dollar per day. The county is inhabited by three dormant tribes; Gabra occupies North Horr Sub-County, Borana inhabits Moyale Sub-county while Rendille are in Laisamis Sub-county. However, Saku Sub-

county and Moyale are inhabited by almost all tribes that lives in the county that includes Borana, Gabra, Rendille, Burji, Gari, Turkana, Samburu, Watta, Konso, Somali and other minorities.

Marsabit County has a population of three hundred fifty thousand (350,000) as per 2009 census and an electorate of one hundred and twenty thousands (120) registered voters as per last election. The county is divided into four (4) constituencies and twenty (20) electoral wards. The constitution of Kenya 2010 created devolution and two tiers of government, National and County government. Marsabit County is one of the forty seven (47) counties that come into being as a result of this.

The constitution states that the governments at National and County levels are distinct and interdependent and shall conduct their mutual relations on the basis of consultation and cooperation. Marsabit County Government has two arms; the Executive and Legislative. The executive is run by County Executive committee members and headed by the governor whereas the legislative is the County Assembly. The two arms work independently but through consultation.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Marsabit County has been marginalized for many years leading to serious underdevelopment. Currently, the county is run by local elected leaders headed by the Governor. Resources are now available courtesy of shareable revenue from the National Government. However, there are still a lot of challenges ranging from corruption, nepotism and clanism leading to massive unemployment of youths and biased project distribution.

Therefore, this research intends to focus on the way of improving equitability and economic development. Based on the problem statement, the purpose of this study is to look for effective ways that could help give good leadership and Governance that could help Marsabit County out of the poverty circle.

### Objectives of the Study

- i. To establish effective and efficient leadership and governance systems for proper service delivery.
- ii. To examine how leadership styles influence the performance of employees in the county government.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter is focused towards explaining the methodology used in carrying out the research. It highlights the type of data used both primary and secondary, the tools and instruments used in the study, sampling techniques data collection procedure and data analysis procedures.

The research design took into consideration the entire Marsabit County. This county is expansive geographically and is basically the largest in the republic of Kenya. It has four sub-

counties comprising of: Nort-Horr, Saku, Laisamis and Moyale. The county has twenty wards comprising of Maikona, North-Horr, Marsabit Central, Illeret, Dukana, Turbi, Sololo, Uran, Obbu, Butiye, Golbo, Manyatta/Ellu, Moyale town, Laisamis, Loglog, Sagante, Karare , Kargi/ South Horr, Korr/Ngurinet and Loiyangalani. The study was carried out in two wards of each sub-county. The wards are Maikona and North Horr in North Horr Sub-County. Loiyangalani and Laisamis in Laisamis sub county, Karare and Marsabit central in Sakuu sub county and Moyale and Sololo in Moyale sub county.

In terms of the sample size and sampling procedure; eight wards were selected for the study, two from each sub county. The researcher with the help of research assistants interviewed and discussed with one hundred and twenty people from NGO's, government and community members while collecting primary data for the study. Specifically, multi-stage cluster sampling was used since the population is scattered over a large geographical area. Purposive sampling was also used as part of multi-stage sampling procedure.

In order to obtain the actual sample of cases random sampling is used. This technique is used to acquire cases that have the required information with respect to governance and leadership. The data was collected from the following groups. Fifteen people were selected from each ward. Considering the youths, women, people with disability and men. Two people in every ward that works with the county government were also considered for interview. In the description of instrument, the researcher used the following instrument during the research.

Self-administered questionnaires were found suitable in collecting data from key informants. The questionnaires were distributed to the area opinion leaders, selected, local residents and government employees. Face to face interview was found suitable in soliciting information from the respondent. An interviewers' schedule was developed by a researcher as a guide to research assistants. In the data collection procedure, the researcher used the primary and secondary data collection technique respectively. The researcher started data collection exercise using bottom-top approach. This was followed by visit to county government offices where employees were issued with self-administered questionnaires to be completed and returned.

The bottom top approach means that the community members are the first to be interviewed. The unstructured questionnaires were used to give the respondent freedom to express their level of participation in development issues. For easy administration and facilitation of research process, the researcher hired research assistants who were first given orientation on the process of data collection.

Secondary data was obtained from text books, journals, magazines, newspapers and other literatures. Personal experience as regards the problem under investigation also provided a vital source of information. The Observation technique was found appropriate in the identification of development projects and other social amenities found in the areas that support economic development.

Data collected from community members and government officials were qualitatively analysed using frequency counts in respect to each questionnaire and later presented descriptively using percentages and tables. Qualitative analysis were also applied in specific areas e.g. as found appropriate.

#### IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and discussion analyses the questionnaire design and interprets the respondents' answers with the aim of answering the research questions highlighted in chapter one.

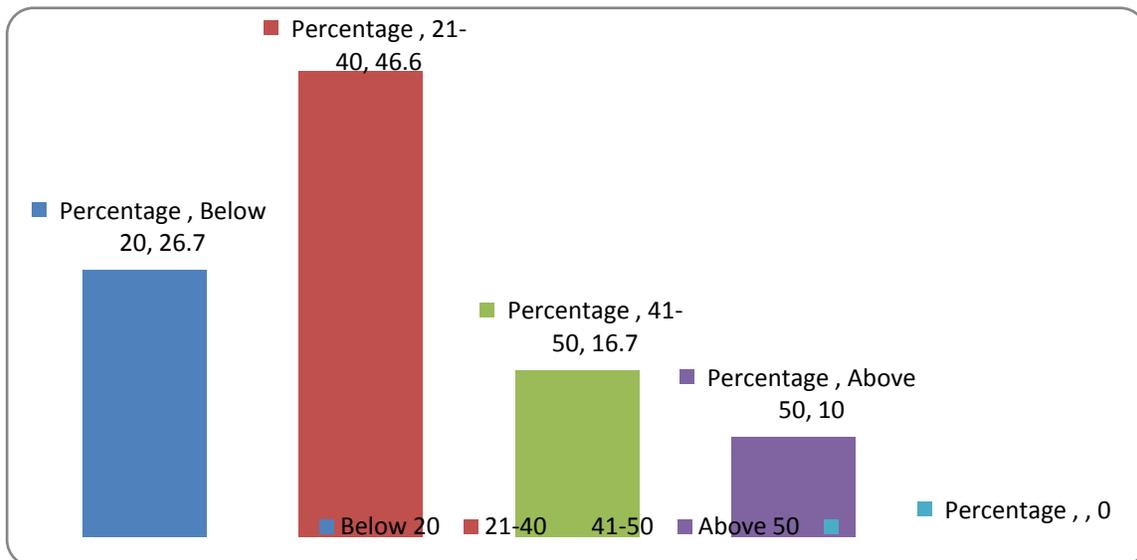
#### Factors Contributing to Poor Governance & Leadership

Overall, the following factors were identified as the leading factors to poor governance and leadership in Marsabit County:

- Lack of proper consultation by leaders in development activities
- Lack of proper policy guiding employments.
- Political difference between the leadership.
- High level of corruption
- Lack of policy guiding revenue collections.
- Nepotism, clanism and favoritism by the county executive.
- Inequality in resource distribution
- Lack of participation in development matters. other factors include disparities in income level and literacy level
- Tribal inclination or grouping.
- Leaders lacking contacts with the electorate

**Table 1: Rating of development of County Government.**

| Age          | No. of respondent | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Below 20     | 32                | 26.7       |
| 21-40        | 56                | 46.6       |
| 41-50        | 20                | 16.7       |
| Above 50     | 12                | 10         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>120</b>        | <b>100</b> |



**Figure 1: Rating of development of County government.**

**Findings**

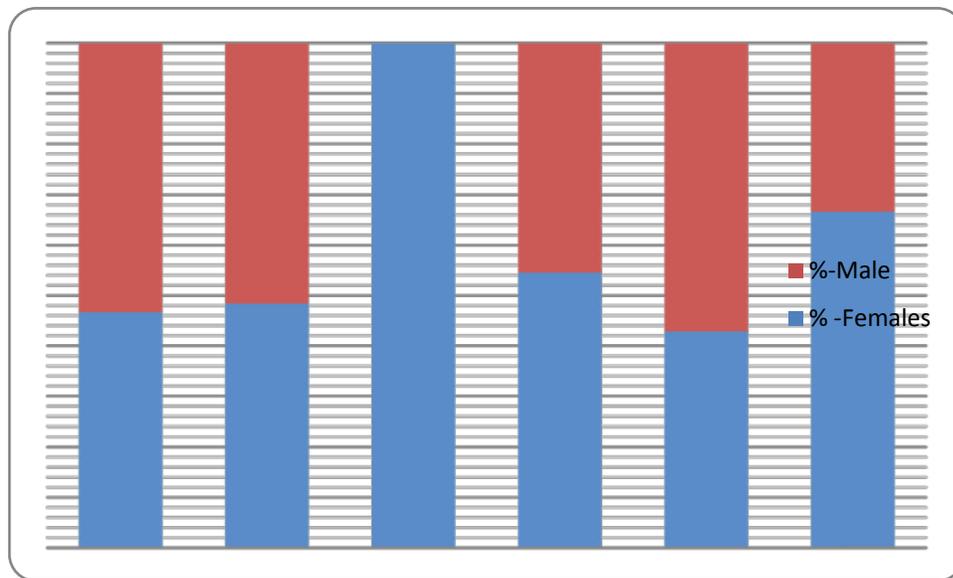
Table 1 above shows that majority of the residents of Marsabit County in their response feel that there is very little development that is visible. It is evident from the investigation that majority of the people has given the county government a score card of less than forty percent. Although many appreciate devolution, they blame the leadership of the county as corrupt and practices nepotism. Therefore they feel that the current leaderships need to be removed from office.

**Table 2: Literacy level**

| Level of schooling | No. of Male | %          | No. of Females | %          | Total      | %          |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Not gone to school | 42          | 52.5       | 24             | 60         | 66         | 55         |
| Primary Level      | 15          | 18.75      | 8              | 20         | 23         | 19.1       |
| Polytechnic        | 4           | 5          | 0              | 0          | 4          | 3.3        |
| Secondary level    | 12          | 15         | 5              | 12.5       | 17         | 14.2       |
| Training/College   | 3           | 3.75       | 2              | 5          | 5          | 4.2        |
| University         | 4           | 5          | 1              | 2.5        | 5          | 4.2        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>80</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>40</b>      | <b>100</b> | <b>120</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Findings**

From table 2 it is clear that majority of the residents of Marsabit County have not gone to school hence a high rate of illiteracy level. Therefore their participation and contribution to county leadership and governance is minimal.



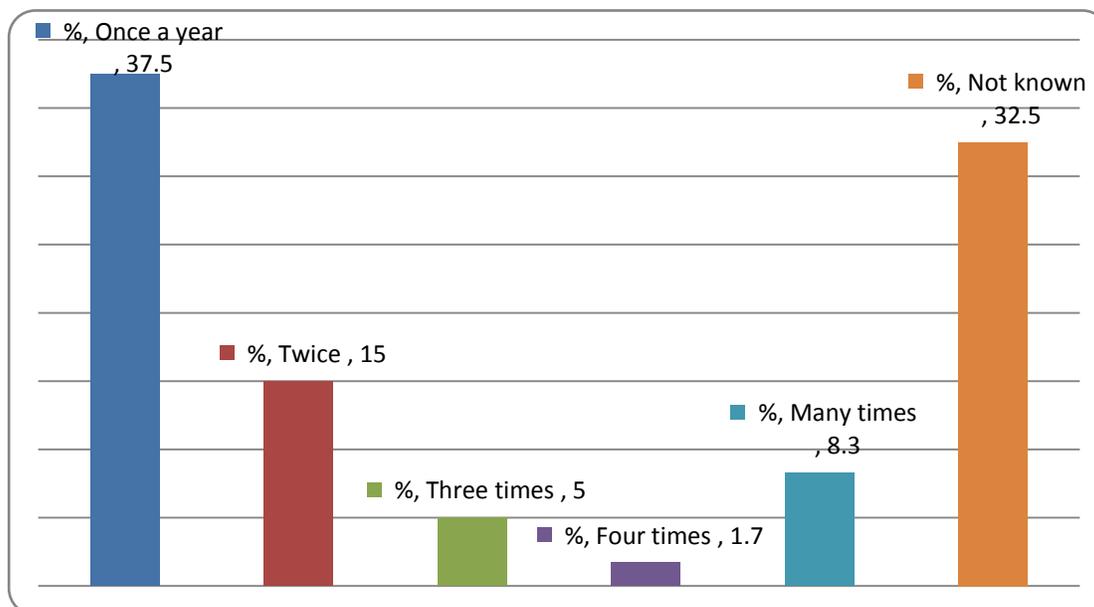
**Figure 2: Literacy Level**

**Table 3: Frequency of public participation by county government**

| No. of times | Frequency  | %          |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| Once a year  | 45         | 37.5       |
| Twice        | 18         | 15         |
| Three times  | 6          | 5          |
| Four times   | 2          | 1.7        |
| Many times   | 10         | 8.3        |
| Not known    | 39         | 32.5       |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>120</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Findings**

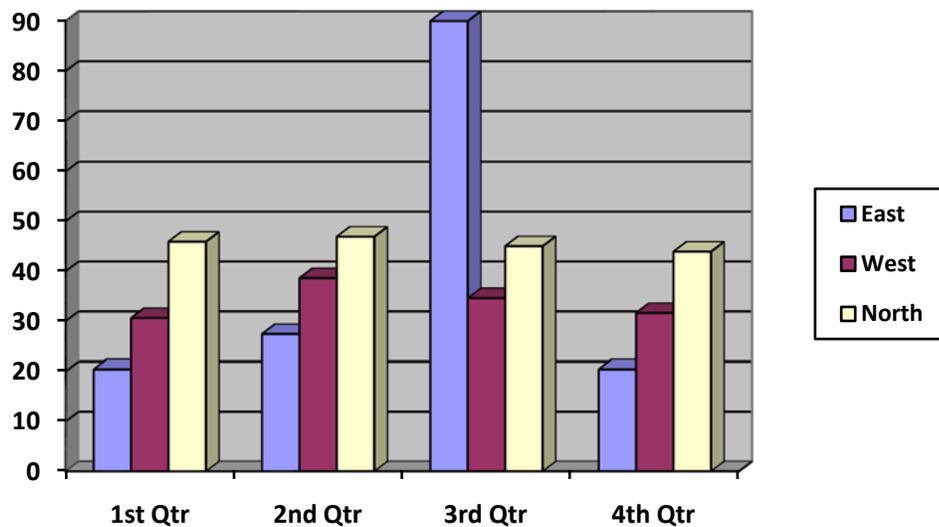
Table 3 above shows that public participation on important county issues such as governance is either done annually or completely not known to the residents of Marsabit County.



**Figure 3: Frequency of public participation by county government**

**Table 4: Trend of Marsabit County governance budget since inception of devolution**

| Financial year | Shareable revenue Hon. National Government | Own Revenue | Donation Danida | Condition Grant |
|----------------|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2013-2014      | 3.5 billion                                | 70 million  | 13 million      | -               |
| 2014-2015      | 4.2 billion                                | 100 Million | 15million       | -               |
| 2015-2016      | 5.3 Billion                                | 100 million | 8 million       | 62 million      |
| 2016-2017      | 5.8 billion                                | 120 million | 48 million      | 112 million     |



**Figure 4: Trend of Marsabit County governance budget since inception of devolution**

Marsabit county government receives a substantial amount of money from the national government in form of shareable revenue. This is what the county virtually depends on for its operations. These monies are budgeted annually as per the constitution strictly following the budget cycle. The national government follows a formula set by the commission on revenue allocation [CRA] and subsequently approved by the senate. Marsabit County generates little of its own revenue putting it in a class of the poorest counties. The maximum revenue it has ever generated is Kenya shilling one hundred and twenty million only. There are donor funding from Danida and World Bank as shown in the table above. Marsabit county also receives conditional grants in form of fuel levy and maternal health care.

**Information on important county activities**

The leadership of Marsabit County is not doing enough in sensitizing the community on development activities. There is lack of information on job advertisement, project planning and several information on county development activities. Public participation is done in a hurry by the executive and as such many people are left out of decision making in budget making process. The information to the public on important county matters need to be aired through local radio stations which is more appropriate to the residents of this vast county. The county executive through the office of county executive in charge of administration do the necessary facilitation using ward administrators at the various ward level. However, the vastness of the county and lack of logistics for the officers at the grass root could not allow dissemination of information at the appropriate time. There is no legislative framework in place to guide in public participation hence lack of proper mechanism in conducting public participation.

The county assembly which is supposed to play the oversight role have several challenges which include: inadequate funding by the county government and the ceilings by the

relevant national government organs. The organs that have recommended the ceiling is the county Revenue Allocation (CRA), with recommendation of the senate and the national assembly. This ceiling was capped at 7% of the total revenue allocation of the county. This amount is so insignificant compared to the work the county assembly does which includes: legislation, oversight and representation. Several bills could not go through public participation as a result of these underfunding which has halted development activities in the county. The commission on revenue allocation and the controller of budget office has been manipulated by the governors. They are no longer independent as it is supposed to be since they favor the executive more than the assembly. This has rendered the county assembly useless and without any role since they could not play their constitutional role effectively.

**V. CONCLUSION**

The study aimed to investigate the challenges and prospects in Marsabit county leadership and governance under the devolved system of government. The following factors contributed to poor governance and leadership in the County:

- High level of corruption
- Lack of policy guidance in revenue generation
- Poor procurement process and tendering
- Inequality in resource distribution
- Political differences between county leadership
- Clanism, favourism and nepotism in employment and contracts.

On the basis of research findings the researcher come up with the following conclusion. The Kenyan government enhanced decentralization of development initiative through the adoption of the constitution of Kenya 2010 which created

county government which was done to enhance economic development.

The transfer of function from national government is not accompanied by resources. Funds are released in piecemeal instead of monthly or quarterly disbursement. There are no proper policies at the county level that guide in the resource distribution which makes it difficult to ensure there is equality. The county assembly of Marsabit needs to put in place legislative framework that would guide in resource distribution for the people of Marsabit county.

The employment policy is not in place in most counties giving leeway for governors to decide on employment hence favoritism, clanism and nepotism to prevail. Marsabit county is among the worst in employment irregularities due to influence from the governor since the county public board have been compromised.

Lack of proper stringent measures have opened up massive embezzlement in counties, leading to high level corruption.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends the following measures in order to improve on governance and leadership in order to attain economic development in Marsabit County.

Consultation among the leadership of the county both elected and opinion leader is of paramount importance. This should be enhanced through regular meetings between the governor and members of the county assembly.

The county executive to exercise high level of accountability and transparency. The governor of Marsabit County through county secretary should enforce proper service delivery. There should be efficient, effective and proper delivery of goods and services to the public to enhance accountability for the people of Marsabit County.

The executive to ensure there is inclusivity of all communities living in the area in all development activities. The fourteen tribes living in Marsabit County should be treated in equal measure and resource allocation distributed equitably without biasness.

The county assembly to put in place all necessary legislation. The county assembly needs to fast track the necessary bills in order to streamline county operation in the right direction and offer proper service delivery to the public.

The county executive and public officer to follow the rules of law and control corruption which is currently rampant in the county. The procurement department is the worst since they don't follow the due process of law. The finance and procurement department should practice accountability, transparency and honesty and adhere to leadership and integrity act. The county executive to implement the budget as approved by the county

assembly. Payment for projects completed by contractors be done within the time frame given.

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