

**PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO MEMBERS OF COUNTY ASSEMBLY IN
SIAYA, KENYA**

BY

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Library, Records Management and Information Studies, School of Information
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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I declare that this research on the Provision of information to Members of County Assembly in Siaya, Kenya is my original work and have not been submitted by any person to any institution or university for examination or any other reason. All sources of information consulted and quoted have been acknowledged and referenced.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father Jaduon'g Cleophas Omoro Nyan'gute who believed that:

An educated person, if working as a security guard, would be deployed on daytime duties unlike his uneducated counterpart who would be scheduled for night duties.

To my wife Salome Anyango, daughter Terry Marsianne Akoth and son Brantone Ochieng, your support during the entire period of my study enabled me to reach this far.

ABSTRACT

The devolved government system in Kenya provides the citizens with opportunity to make decisions at the county ward level. Members of County Assembly - MCAs are elected by citizens at the ward level to represent the constituents, legislate laws and to provide oversight over the county government. They require up to date and accurate information to successfully perform their duties. This study aimed to investigate the access and use of information by the Members of County Assembly in Siaya and establish strategies to assist the County government to enhance the use of information. The objectives were to determine the activities carried out by Members of County Assembly; assess their information needs; ascertain the information sources available and accessible to them; establish the extent to which the existing information sources met their needs; assess the challenges they encountered in accessing and using the information sources; and to recommend strategies to be used by the County government to provide information. The study was informed by Wilson's information seeking model. It applied case study approach as a research design and collected data through interviews from the 48 Members of County Assembly and nine key informants. Collected data were organized into themes based on the research objectives. The analyzed data were presented using frequency tables, charts and narratives. The findings showed that the Members of County Assembly were not adequately served with relevant information sources to assist them with information they required for their daily activities. They needed a range of information sources including government publications opinion leader's views, local radio stations, and contact with fellow members. The key challenges established in accessing and utilizing information included the MCAs inadequate awareness and competencies in the use of information and communications technologies to access the information sources and services, inadequate information sources and low publicity of the existing information sources. The study concluded that there were gaps in information provision for the members of county assembly which made their work difficult. It recommends that the county government establish a library or information centre within the assembly; provide support for access and utilization of information.; market the information sources through employing qualified information workers; enhance repackaging of information through improved Information Communication Technology use; and provide information literacy to the MCAs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE.....	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	x
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background Information	4
1.1.1 Devolved System of Government.....	4
1.1.2 The Structure of the Devolved System of Government.....	5
1.1.3 Objectives of the Devolved Systems of Government.....	8
1.1.4 Composition of the County Assembly.....	10
1.1.5 Functions of Members of County Assembly (MCAs).....	11
1.1.6 Information Need and Seeking Behaviour	12
1.1.7 Siaya County Demographic and Administrative Units.....	14
1.1.8 Information Infrastructure in Siaya County.....	17
1.2 Statement of the Problem	20
1.3 Aim of the Study	21
1.4 Objectives of the Study	21
1.5 Research Questions	21
1.6 Significance of the Study	22
1.6.1 Theoretical Significance	22
1.6.2 Practical Significance	22
1.6.3 Policy Related Significance.....	22
1.7 Assumptions of the Study.....	23
1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	23
1.8.1 Scope of the Study.....	23

1.8.2 Limitations of the Study	23
1.9 Definition of Terms	24
CHAPTER TWO	25
LITERATURE REVIEW	25
2.0 Introduction	25
2.2 Theoretical Framework	26
2.2.1 Wilson’s 1996 Model	27
2.2.2 Ellis’ 1989 Model	29
2.2.3 Kuhlthau’s Model	30
2.3 Activities Carried out by MCAs.....	32
2.4 Information Needs of Legislators.....	33
2.4.1 Information Needs of MCAs	35
2.5 Information Sources Available to MCAs.....	37
2.6 Challenges of Providing Information to Legislators	38
CHAPTER THREE.....	41
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	41
3.0 Introduction	41
3.1 Research Design	41
3.2 Location of the Study	42
3.3 Target Population	42
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	43
3.5 Data Collection Procedure.....	44
3.6 Validity and Reliability	44
3.6.1 Validity	44
3.6.2 Reliability	45
3.7 Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation	45
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	46
CHAPTER FOUR.....	47
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....	47
4.0 Introduction	47
4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents and Response Rate	47
4.1.1 Educational and Professional Background of the MCAs	47
4.2 The Activities Carried out by MCAs.....	49
4.3 Information Needs of the MCAs	51

4.4 Information Sources Available and Accessible to MCAs	53
4.4.1 Perception on Availability of Information Sources	53
4.4.2 Sources of Information Accessed by MCAs	54
4.4.3 Information Systems Available in Siaya County.....	57
4.6 How Information Sources Met the Needs of the MCAs	60
4.6.1 Distribution of Information Sources.....	61
4.6.2 Usefulness of Information to the MCAs.....	61
4.6.3 Gaps in Information Sources and Solutions	62
4.7 Challenges Experienced in Access and Use of Information Existing Sources.....	63
4.8 Strategies of Providing Information to MCAs	66
CHAPTER FIVE	69
DISCUSSION, SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND	
 RECOMMENDATIONS	69
5.0 Introduction	69
5.1 Discussion of Findings	69
5.2 Summary of Major Findings	69
5.2 Conclusions	80
5.3 Recommendations	82
5.4 Suggestion for Further Research	84
REFERENCES.....	85
APPENDICES:.....	92
Appendix 1: Location of Siaya County on Map of Kenya	92
Appendix 2: Siaya Location in Western Kenya.....	93
Appendix 3: Cover Letter to Respondents.....	94
Appendix 4: The Structured Interview Schedule for MCAs.....	95
Appendix 5 Structured Interview for Key Informants.....	96
Appendix 6: Payment Receipt for Research Permit.....	97
Appendix 7: Research Permit from NACOSTI	98
Appendix 8: Letter from Moi University to NACOSTI	99
Appendix 9: Research Permit Identification Card	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Target Population.....	42
Table 4.1: Activities Carried Out by MCAs (n = 30)	50
Table 4.2: Information Needs of MCAs	52
Table 4.3: Information Systems Available in Siaya County.....	59
Table 4.4: Information Useful to MCAs.....	62
Table 4.5: Challenges in Accessing Information Sources	64
Table 4.6: Strategies for Improving Access to Information by MCAs.....	66

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Structure of the National and County Governments in Kenya.....	7
Figure 1.2: The Structure of the County Assembly	8
Figure 2.1: Wilson 1996 Information Model.....	28
Figure 4.1: Educational Background of the MCAs in Siaya County (n=48).....	48
Figure 4.2: Availability of Information Sources in Siaya County	53
Figure 4.3: Information Sources Consulted by MCAs	55

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APR	Annual Progress Review
DIDC	District Information and Documentation Centre
CIC	Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution
COK	Constitution of Kenya
ERS	Economic Recovery Strategy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
KNA	Kenya News Agency
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNLS	Kenya National Library Services
MCA	Members of the County Assembly
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
MTP	Medium term plan
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SID	Society for International Development
STI	Scientific and Technological Information
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the background information to the study; statement of the problem, aims and objectives of the study, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, scope and limitations of the study, and the definitions of terms used in the study. Information is the raw material upon which both urban and rural populations depend for development. Prosperity, progress and development of any nation depend on its ability to acquire, produce, access and use pertinent information (Harande, 2009). Information therefore is a key ingredient in the decision-making process for development planning.

Decision-makers in the County Government are spread across the various established institutions as specified in the *Constitution of Kenya 2010*. The decisions emanate from both the Executive and the Legislative wing of the county. The legislative wing is headed by the Speaker of the County Assembly, while the Executive wing is headed by the Governor. The County legislators, known as Members of the County Assembly (MCAs), are elected by members of the community to represent their interests. They act as the eyes, ears and voice of the communities as far as development planning decisions are concerned. They make a myriad of decisions for and on behalf of the electorate, which requires that a vast amount of cross cutting information be made available to facilitate accurate, timely and balanced decisions. Information sources should therefore be identified, collected, organised and availed for effective decision-making.

The term 'development' has received varying definitions. Generally, it has been defined, especially in the Third World, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) growth, income and wealth, the production of commodities, and the accumulation of capital. However, in the past several years, social, political and environmental components have changed the way development is looked at (Rigby, 1993). The World Bank, for example, in its 1991 World Development Report stated the goal of development as that of enhancing the quality of life through better education, higher standards of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom, and a richer cultural life (World Bank, 1991). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) expanded on the theme of development by stating that:

” Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices, including choices to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. These choices should include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect’ (UNDP, 1990).

The process of development should therefore create the right environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests.

In Kenya, development has been guided by national development plans prepared by the government since independence. These plans have been thematically formulated into five

year batches; for example, the eighth national development plan for the years 1997-2001 was based on the theme “Rapid Industrialisation” and gave a structural system to transform Kenya into a newly industrialising country for the 24 years that followed. The last theme in this series was on ‘Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERS) 2003-2007. The country then, formulated the Kenya Vision 2030 policy blueprint whose general scope was to create a cohesive, equitable and just society based on democratic principles grounded on the existing and diverse cultures and traditions in Kenya. The vision is being rolled out in five year tranches known as Medium Term Plans (MTP) (Kenya, 2010). The latest medium term plan cover the years (2013-2017) on the theme “Transforming Kenya: Pathway to Devolution, Socio-economic Development, Equity and National Unity (Kenya, 2013).

In 2000, the United Nations outlined eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators to lead the world in improving the lives of vulnerable in the societies; These came to be known as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to the MDG goals status report on Kenya for 2011, these goals were entrenched into the Kenya government system in 2004. They had been monitored annually and were scheduled to end in 2015. The Kenya Vision 2030 incorporated the key MDGs through economic, social and political pillars (Kenya, 2003).

Sound decision-making is dependent upon availability of comprehensive, timely and up-to-date information (Munyua, 2009). It is essential that stakeholders in development planning are equipped with the relevant information to facilitate the decision-making.

This ought to be based on the existing information on the status of the issues to be implemented.

The strategies and actions to achieve the desired future form the basis of development planning (Bosco, 2010). The information systems for development planning should be set up involving rural communities as well as bearing local content (Mchombu 1993). Provision of information at the local levels is important and systems should be put in place so as to track information from the National Government and the County Government. Information from both governments should be brought together through an integrated system and distributed for use at the development planning level.

1.1 Background Information

1.1.1 Devolved System of Government

Devolution is a form of decentralisation that involves the transfer of selected functions from a central authority to the lowest feasible structure. It entails the ceding of power from a central authority to local authority, such as the state powers of revenue collection and expenditure (Lubale, 2012).

The devolved system of government in Kenya came into place as a result of the new constitutional dispensation of 2010 and put in place a two tier structure –the National and County levels. A total of 47 counties, among them Siaya County, were created spread across the former eight provinces. The National Government is responsible for planning for the whole country, while the County Government implements the devolved functions

and also draws up plans for the devolved units to come up with operating budgets. The planning and budgeting aspect requires that relevant, adequate and timely information, as a key development planning tool, is availed to the policy makers and stakeholders at all levels within the government hierarchy. A robust framework should be developed to enhance the flow of information across the parallel levels of the government.

1.1.2 The Structure of the Devolved System of Government

The devolved government consists of the Executive and the Legislature (CoK, 2010). The Executive comprises the Governor and the Deputy Governor as heads of the County Government both of whom join other members appointed by the Governor to form the County Executive Committee, which operates like a cabinet. The County Assembly vets the Governor's appointees before taking up their respective positions.

Section 183 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 stipulates the functions of County Executive Committees to include the following: implementation of county legislation; implementation, within the county, national legislation to the extent that the legislation so requires; managing and coordinating the functions of the county administration and its departments; and, performing any other functions conferred upon it by the constitution or national legislation. A County Executive Committee may prepare proposed legislation for consideration by the County Assembly and provide the County Assembly with full and regular reports on matters relating to the county.

The Executive Committee in Siaya County consists of eight members who head the following departments: (1) Finance, Planning and Vision 2030; (2) Governance and Administration; (3) Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; (4) Lands, Physical Planning and Housing; (5) Trade, Industry, Labour and Cooperative Development; (6) Tourism, Wildlife Conservation and Information; Environment, (7) Water and Natural Resources and (8) Education, Youth Affairs, Gender and Social Services Functions that are not devolved are run by the National Government at the county level (Siaya County government website).

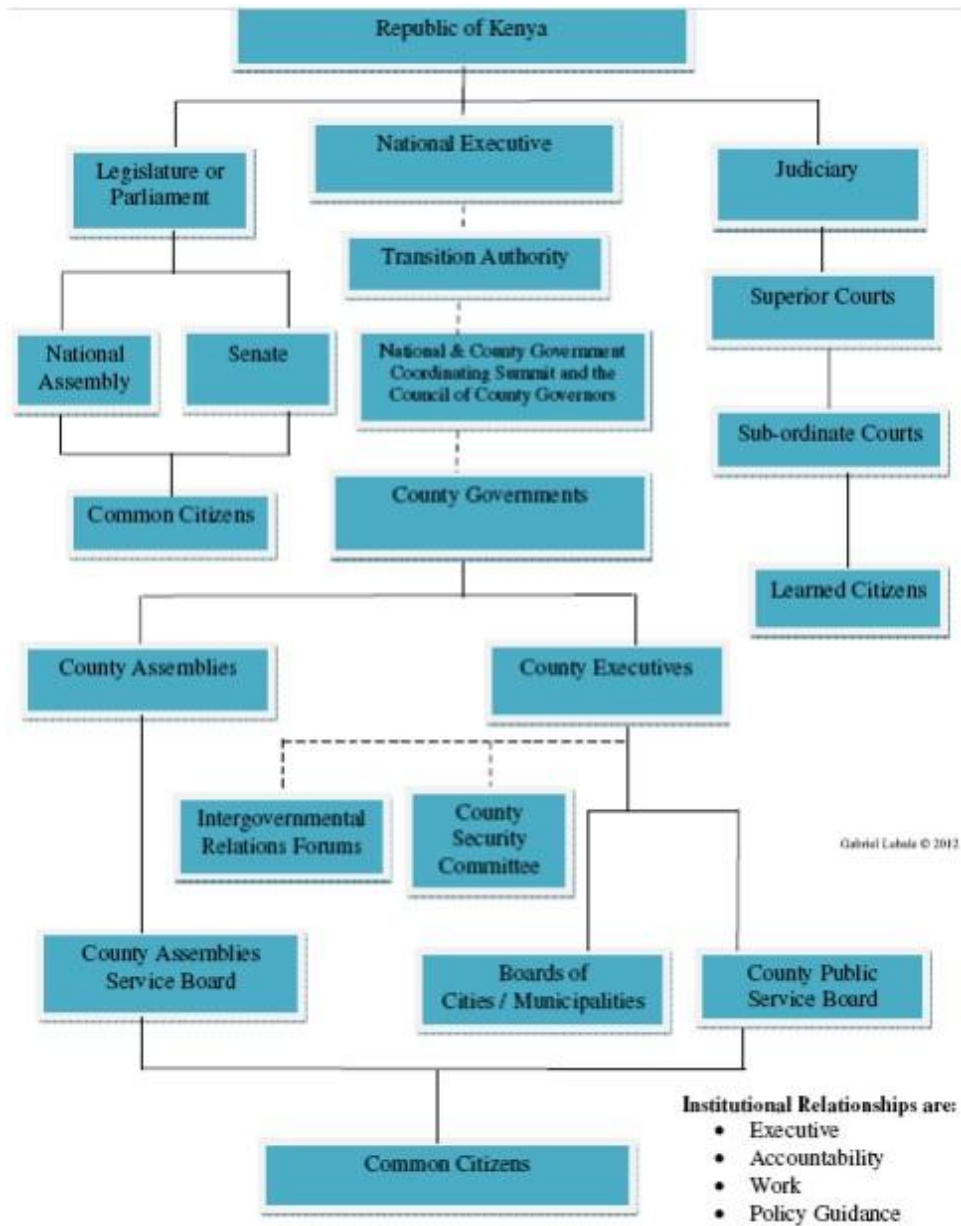


Figure 1.1: Structure of the National and County Governments in Kenya

Source: <http://gabriellubale.com/ah-introduction-to-the-county-government-of-kenya>

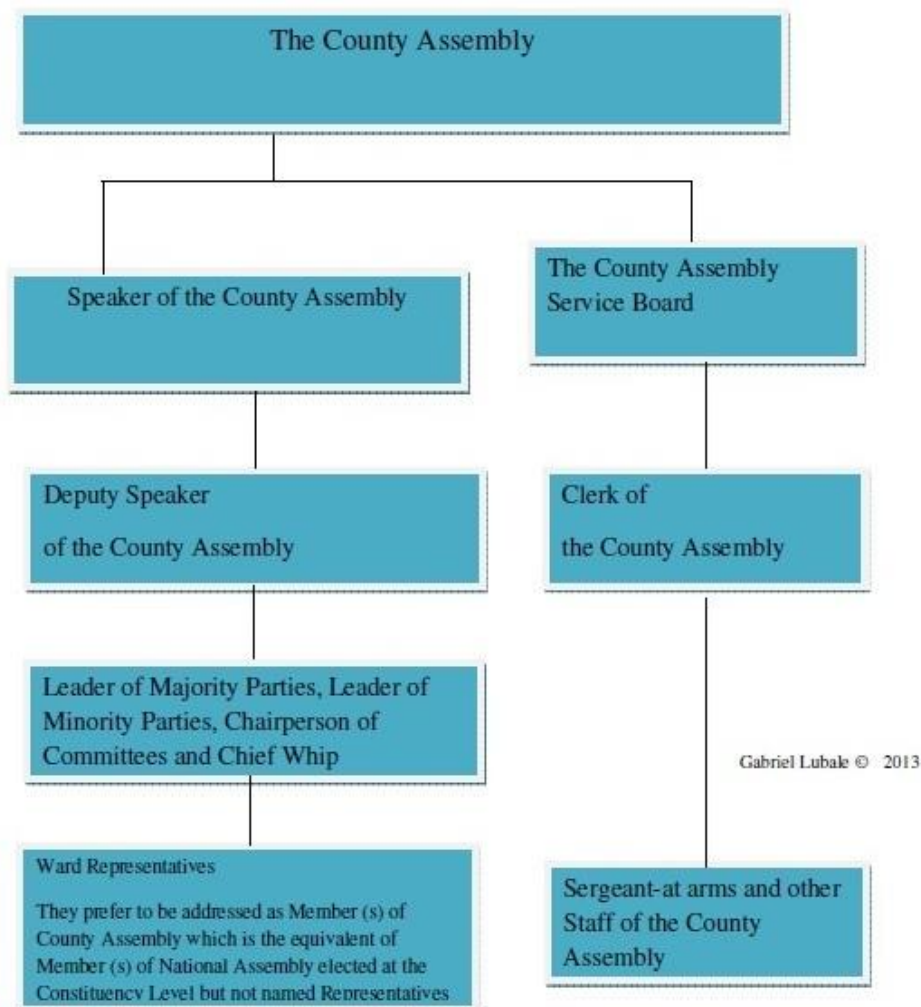


Figure 1.2: The Structure of the County Assembly

Source: <http://gabriellubale.com/ah-introduction-to-the-county-government-of-kenya/>

1.1.3 Objectives of the Devolved Systems of Government

The objectives of the devolved government are spelt out under article 174 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. These include the following: promotion of democratic and accountable exercise of power; fostering of national unity by recognising diversity; giving of powers of self-governance to the people and enhancing of the participation of the people in the exercise of the powers of the state and in making decisions affecting

them; recognition of the right of communities to manage their own affairs and to further their development; protection and promotion of the interests and rights of minorities and marginalised communities; promotion of social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya; ensuring of equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout Kenya; facilitation of the decentralisation of state organs, their functions and services, from the capital of Kenya; and, enhancing checks and balances and the separation of powers. The devolved system not only brings government and resources closer to the people, but also gives powers and responsibilities to the people and leaders at the County level in decision-making and determining the direction they want to go in development and politics.

In his policy paper, “Devolution in Kenya’s New Constitution” (part of the SID series of publications), Nyanjom (2011) argues that:

... Decentralisation will most likely bring efficiency. This is predicated on the expectation that decentralising functions to the lowest feasible level of decision-making and implementation will optimize information flows and reduce transaction costs.

Thus, a decision to devolve is often based on the failure of central government to deliver, such as in revenue collection or in service delivery; decentralisation too will ensure equitable distribution of resources. According to Nyanjom (2011), there shall be greater and impactful decision-making and involvement of the people in decision-making, and revenue collected in each county shall be used to develop the same county

1.1.4 Composition of the County Assembly

The County Assembly comprises members elected by registered voters from the various electoral wards within the county, special seats to ensure no more than one gender occupies more than two thirds of the seats in the County Assembly, the marginalized groups including the disabled and the youth. The Speaker is an ex-officio of the Assembly.

Table 1.1: Representation in Siaya County Assembly

Assembly composition	Number
Elected members	30
Youth representative	1
Disabilities representative	1
Women representatives	16
Total	48

Source: Field data 2015

The Assembly members are elected into various house committees that include the legal committee responsible for the preparation of bills, finance committee for budget and financial obligations among others. The majority and minority parties in the Assembly elected leaders to represent these parties in the assembly. The chief Whip ensures the smooth operations of the assembly business by ensuring that all the bills are presented to the floor of the Assembly. The Hansard department ensures that the Assembly proceedings are documented accurately and represents the views as presented by the

Assembly members. The Clerk of the County Assembly is the administrative head of the County Assembly.

1.1.5 Functions of Members of County Assembly (MCAs)

The County Government Act of 2012 outlines the functions of MCAs to include the following:

- i. To maintain close contact with the electorate and consult them on issues before or under discussion in the County Assembly;
- ii. To present views, opinions and proposals of the electorate to the County Assembly;
- iii. To attend sessions of the County Assembly and its committees;
- iv. To provide a linkage between the County Assembly and the electorate on public service delivery; and,
- v. To extend professional knowledge, experience or specialised knowledge to any issue for discussion in the county assembly (Kenya 2012)

Like their counterparts at the National Government, the MCAs have representation, legislative and oversight over government as their roles (Johnson and Nakamura, 1995). Through the various wards they represent, MCAs ensure that the views and needs of their constituents are well articulated in the County Assembly and to the County Executive. They ensure that the decisions made by the Assembly are translated into policies through the enactment of relevant legislations. They also perform an oversight role on the

implementation of the projects by ensuring they are accomplished as stipulated within the frameworks set up by the County Government.

1.1.6 Information Need and Seeking Behaviour

Information needs of individuals differ depending on their respective functions and tasks, the level of their knowledge and experience (in the specific field of specialisation and in the use of information systems and services, their particular interests and needs satisfaction for which they seek information, on the breadth and depth of their interest profiles, and on the nature of the subject or field of specialisation or interest. Kuruppu (1999) points out that the search for information by a person is rarely an end in itself, but part of a process of, among others, decision-making, problem solving, planning and resource allocation.

. An information seeking behaviour of a user may result from the recognition of some information need. Information needs — the type, coverage, depth — of a user may differ considerably depending upon their activity at a given moment; for instance, when entering a new field of research as compared to when seeking a solution to a specific problem in a field already familiar to the person. In an organisation, the search for information by an individual is seldom an end in itself, but part of a process of decision-making, problem solving, planning and resource allocation. Effectively, it is one aspect of the overall process of system management. This implies that information seeking has to be studied within an organisational context or a particular process.

The methods of seeking information, the criteria for selection and the information itself all tend to vary with the time and context, and therefore make it a complex process (Kuruppu, 1999). MCAs are drawn from a diverse educational background as well as different geographical locations. These factors make the needs of individual MCA diverse and unique from the other. However, their roles expose them to specific activities that standardise their information needs and seeking behaviour. Thus, the representation, legislative and oversight roles endow the MCAs with homogenous information needs.

According to Prasad (2000), need is a want for something that one cannot do without; According to Wilson and Walsh (1996), a need is a “subjective experience, which occurs only in the mind of the person in need and, consequently, is not directly accessible to an observer”. There must be subjective expression for a person to experience information need and to engage in information seeking behaviour. Case (2002), defines information need as “recognition that personal knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that needs to be achieved”. Information need is a relationship that exists between information and information purpose (Wilson and Walsh, 1996). Information is needed by policy makers, politicians, executives and people from all walks of life (Gupta, 1998). Ebkhanenonor (1990) refers to information need as the extent to which information is required to solve problems as well as the degree of expressed satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the information. Wilson (2000) observes that information needs may be physiological (e.g., need for shelter, food, etc.), affective or emotional, and cognitive (e.g. need to learn a skill, etc.). Information needs arise whenever individuals find themselves in a situation requiring knowledge to deal with situation as they deem fit (Tackle and Adams, 2007:69). In his study, Tihamiyu (1999) looked at information needs of civil servants by

identifying the work activities they carry out. The information needs of the MCAs revolve around their work activities as specified in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya (Kenya 2010).

1.1.7 Siaya County Demographic and Administrative Units

Siaya is located in the South Western part of Kenya. It is bordered by Busia County to the North, Kakamega and Vihiga Counties to the North-East and Kisumu County to the South-East. It shares a water border with Homa Bay County to the South. The county's total area is approximately 2,530 km² and has a population of 843,304 made up of 398,650 males and 443,654 females and with a density of 332.88 persons per km² (KNBS, 2009).

The County is one of the six counties in the former Nyanza Province, the rest being Kisumu, Homa Bay, Migori, Kisii and Nyamira. It consists of the former districts of Siaya, Bondo and Rarieda, with seven administrative divisions in Siaya, three in Bondo and two in Rarieda. The divisions were further sub-divided into 30 locations and 130 sub-locations for Siaya, 11 locations and 26 sub-locations for Bondo, and eight locations and 23 sub-locations for Rarieda. There were initially five Parliamentary constituencies of Alego/Usonga, Bondo, Gem, Rarieda and Ugenya. Following the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) that was set up to revise the electoral boundaries, carved an extra sub-county out of Ugenya to create Ugunja sub-County and hence constituency making them six (IEBC, 2013).

Table 1.2.: Siaya County's Electoral Wards by Constituency

Constituency	County Assembly Wards
1. Alego/Usonga	6
2. Bondo	6
3. Gem	6
4. Rarieda	5
5. Ugenya	4
6. Ugunja	3
Total	30

Source: IEBC, 2013

As Table 1.2 shows, there are 30 wards that make up the County. In terms of county administration, there are six Sub-Counties, which are synonymous with the Constituencies, and hence Bondo, Rarieda, Siaya, Gem, Ugenya and Ugunja. The County headquarters is in Siaya town. Other major towns in the county are Yala, Ugunja, Segal, Ukwala, Ndori, Bondo and Usenge as shown in the county map in Figure 1.3.



Figure 1.3: Map of Siaya County

Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=siaya+county+map&biw=672&bih=396&tbn=isch&imgil=Yi->

The Siaya county profile of 2013 outlines the development agenda for five years covering 2012-2017. The profile has been mapped based on the thematic areas specified in Chapter Eleven and the fourth schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, which specify the objectives and functions of the devolved system of government; hence, the socio-economic development agenda is in line with the functions of the devolved government.

The profile has further incorporated the dictates of the new constitution, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Kenya Vision 2030. This diverse profile calls for cross-cutting information that effectively captures the contents of these documents. The County's development priority programmes and projects relate to agriculture and rural development, general economic, commercial and labour sectors; energy, infrastructure and ICT, environmental protection, water and housing, health sector, education,

governance, justice, law and order sector, public administration and international relations sector, social protection, culture and recreation sector, and key priorities identified during county consultation on the second Medium Term Plan 2013-2017. These priority programmes and projects form the core of the decisions that the county legislators in Siaya would concern themselves with in the course of their deliberations.

1.1.8 Information Infrastructure in Siaya County

The major information provision infrastructure within Siaya County can be categorised broadly into three major channels. These are government departments, Kenya National Library Service networks, and community based library/information centres. Other channels include personal contacts, use of information and communications technology (ICT) – using Internet services and communications amongst members of the community. The government departmental information services include the two Sub-County Information and Documentation Centres located in Siaya and Bondo towns and three branches of the Kenya National Library Services community library networks located in Nyilima in Rarieda Sub-County, Ukwala in Ugenya Sub-County, and Rambula in Ugunja Sub-County. Others are community based information centres and private entrepreneurs.

The Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) is a public library funded by the government. It was founded in 1965 and became operational in 1967. It has a network of 61 libraries nationally, 8 provincial, 8 districts, and 45 community based libraries. Siaya County hosts three of these community libraries at Nyilima in Rarieda Sub-County, Ukwala in Ugenya Sub-County, and Rambula in Ugunja Sub-County (Kenya Education

Directory, 2015: 40). The library network provides information to the communities based on the respective profiles and stocks information resources covering all levels of information seekers. The users of these libraries comprise students from across the educational levels.

The District Information and Documentation Centres are public institutions run by the Ministry of Devolution and Planning (formerly Ministry of Planning and National Development and are found across the county to help the district based planning officers. They were established under the District Focus for Rural Development in 1994. These information centres are hosted in Bondo and Siaya towns. The centres act as reference centres for all government publications distributed from the Ministry headquarters. The operations of these centres have since been devolved to the county governments.

Community based information centres are other channels that exist for provision of information. They include the Siaya Community Library in Siaya town, Usonga Community Library in Alego Sub-County, Ndwarra Community Resource Centre in Ugenya Sub-County, and Ugunja Community Resource Centre in Ugunja Sub-County. Other community based information services emanate from the organised groups like farmers, business communities, and extension workers. All these groups collect and distribute development information to their targeted communities within the Wards.

Additional information sources are provided through entrepreneurs in Internet cyber cafés found across various shopping centres that have electricity connectivity within the

County. These information sources are mainly commercial and therefore require that the information seekers pay for the services. The users of these information sources include students, the business community and other information seekers who do not have Internet connectivity.

The Kenya News Agency (KNA) was established in December 1963. It specialises in news gathering and dissemination countrywide and beyond with emphasis on development content. The agency plays a central role in promoting national development and unity which is geared towards the realisation of the Kenya Vision 2030.

KNA provides the most widespread network in the East African region with manned offices in most districts. These offices are administered through the 47 County Information Offices. The news items and video clips from the field are channeled directly to the KNA National Desk for editing and onward transmission to subscribers. Increased modernisation has enabled KNA to provide efficient news transmission. The National Desk passes over a hundred news and feature items to subscribers daily (KNA, 2015). The agency website provides a one stop shop for information from the 47 counties across the country. This provides the MCAs with an opportunity to benchmark with other counties on development issues. The county government could use this agency to help promote service delivery to the citizens.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Information plays a key role in the decision-making process in society. MCAs are elected leaders tasked with the responsibility of representation, legislation and oversight over the County Governments. They require timely, accurate and readily available information to carry out their responsibilities effectively. However, the information resources in Siaya County are not adequately available to them given that there are only two sub-county information and documentation centres in Siaya and Bondo towns and three branches of KNLS facilities in Ukwala, Rambula and Nyilima. Legislation made by MCAs has had negative impact on the communities leading to public protests and demonstrations in the county. Information is needed to enable the MCAs to formulate laws that are acceptable to the residents. The oversight roles of the MCAs are hampered by lack of information to enable them monitor the activities of the County Government. On their representation role, the MCAs need accurate information about the citizens so that the county programmes can be beneficial to all the residents. The information needs of the MCAs therefore need to be adequately met to enable them perform their representation, legislative and oversight roles effectively. However, observation reveal that MCAs are not adequately empowered with information to enable them discharge their mandates effectively. A review of literature shows inadequate research has been conducted to ascertain how readily the information is available within the County Government of Siaya and how it impacts on decision-making activities of the MCAs.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the information needs and use by the Members of County Assembly in Siaya County and to come up with strategies to assist the County Government to enhance the use of information by MCAs.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of the study were to:

- i. Determine the activities carried out by the Members of County Assembly (MCAs)
- ii. Ascertain the information sources which were available and accessible to the MCAs
- iii. Assess the information needs of the MCAs
- iv. Establish the extent to which the existing information sources met the needs of the MCAs
- v. Assess the challenges encountered by the MCAs in accessing and using information sources
- vi. Recommend strategies that could be used by the County Governments to provide information to MCAs

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. Which research activities are carried out by MCAs that require the use of information?
- ii. Which sources of information are available in Siaya County?
- iii. What are the information needs of the Members of Siaya County Assembly?

- iv. To what extent do the information sources meet the needs of the MCAs in Siaya?
- v. What are the challenges encountered by the Members of Siaya County Assembly in accessing and using the information sources?
- vi. What strategies can Siaya County Government put in place to mitigate these challenges?

1.6 Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

The study will contribute to the knowledge development by adding onto the knowledge arena the aspect of information needs and seeking behaviour of in the devolved government system in Siaya County. This will help bridge the knowledge gap that currently exists due to the fact that devolution is a new phenomenon in the Kenya..

1.6.2 Practical Significance

The study findings will assist Siaya County Government to establish an information system for MCAs that will mirror their information needs. They will then be able to get timely and accurate information to enable them perform their duties.

1.6.3 Policy Related Significance

The outcome of the study will enable the Siaya County Government to develop information related policies for the County and thereby contribute to equitable representation of the citizens through the use of information by the MCAs.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that the MCAs required relevant and up-to-date information for decision-making. The study also assumed that there were inadequate information sources that could be used by the MCAs in Siaya County

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

1.8.1 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Siaya County. It targeted all the 48 elected and nominated MCAs in the Siaya County Assembly and the nine key informants that provided information on the situation as it exists.

1.8.2 Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out within the limitations of the two years that the course was scheduled to run. The diverse distribution of the MCAs posed a challenge, especially with data collection. However, the researcher took advantage of the sessions of the Assembly sittings to collect the required data from the respondents. The researcher also used the office of the County Assembly Speaker to get more respondents who could not be easily accessed. Despite this intervention by the Speaker, the researcher was able to collect data from 30 out of the possible 48. The educational level of the MCAs posed challenges relating to the understanding of the questions. In this respect, diverse responses were provided for the questions which brought issues with the moderation of the responses.

Chapter 1 of this dissertation provides an introduction, background to the study, problem statement, objectives and significance of the study. The literature review is the subject of Chapter 2. This is then followed by Chapter three which is devoted to explaining the research methods.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Baraza – Public meeting organised by the provincial administration including the chiefs and Sub-County administrators.

Devolution – This is a form of decentralisation of the government, which involves the transfer of selected functions from a central authority to the lowest feasible structure. In Kenya the functions are transferred to the counties.

County – A territorial division in Kenya that forms the chief administrative unit headed by a Governor as the chief administrator.

Information resource centre - reference/research library that provide comprehensive and authoritative information in areas of interest to users.

Ward – a representational constituency within a county.

Members of County Assembly – members elected by the registered voters of electoral wards, each ward constituting a single member constituency.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews previous studies that have been undertaken and are relevant to this study. It reviews literature based on the objectives of the study as well as the theoretical models used to guide similar studies. Literature review is important because

- a) It shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being undertaken
- b) It relates a study to the larger ongoing dialogue in the literature about a topic filling in gaps and extending prior studies
- c) It provides framework for establishing the importance of the study. As well as benchmark for comparing the results of a study with other findings.

The progress of modern societies as well as individuals depends a great deal upon the provision of the right kind of information, in the right form and at the right time. Information is needed to be able to take the right decisions and also to reduce uncertainty (Ukachi, 2007). Information has attracted varying definitions from across the sectors of the society. Ajewole (2001) categorised information definition into three strands. The first is the scientific and technical information (STI), referring to information within the domain of scientific communities. The second strand is socio-cultural in which information is viewed as knowledge, which is transferable in the conduct of various activities. Finally, information is perceived as basic resource and an indispensable link between a variety of activities, intellectual and material, in the service of society,

institutions and individuals. However there is no consensual definition of the concept. Notwithstanding the lack of consensus, there seems to be agreement on the capabilities of information. Information is capable of provoking actions and inaction in the recipient.

To the MCAs who are tasked with representation, legislation and oversight over the County Government, information enables them make unbiased decisions affecting the communities leading to implementation of equitable development programmes within their respective representative wards. According to Ginsberg (1980), information reduces uncertainty, while Gilad (1996) posits that information reduces risks in decision-making. To the MCAs, information refers to resources which enhance the making of sound decisions that augment equitable developments of the county.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Kombo and Tromp (2009) define theoretical framework as a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories that account for or explain phenomena. It attempts to verify why things are the way they are based on theories. Kemoni (2008) opines that theoretical framework responds to two questions; what is the problem and why is the suggested approach a valuable solution?

Many information-seeking models have been developed in the past decades with a view to improving information access for users (Norbert and Lwoga, 2012). Existing information seeking behaviour models include those of Wilson (1981; 1996), Krikelas (1983) and Kuhlthau (1991). The present study, however, focuses on the Wilson's 1996

information behaviour model (Wilson, 1999) in order to explain the information needs and information seeking patterns of MCAs of Siaya County.

The Wilson model was chosen over the others because it addresses most of the objectives of this study. The model will be useful in the study of the provision of information to the MCAs. The model had also been used in several studies conducted previously, including by Lwoga et al. (2010) regarding farmers' information seeking behaviour in Tanzania, by Ikoja-Odongo and Mustert (2006) concerning the information seeking behaviour of South African parliamentarians and Ugandan informal entrepreneurs, and by Norbert and Lwoga (2012) on the study of information seeking behaviour of physicians in Tanzania. Wilson's model is described in section 2.2.1 below.

2.2.1 Wilson's 1996 Model

Wilson's 1996 model was built from that of 1981, drawing upon research from a variety of fields other than information science, including decision-making, psychology, innovation, health communication and consumer research. The model suggests that an information user engages in information seeking behaviour in order to satisfy a perceived need. The user searches information from formal or informal information sources or services, which may result in success or failure in finding relevant information. If successful, the user may make use of the information. Otherwise, they may be fully or partially satisfied or may fail to fulfil the perceived need, and repeat the search process.

In the process of seeking information, the user may encounter intervening variables, which may be supportive of information use as well as preventive. These variables may be personal in character, emotional, educational, demographic, social/interpersonal, environmental, and economic and source characteristics. In Figure 2.4 the Wilson model demonstrates the steps taken by information seekers in satisfying their information needs.

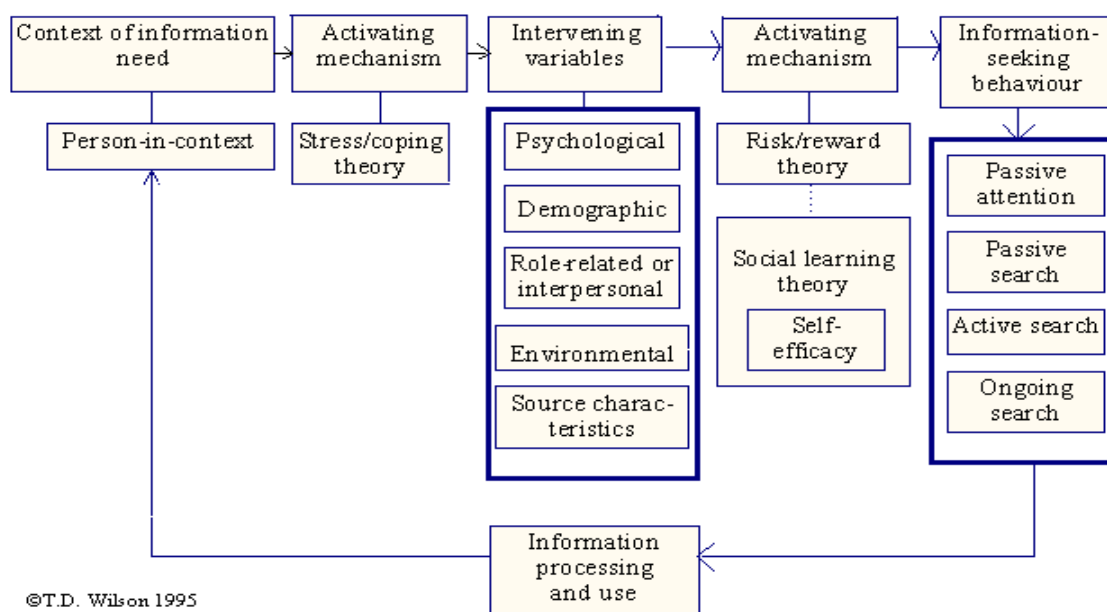


Figure 2.1: Wilson 1996 Information Model

Source: <http://ptarpp2.uitm.edu.my/silibus/model.pdf>

In their search, MCAs look into all areas where they are likely to find relevant information. The sources visited include both the formal information systems and other non-formal sources like talking to members of the public. This is necessitated by the diversity of the information they require to make decisions as well as the diverse needs of the constituents whom they represent.

2.2.2 Ellis' 1989 Model

Ellis (1989) elaboration of the different behaviours involved in information seeking is not set out as a diagrammatic model. He makes no claims to the effect that the different behaviours constitute a single set of stages and uses the term 'features' rather than 'stages'. These features include the following:

- Starting: the means employed by the user to begin seeking information; for example, asking some knowledgeable colleague
- Chaining: following footnotes and citations in known material or 'forward' chaining from known items through citation indexes
- Browsing: 'semi-directed or semi-structured searching'
- Differentiating: using known differences in information sources as a way of filtering the amount of information obtained
- Monitoring: keeping up-to-date or current awareness searching
- Extracting: selectively identifying relevant material in an information source
- Verifying: checking the accuracy of information
- Ending: which may be defined as 'tying up loose ends' through a final search

Ellis (1989: 178) notes that, "the detailed interrelation or interaction of the features in any individual information seeking pattern depend on the unique circumstances of the information seeking activities of the person concerned at that particular point in time". However, 'starting' must initiate a process and that 'ending' must end it. Also 'verifying' is a penultimate stage in a process and that 'extracting' must follow from specific search behaviour such as 'browsing'. Indeed, drawing attention to this fact leads to the

conclusion that ‘extracting’ is not an information behaviour of the same kind as ‘browsing’, or ‘chaining’ or ‘monitoring’, and further suggests that ‘differentiating’ is also a different kind of behaviour: browsing, chaining and monitoring are search procedures, whereas differentiating is a filtering process and extracting may be seen as an action performed on the information sources.

2.2.3 Kuhlthau’s Model

Kuhlthau’s (1991; 1994) works complement that of Ellis by attaching to stages of the ‘information search process’ the associated feelings, thoughts and actions, and the appropriate information tasks. This association clearly identifies Kuhlthau’s perspective as phenomenological, rather than cognitive. The stages of Kuhlthau’s model are: Initiation, Selection, Exploration, Formulation, Collection and Presentation.

The Initiation stage is characterised by feelings of uncertainty, vague and general thoughts about the problem area, and is associated with seeking background information. The ‘appropriate task’ at this point is simply to ‘recognise’ a need for information. The remaining appropriate tasks are: Identify referring to fixing the general topic of the search; Investigate, or search for information on that general topic; Formulate, referring to focusing on a more specific area within the topic; Collection, referring to gathering relevant information on the focus; and Complete, referring to ending the information search. Kuhlthau’s model is thus more general than that of Ellis in drawing attention to the feelings associated with the various stages and activities. The fundamental proposition is that the feelings of uncertainty associated with the need to search for

information give rise to feelings of doubt, confusion and frustration and that, as the search process proceeds and is increasingly successful, those feelings change. As relevant material is collected confidence increases and is associated with feelings of relief, satisfaction and a sense of direction.

In effect, what Kuhlthau postulates here (and confirmed by empirical research) is a process of the gradual refinement of the problem area, with information search of one kind or another going on while that refinement takes place. Thus, a successive search process is implicit in Kuhlthau's analysis of the search activity. The strength of Ellis' model, as with Kuhlthau's, is that it is based on empirical research and has been tested in subsequent studies. Through a merger of Ellis' and Kuhlthau's models, strong similarities can be seen and the major difference appears to be that Ellis specifies the modes of exploration or investigation. The point must be reiterated, however, that Ellis does not present his characteristics as stages but as elements of behaviour that may occur in different sequences with different persons or with the same person at different times. Kuhlthau posits stages on the basis of her analysis of behaviour, while Ellis suggests that the sequences of behavioural characteristics may vary. Ellis' (1989) stages are concerned with behavioural patterns in the actual information search activity, while Kuhlthau (1994) presents stages of activity within which the behavioural patterns may occur. Ellis's behavioural model is a set of activities within what Kuhlthau calls 'Collection' and that all three of these are nested within Wilson's 1996 model of information behaviour in general.

While Ellis and Kuhlthau models are linear, meaning that the search for information starts and ends when the search is complete, Wilson's model goes another round by repeating the search, which is extended to both formal and informal systems. The model also incorporates both Ellis' and Kuhlthau's models and goes further to incorporate the feelings of the information providers. It takes care of the environmental factors that affect the search for information.

2.3 Activities Carried out by MCAs

Legislators are the representative of the people in the legislative assembly (in this case the County Assembly). In Kenya, the county is divided into 47 counties with each having a County Assembly in which elected members (MCAs) sit. According to Muriu, Odour and Nguti (2013), the MCAs have the responsibility of ensuring that the voice and preference of their constituents is present at the table of decisions and that of law and policymaking responsibility. They assert that the laws and policies made by the MCAs are what make the work of the County Government possible. The MCAs also have an oversight role in which they hold the power to approve, check and follow up on every matter being conducted in the county.

The activities of the MCAs are centered on their roles. However, as Nguriu (2013) points out, most of the MCAs have not fully internalised their roles as stipulated (Kenya, 2010). Unlike their predecessors, the councilors, in the previous constitution, the MCAs do not have direct service delivery to the people but are supposed to play an oversight role. This

requires constant consultation with the electorate to ensure the views of the electorate are well presented and monitored through to the implementation of the projects.

The role of the MCAs involves the following: passing of laws for the good governance of the people; providing, by giving legislative sanctions, taxation and acquisition of loans, the means of carrying out the work of the County Government; scrutinising County Government policy; and, monitoring the implementation of the County Government programmes and projects. The activities require a robust information support system as Rugambwa and Kintu (2013) observe.

2.4 Information Needs of Legislators

For legislators, information is important because elected officials risk making costly, or even dangerous, decisions for a whole nation if they are not provided adequately (Aleman and Scooby, 2000). According to James Madison (1997), a popular government without information or the means of acquiring it is but preamble to a farce or tragedy, or perhaps both. He asserts that, “People who mean to be their own government must arm themselves with power that knowledge gives”. It is thus essential that decision-makers have information that is free of bias, and reflects the full range of existing opinions

UNESCO (1994) study asserts that the information provided to a user group must be relevant to its needs and should fulfil the gap between what the people know and what they require to know in order to solve a given problem. Ascertaining the information needs of a given information user group is therefore determined by the various activities

that are undertaken by these communities. The information needs of the MCAs are captured in section 2 of the Schedule Four of the Constitution of Kenya, which stipulates the functions of the County Government. These functions, and therefore, information relate to, among others, agriculture, health, education, cultural activities, planning and development.

The MCAs should perform their decision-making duties from an informed perspective if they have access to information relevant to the decisions they ought to make. This ensures that they take full control of their decisions. However, the central problem of modern democracy is that to deal with complex issues, representative assembly members rely on the opinions and actions of experts to develop effective policy, which denies them the control over the decisions being made as the views come from the experts and may move away from their desires (Lupia and McCubbins, 1994).

According to Johnson and Nakamura (1999), the needs of legislators are pegged on to their key mandates that include representation, law making and oversight. Through representation, legislatures are useful “nerve endings of the policy” as they are often the branch of government to which popular complaints/dissatisfactions/demands for action are first articulated. Through law making legislators not only represent the public by articulating citizen preferences, but they also translate their preferences into policy through enacting legislation. Oversight occurs after a law is passed and involves monitoring executive activities for efficiency, probity and fidelity.

The MCAs represent the citizens at the lowest part of the society at the Ward level (Kenya, 2010). Like other legislators, their roles are representation, law making and oversight. The needs are however tailored to the activities of the local area represented as opposed to the National Assembly

2.4.1 Information Needs of MCAs

The need for relevant, accurate and timely information to support decision-making has grown along with democratic governance and with the increasing complexity of government at the local, national and international levels (Marcella et al., 1999). Franker and Akussah (2012) noted that decentralisation processes at the local level greatly increases the responsibility of local actors and enhances their social policy decision-making capabilities. These changes mean that mayors, councilors, municipal secretaries and managers have increased influence on planning primary education, public health, water and sanitation services, and physical planning. They also generate and require information to support objective policy and decision-making for cost-effective allocation of resources (Durrant, 2004).

According to Adams and Anum (2005), for any good development planning in the districts, the right data or information is needed. Omagbemi et al. (2005), in their study of the information needs of local government policy makers in Ogun State, Nigeria, observed that local administrations, being closest to the grassroots, would be in a better position to formulate policies that will affect the lives of their inhabitants. Drucker (1979) posited that having policies made at the lowest possible level enhances their quality.

However, this can only be achieved where there is access to relevant and current information.

Babu (2006) observed that information has a great impact on decision-making and hence its value is closely tied to the decisions that result from its use. Its value is related to those who use it, when it is used and in what situations. Information is relevant if it leads to improved decision-making. It might also be relevant if it reaffirms a previous decision

Mustert and Ocholla's (2005) study resolute the information sources, services and systems used by the parliamentarians in Southern Africa. The study, which targeted 763 respondents, achieved a response rate of 23 per cent (167/763) and revealed that parliamentary libraries are under-utilised because parliamentarians use other equally competing information sources largely accessed through the Internet. The study also revealed the rising use of electronic sources to access information.

The study by Alemna and Skouby (2000) addressed issues related to information seeking behaviour of parliamentarians in Ghana, including their perception and needs of information sources. The study, conducted by a questionnaire with a response rate of 57.3 per cent (94/164) showed that the main purpose for seeking information was when preparing for parliamentary debates, speeches and questions. The study findings also showed a low level of use of electronic information in parliament.

Thapisa (1996) study aimed at determining the information needs of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Botswana, identifying the sources they used, determining the degree of assistance they required in using information for parliamentary debates, and determining the adequacy of the library in providing them with information. The results of the study, conducted through a structured questionnaire with response rate of 27.5 per cent (11/40 members), indicated that the parliamentarians demonstrated an awareness of the value and importance of information in legislative debates. The study also showed that they appeared to seek information mostly from government departments, personal contacts and fellow parliamentarians.

2.5 Information Sources Available to MCAs

Legislators require information from a myriad of sources including both formal and informal to be able to undertake their roles effectively. Rugambwa and Kintu (2013), quoting from Dietrich-Schulz (2008) asserts that the availability of both library and research resources are very crucial for legislators to effectively perform their representative, oversight and legislative functions. At all level of the legislators work, whether committee, plenary or constituency, good information allows them to understand problems, consider solutions, influence policies or strategies, and identify areas of weaknesses within the County Government. Thus, improving the quality of policy debate and policy making processes is a key part of improving the quality of life of a country's citizens (Court and Young, 2004).

The government information services in the counties, through the Sub-County Information and Documentation Centres, provide the legislators with government publications (Ngoru, 2014). These publications include, among others, the budgetary reports, development and recurrent expenditure reports, statistical and economic surveys. The legislators rely on informal sources of information such as the opinion leaders who sets the agenda for development projects within their representative areas (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). The views of the opinion leaders, though informal, represent the real-life situation that affects the electorate. The media, both print and electronic, helps with agenda setting for public policies. It assists legislators in collecting, assembling, interpreting, and prioritising environmental signals pertinent to particular policy decisions (Tan and Weaver, 2009). The legislators therefore prefer using the media as sources of information for current issues that affect the general population.

Legislators also prefer to use their colleagues as particularly effective in satisfying communication, interaction and information needs. This is based on uses and gratifications theory which posits that individuals prefer particular media based on their communication needs and underlying social/psychological motivations (Cho, de Zunigas, Rojas and Shah, 2003). The legislators thus rely on their fellow colleagues to gain information for use in their institutionally defined roles.

2.6 Challenges of Providing Information to Legislators

The legislators elected to serve in the Siaya County Assembly are drawn from varied educational and professional background as shown in Figure 5. This is bound to pose

challenges to information professionals charged with the responsibilities of providing them with information. In his research on the provision of information Gwang (2011) identifies the challenges in information provision including the nature of professional practice, elitist and urban centred information services, lack of available information resources, poor state of library and information services, politics and economics of information where information does not have political campaigners, lack of ICT tools to access the information resources, and poor information literacy among the user communities. Ochogwu (2009) also identifies lack of information systems and dearth of research by information professionals in information provision.

Information sources can be defined as the physical (or digital) entities in a variety of media providing potential information (Ingwersen and Järvelin, 2005: 387). They can also be distinguished as external and internal sources, human and documentary sources, or formal and informal sources. The information sources at the county level relate to the activities specified in the County Government functions, which include newspapers, magazines, learned journals, books, monographs, in-house memoranda (files), indexes, abstracts, conference proceedings, thesis and dissertation, bulletins from the private sector, government publications, consultancy reports and feasibility reports (Alyepeku, 1989). The formal information systems in Siaya County include the community libraries run by KNLS and the District Information and Documentation Centres (DIDCs), and now Sub-County Information and Documentation Centres.

Chapter 4 has discussed the theoretical framework, the activities carried out by MCAs; the information needs of legislators; information needs of MCAs; the information sources available to MCAs and challenges of providing information to legislators

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the methods and techniques that were applied while undertaking the research, which, according to Kothari (2004), is a way to systematically solve a research problem.. It identifies the relevant tools that were necessary to help the researcher achieve the research objectives, and highlights the issues related to research design, location and target population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection and analysis procedures, validity and reliability tests, as well as the ethical issues that needed to be put in place to effectively achieve the research results.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a case study approach, which enabled an in-depth investigation of the research topic. It brought out the required details that led to a deeper understanding of the research area, giving a picture of the circumstances as they existed in their natural environment. The interview questions were formulated to enable the capture of the respondents' views of the situation from their own understanding, and hence helped in understanding the research topic from the respondents' perspective. With a population of below 50 respondents who were drawn from a homogenous sector, a case study became the ideal design strategy.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study area was located in Siaya County in Western Kenya, which is one of the six counties that make up the former Nyanza Province. The County lies between latitude 0° 26' to 0° 18' North and longitude 33° 58' East and 34° 33' East as shown in the map in Appendix 1. The county covers a total of 2,496km².

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted all the 48 elected and nominated MCAs of the Siaya County Assembly as listed in Table 3. Nine key informants drawn from the County Assembly, KNLS, the Sub County Information and Documentation Centres and the community based information resource centres were interviewed also interviewed to gather background information on the relevant information services in the county.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Representation category	Number
Elected members	30
Youth representative	1
Disabilities representative	1
Women representatives	16
Total	48

Source: Field data, 2015

The researcher purposively selected four informants from the assembly staff for detailed interview. These included the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Chief Whip and the Chair of the Legal Committee. Other informants included the heads of the KNLS community libraries at Ukwala, Rambula and Nyilima and two information officers heading the sub-county information and documentation centres based in Bondo and Siaya. Finally, the head in the Siaya Community Library was interviewed to get information from the community based information resources centres perspective. Given the size of the target population, a structured interview was used to collect data from all the MCAs, while non-structured interview was used on the key informants.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Kahn and Cannell (1957: 149) describe interviewing as “a conversation with a purpose”. They further point out that interviews are important for qualitative research because it is a good approach to gather in-depth attitudes, beliefs and anecdotal data from individual patrons, pointing out that personal contact with participants might elicit richer and more detailed responses thereby providing an excellent opportunity to probe and explore questions. So, participants do not need the ability to read and write to respond to the interview questions.

The researcher used interview schedules to collect data from the MCAs and the key informants. Two separate interview schedules were designed based on the research objectives and they helped probe the respondents’ knowledge. Through them, the

researcher managed to extract additional information that could not be obtained straight from the schedule questions.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher collected data through self-administered interviews to the MCAs. Appointments with the MCAs were booked through the Speaker while the Assembly was in session. This ensured that maximum numbers of respondents were available. Personal contacts with the respondents enabled the researcher to build rapport with them and therefore won their trust. Appointments were booked with the key respondents and the researcher visited them in their individual work premises.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are critical criteria for measuring the data collected for research purposes. According to Kothari (2004), validity is the extent to which differences found with a measuring instrument reflect the true differences among those being tested. A measuring instrument is said to be reliable if it provides consistent results. Reliability in measuring instruments contributes to validity, though a reliable instrument need not be a valid instrument. The researcher used the same interview tools on all the participants to ensure standard response were elicited from all the respondents.

3.6.1 Validity

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define validity as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. The researcher conducted a pilot

study to pre-test the schedules by conducting interviews on a small group of respondents with similar backgrounds, but who did not form part of the study. The aim was to help validate the information that was to be collected during the actual data collection. This provided a preview of the data collection before the same was administered upon to the actual respondents.

3.6.2 Reliability

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated tests. The researcher undertook a pilot study on sample population similar to the sample to ascertain the reliability of the data collection instruments and to ensure these instruments were appropriate for the collection of the required data. This action enabled the improvement on the instruments' quality before administering the same to the respondents. It also helped ensure that reliable information was collected.

Both structured and non-structured interview methods were used to help overcome the deficiencies of either method. The interviews conducted on the key informants provided additional information as well as confirmed the information provided by those taken through the structured interviews.

3.7 Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation

The data collected was organised into themes based on the research questions. This enabled the researcher to collate responses from each research question to establish how

the responses addressed the research objectives. The qualitative results were presented through narratives and quotations from the respondents captured as they were extracted from the respondents. This helped capture the respondents' individual opinions.

The responses were tabulated to help capture the various themes that the respondents addressed. The tabulated results were interpreted based on the objectives and how these results deviated from the objectives of the study. The percentage variables were explained in relation to the objectives. This involved both negative and positive deviations from the objectives of the research.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The researcher, through a recommendation letter from Moi University, sought a research permit from the National Commission for Science and Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before embarking on the research. NACOSTI directed that the researcher reports and seeks permission from the administrators at the location of the study in this case the Siaya County Commissioner and the Siaya County Director of Education before undertaking the research in their areas of jurisdiction. Consequently, the researcher secured approvals from both officers. The results from both structured and non-structured interviews were handled with confidentiality to ensure the information collected was used strictly for the purposes of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings of this study that sought to investigate the provision of information to MCAs in Siaya County and to come up with strategies to assist the County Government in enhancing the use of information by the MCAs. The findings are outlined according to the research questions based on the responses from the interviews and data gathered as per the research objectives.

4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents and Response Rate

The study analysed results based on the responses from 30 MCAs and the nine key informants. The research yielded 30/48 (63%) response rate. The responses from the MCAs could not achieve total number of 48. While some MCAs were not willing to grant an interview, some were not available during the days that the researcher conducted the interviews during the assembly days. The researcher interviewed all the nine key informants.

4.1.1 Educational and Professional Background of the MCAs

The result of analysing information on professional and educational background of the MCAs as provided by the office of the Clerk of the County Assembly is showed in Figure

5.4

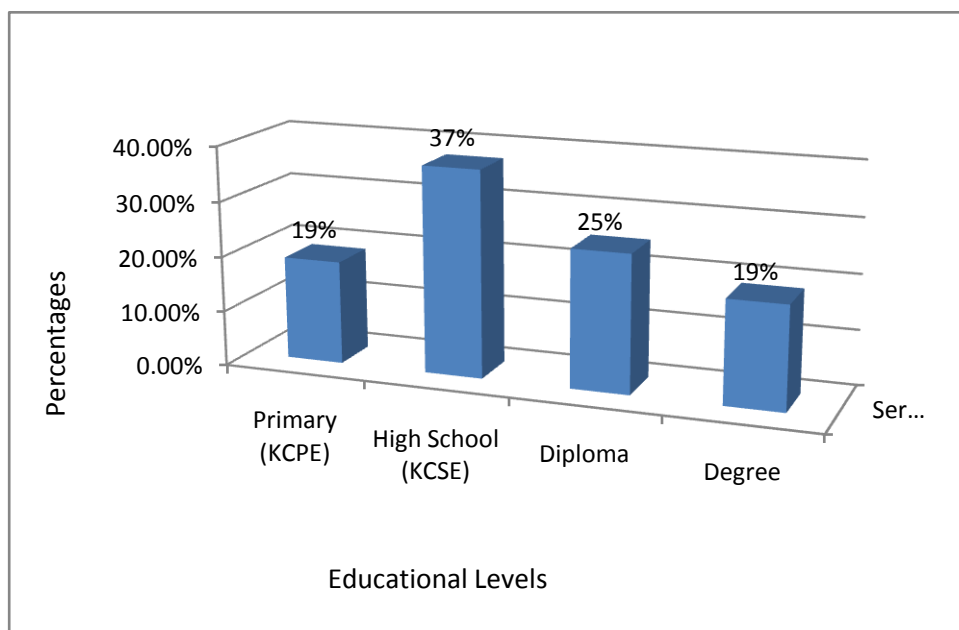


Figure 4.1: Educational Background of the MCAs in Siaya County (n=48)

Source: Office of Clerk, County Assembly of Siaya (2014)

Their academic qualifications consisted of 81 per cent (39/48) with secondary level of education and above, while the remaining had below secondary level. Over 40 per cent of the MCAs held diploma and degree qualifications in their respective fields of specialisations, while 37 per cent had high school education. This implies that most of the MCAs are able to follow the proceedings of the Assembly as well as participate effectively on the deliberations that are necessary to offer leadership to the County Government of Siaya.

The diverse educational qualifications of the MCAs imply that the information needs and seeking behaviour would be as diverse as their educational background. Those MCAs over 45 years may not have had either Kenya Certificate of Primary Education or Kenya

Certificate of Secondary Education but had experiences based on the works undertaken in other fields of specialisation that were not captured under the parameters used to pick the qualifications. The information on the educational levels of the MCAs was obtained from the Office of the Clerk of the County Assembly.

4.2 The Activities Carried out by MCAs

To establish the activities carried out by the MCAs, the researcher asked the MCAs to enumerate the activities they undertook and which necessitated the use of information. The question was important as it provided an indication of the type of information required. It also informed the MCAs' information needs.

It emerged from the activities mentioned that a wide range of activities fell under the MCAs' docket. These activities are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4.1: Activities Carried Out by MCAs (n = 30)

Activities Carried out	Frequency N= multiple responses	Percentage Members	Theme
Participation in the Assembly debates to pass laws	16	53	Legislative
Participation in the departmental committees	12	40	Representation
Evaluation of timelines of the County development projects	6	20	Oversight
Approval of the budgetary allocations	18	60	Oversight
Preparation of bills for discussion	20	67	Legislation
Participation in the intergovernmental activities	5	17	Representation
Monitoring the county development activities	7	23	Oversight
Ensuring equitable distribution of resources	15	50	Representation

Source: Field data, 2015

The analysis of the activities mentioned by the MCAs showed that they spread across three themes of legislation, oversight and representation. These themes form the backbone of their roles. The activities give a picture of what would constitute the

information needs of the MCAs. It could be deduced, therefore, that the information needs of the MCAs revolved around legislation, oversight and representation.

4.3 Information Needs of the MCAs

The interviewed MCAs suggested various types of information that they wished to have included in the current information sources offered by the County Government. The information requirements were as varied as the knowledge level of the MCAs and included the following: information on the government implementation of development programmes 8 (27%); public participation in County and National activities 14 (47%); accurate statistical information 12 (40%); women participation in ward activities 3 (10%); online information 6 (20%); monthly baraza with the Governor 4 (13%).

Table 4.2: Information Needs of MCAs

Information needs of MCAs	Frequency N= Multiple responses	% of information	Theme
Implementation of development programmes	8	27	Oversight
How members of the wards participate in county activities	14	47	Representation
Statistical information on county projects	12	40	Oversight
How the County Government allocates the development projects	3	10	Oversight
How the bills are prepared	6	20	Legislative
How the Governor prioritises projects	4	13	Oversight

Source: Field data 2015

The type of information that MCAs require defines the kind of activities they undertake in the County Assembly. This confirms the assertion by the Sub-County Information and Documentation officers and the KNLS librarians of the need to market the existing information stocks within the documentation centres and the libraries in the county. The interview with these officers revealed that the documentation centres and the libraries are well stocked with relevant information for planning from various government departments. The Sub-County Information and Documentation Centres are operated under the Ministry of Devolution and Planning through the Department of Rural

Planning. The department ensures all the planning information from the various Ministry headquarters are distributed to these centres in a timely manner. Intensive marketing needs to be undertaken to sensitise the MCAs on the availability of these information.

4.4 Information Sources Available and Accessible to MCAs

This study sought to establish the information sources that were available and accessible to the MCAs. The perception of MCAs was sought as it helped to establish the available sources and their accessibility. From the findings, the County Government would be able to come up with strategies of ensuring that all the available information sources were accessible to the MCAs.

4.4.1 Perception on Availability of Information Sources

The rating of the availability of information sources for decision-making showed that over 80 per cent of the MCAs who responded perceived information to be available and highly available in the County as shown in Figure 6.++++

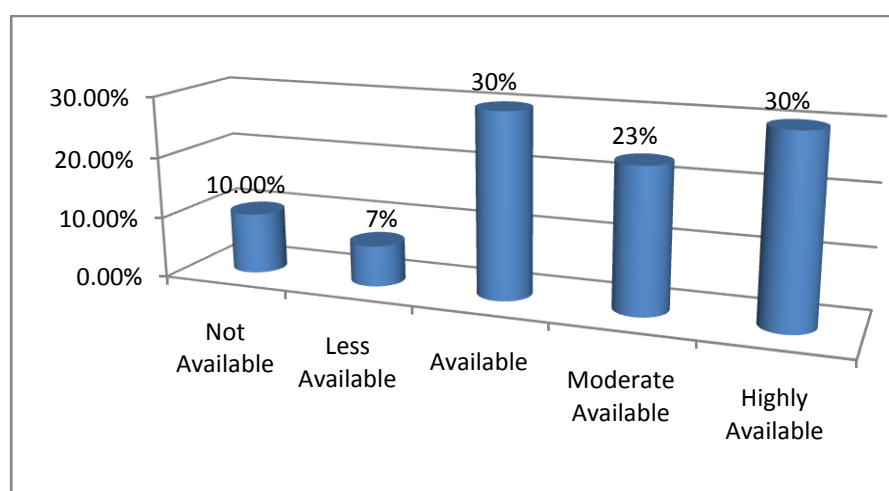


Figure 4.2: Availability of Information Sources in Siaya County

Source: Field data, 2015

The finding confirms the information provided by the key informants from the Sub-County Information and Documentation officers and the KNLS librarian who reiterated that there were lots of information within the two systems.. The other 17 per cent of the respondents who pointed out that the information was less available confirmed the need to market the existing information in order to increase the awareness of its availability within the county information systems.

4.4.2 Sources of Information Accessed by MCAs

The study sought to ascertain the information sources that were accessed by the MCAs. This was important as it would inform the decision to enhance access to the sources which were authoritative and yet less accessible.

The results showed that the MCAs consulted both formal and informal sources of information to help them achieve their work activities as shown in Figure 7.

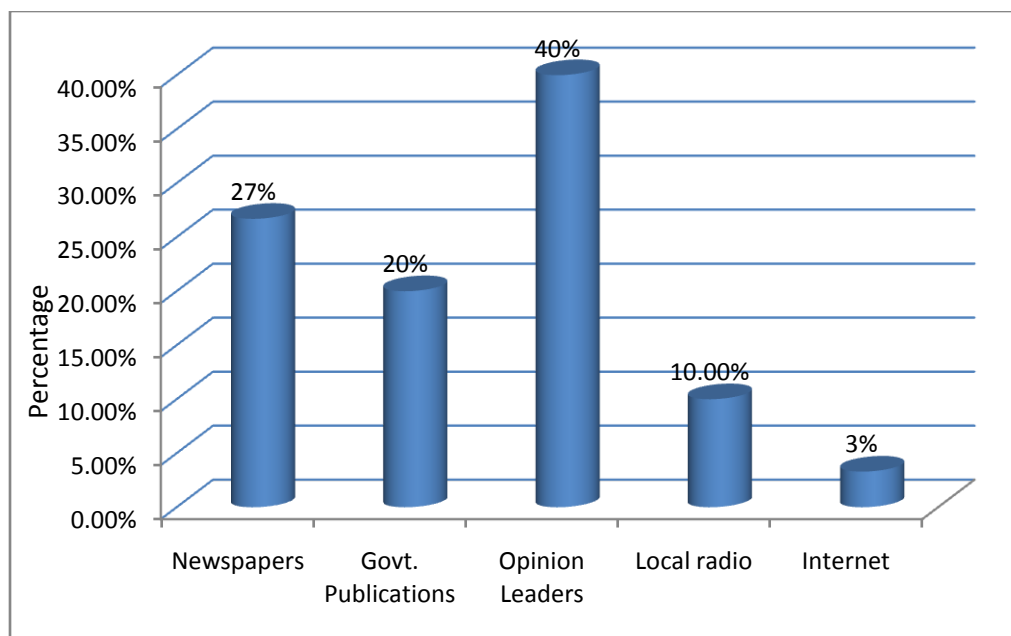


Figure 4.3: Information Sources Consulted by MCAs

Source: Field data, 2015

Some 40 per cent of the MCAs consulted the opinion leaders as a source of information as compared to 20 per cent who consulted government publications. The publications included statistical abstracts, economic surveys, development and recurrent expenditures reports, sectoral surveys (such as the Kenya Aids Indicator Survey), reviews and development profiles. This could confirm the relevance and currency of information provided by the opinion leaders; information from this source related directly to the activities of the wards the MCAs represent. The high level of information gained from the opinion leaders could as well indicate the participation of the public on county affairs.. This confirms the study in Ghana by Thapisa (1996) which showed that Members of Parliament used personal contacts to gain access to information for decision-making. It could also be the reason the MCAs rarely visited the existing information

systems in the county as affirmed by the key informants. The MCAs also gained information from fellow members of the Assembly during formal and informal engagements,

The results also showed that 27 per cent of the MCAs consulted newspapers as a source of information for their activities. This is a source on current affairs that could provide a basis for benchmarking with other counties from the press reports.

The low level of Internet usage as indicated by 3 per cent consultation could point to the low level of ICT penetration within the County or inadequate training on the use of the technology. Although government publications provide authoritative sources of data for background information and planning purposes, they recorded a 20 per cent consultation rate. The low rate points to the need to market these information sources to the MCAs as it would help save the time the MCAs would spend searching for information.

The fact that the MCAs consult both formal and informal information systems confirms the components of Wilson's model of information seeking behaviour. Additionally, the high level of consulting opinion leaders confirms the confidence the MCAs had on this source as well as reiterating the fact that most MCAs rarely consulted the information centres.

4.4.3 Information Systems Available in Siaya County

The information systems availability in Siaya was derived from further probing the MCAs to identify information systems which the county could strengthen as new systems are put in place. The MCAs identified the following information systems, which were available in the county and provided information relevant to their activities and are summarised in Table 5:

(i) *The government information services –*

These include the Sub-County Information and Documentation Centre (formerly the DIDC) that stocks mainly statistical matters, budgetary issues, various development plans, survey and status reports from the government as well as United Nations (UN) agencies, and county development profiles.

According to the Bondo DIDC information officer,

The DIDCs stock practically all government published information relevant to the activities of the MCAs

The other government sources comprise the KNLS branch libraries at Nyilima, Ukwala and Rambula, which provide information for general readership, especially on academic programmes undertaken by the surrounding institutions, professional development for those pursuing career courses, and current information from the local dailies as well as Internet services to the general patrons.

(ii) *Community libraries and information resource centres –*

These sources are found in a few locations within the County. They include the Siaya Community Library, Usonga Community Library, Ndwarra Community

Resource Centre, Ugunja Community Resource Centre and Mama Sarah Obama Community Library. The information resources in these community libraries relate to material required for community development activities, school and college going students, general readership, and Internet connectivity where there is electricity.

(iii) *Private entrepreneurs* –

These sources include the cyber cafés operated by private entrepreneurs and opinion leaders within the communities. The cyber cafés are found within the shopping centres where there is electricity connection. The cyber cafés also help the MCAs gather background information on projects before they undertake them, as well as to send and receive emails relating their work activities. The opinion leaders consist of senior citizens who were once employed or have been involved in community development activities and are consulted by MCAs from time to time for information on specific areas. Some MCAs also rely on their hand held electronic devices like mobile phones to access information from the Internet.

(iv) *Public media* –

The public media as a source of information include both the print and non-print media sources such as newspapers, radio (Ramogi and Mayienga FM) and television (TV). These provide information on the current status of projects within the County and in other counties. The MCAs use the information for benchmarking as well as for oversight activities.

(v) *Opinion leaders and public meetings –*

These emerged as major information systems through which the MCAs obtained information on the challenges affecting their constituents. The opinion leaders comprise of, experienced public leaders who hold institutional memory for the various activities that are undertaken by the communities. These leaders provide strategic direction to the MCAs “with a view to protecting the community interests. Public meetings organised by the MCAs and other leaders provide opportunities to access information that would inform such matters as the allocation of funds and distribution of development projects within the communities.

Table 4.3: Information Systems Available in Siaya County

Information systems available in Siaya County	Frequency N = Multiple responses	Percentage
Sub-county Information and Documentation Centre's	12	40
Kenya National Library Services (KNLS)	1	3
Community Information Centres	5	17
Community-based Organisations	2	7
Opinion leaders	8	27
Extension officers	1	3
Assembly forum	1	3

Source: Field data, 2015

Amongst the formal information systems, the most preferred were the Sub-County Information and Documentation Centres (40%), while the opinion leaders recorded 27 per cent in the informal systems. The 40 per cent preference for the formal systems could be attributed to the availability of official information provided by the centres, while the 27 per cent for the opinion leaders owes to the participation by the members of the public on the affairs of the County Government. The other systems with lower percentages, including extension workers and assembly forums, supplement the information obtained from the two systems within the county. The extension workers in agriculture, health, education among others are sources of information specific to the areas where they operate. The assembly forums provide information from assembly members based on the experiences from their ward activities. This helps ensure the beneficial activities are replicated in several wards. It emerged that MCAs prefer consulting amongst themselves before calling on additional sources of information. These consultations are healthy as they generate information that informs the MCAs' action points when it comes to the development activities within their representative wards.

4.6 How Information Sources Met the Needs of the MCAs

This study set out to establish the extent to which the existing information sources met the needs of the MCAs. This was necessary as it would inform the decision by the County Government in enhancing the distribution and publicity of information sources. To address this, the researcher assessed whether information was useful to the MCAs and if they were experiencing any gaps.

4.6.1 Distribution of Information Sources

The findings revealed that the distribution of the information sources within the County was scanty. This poses challenges to the MCAs. While the county covers an area of over 2,500 square kilometres, there are only two government information sources found in Siaya and Bondo towns and KNLS hosted three community libraries. The scanty distribution leaves the MCAs with the option of acquiring key information from the informal systems.

4.6.2 Usefulness of Information to the MCAs

The MCAs expressed the types of information that they found useful as they carried out their activities in the County Assembly. This assessment was necessary because it would provide a guide on the types of information sources that the County Government should avail to the MCAs for them to execute their duties effectively.

The study found that a high percentage (53%) required legislative information to enable them carry out their duties.

Table 4.4: Information Useful to MCAs

Information useful to the MCAs	Frequency N= Multiple responses	Percentage who find information useful	Theme
Law making information	16	53	Legislative
How money is spent by County Government	6	20	Oversight
Projects implementation information	10	33	Oversight
Financial budgetary information	5	17	Oversight

Source: Field data, 2015

The oversight information topped the MCAs' list of information that is useful. This gives an indication that the MCAs are concerned with development of the County through monitoring of the activities and actions of the County Government as it implements the development activities.

4.6.3 Gaps in Information Sources and Solutions

The study assessed the data to determine if there existed any gaps as the MCAs accessed information. It also sought if the MCAs could foresee possible ways of overcoming the gaps experienced. It was necessary to establish these two aspects as this could provide solutions from the MCAs perspective. This would also ensure that the main users of the information, the MCAs, could provide working solutions.

The results showed that 70 per cent of the respondents experienced gaps in their information needs despite the overwhelming affirmation on the availability of

information by the key informants. This could be attributed to the fact that the information needs were commensurate with the level of knowledge of the information seeker as well as the background information the users possessed on the topics they were undertaking search on. The MCAs felt that the County Government should avail information relating to the implementation of the projects as well as the timelines within which the projects should be accomplished. This confirms Case (2002), definition of information need as “*a recognition that Personal knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that needs to be achieved*”.

4.7 Challenges Experienced in Access and Use of Information Existing Sources

The study assessed the challenges that were experienced by the MCAs in accessing and using the information sources. Establishing these challenges was important as it would assist the County Government in rectifying the situation once the challenges were identified. The challenges are summarised in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5: Challenges in Accessing Information Sources

Challenges in Accessing Information Sources	Frequency N=Multiple response	Percentage	Theme
It normally take long for the MCA to find information	17	57	Organisation
Inadequate libraries and community information centres within the Wards	12	40	Infrastructure
Inadequate knowledge on ICT to access Internet based information	6	20	Information literacy
Most information is not detailed and some is doubtful	3	10	Information quality
Lack of online information that can be accessed from remote locations	5	17	Distribution of information

Source: Field data, 2015

The challenges experienced by the MCAs in accessing information ranged from organisation of the information and information infrastructure to information literacy of the McAs, the quality of information and the distribution of the information across the County.

The results showed that 70 per cent of the respondents experienced challenges in accessing information from the available information sources. This could be an indicator to inadequate information seeking literacy on the part of the MCAs or lack of organisation of the existing information. The other 30 per cent indicated that they were

not experiencing problems in accessing information from the existing information sources. This could be attributed to their knowledge on the existing sources and on how to access it or the variety of sources that they consult for information.

The high number of members who experienced challenges points to the definitions and what constitutes the information need as expressed by Kuruppu (1999), in which it is pointed out that the information needs and utilisation of an individual is based on the level of knowledge as well as the degree to which the individual is capable of interacting with the information systems that are in place. The County Government Act did not stipulate the level of education required for MCAs. This therefore accounts for the varying levels of education of the MCAs thus leading to some of the challenges in accessing the information sources and systems.

The greater challenge on the organisation of information (57%) could be attributed to the low level of knowledge of the MCAs regarding the way the existing information is organised within the information systems either by the information officers or poor knowledge of the MCAs on access techniques.

The infrastructural challenges (40%) were attributed to the least number of existing libraries and information centres. The County has three public libraries, which are found only in three out of the six sub-counties. Two of these are in one Sub-County. This means that the MCAs have to cover long distances if they are to access reliably documented information.

Information literacy (20%) also posed a challenge. It emerged that some MCAs could not access the information using ICT and that information within the County is not well distributed using the online services. It therefore emerges that there was need to educate the MCAs on the use of ICT and to distribute information through online services.

4.8 Strategies of Providing Information to MCAs

Once the challenges in accessing information by the MCAs had been identified, the MCAs were asked to propose the strategies that they would like to be put in place to alleviate those challenges. This was done to help come up with solutions from their perspective and which would be relevant to them. The MCAs came up with a number of interventions and strategies, which are summarised in Table 10.

Table 4.6: Strategies for Improving Access to Information by MCAs

Strategies for improving access to information	Frequency N = Multiple Responses	Percentage	Theme
Construction of libraries and community information centres in every Ward	15	50	Infrastructure
Establishing research centre at the County Assembly premises	3	10	Infrastructure
Marketing of information services through employment of trained information professionals	8	27	Distribution
Holding regular public meetings through barazas	4	13	Reliable information
Repackaging of information through improved ICT facilities	12	40	Distribution
Providing information literacy to the MCAs	6	20	Information literacy

Source: Field data, 2015

The identified measures ranged from Infrastructure to distribution of information sources and provision of information literacy amongst the MCAs. The major strategies relating to

infrastructure (50%) showed that the MCAs noted the inadequacy of information systems and sources within the County. The distribution challenges could be overcome through the repackaging of information via the use of ICT facilities' as well as employment of qualified information personnel. Information literacy was also a major challenge which could be overcome through provision of user education to the MCAs.

Other strategies such as construction of libraries and community information centres in every representation Wards (50%) and establishing research centres within the Assembly premises (10%) confirmed that the MCAs rely on information from the Sub-County Information and Documentation offices for work in committees. Marketing of information services through employment of trained information professionals (13%) confirmed that few MCAs visited the information centres. Holding regular public meetings through barazas (13%) indicates that the MCAs rely on opinion leaders as well as other members of the public for information that influences their decision-making on matters relating to the committee discussions. Public meetings serve to ensure the accuracy of the information that the MCAs eventually use from their proffered opinion leaders. The suggestion of repackaging of information through improved ICT facilities (40%) confirmed the informants' reports that some of the MCAs relied on their ICT gadgets to access information and thus rarely visited the information centres. The strategy involving the provision of information literacy to the MCAs (20%) confirmed the view of the key respondents, especially the information officers at the KNLS and the Sub-county information centres to provide literacy to the MCAs to enable them effectively utilise

their hand held ICT gadgets. This would also enhance their ability to seek information from the existing facilities within the County.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the purpose of the study, the research questions and the methodology used in conducting the research. It highlights the summary of the major findings based on the research objectives, provides conclusions from the findings and offers a number of recommendations useful to information managers and policy makers including how the recommended actions could be actualised. It also highlights areas that were of interest to the research but could not be handled and therefore require further research.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

The aim of this research was to investigate the need and use of information by the MCAs in Siaya County and come up with strategies to assist the County Government in enhancing the use of information by the MCAs.

The Siaya County Assembly comprised 48 Members. The study interviewed nine key informants to help gather background information on the study, who included the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and the Chief Whip of the County Assembly, two information officers from the Sub-County Information and Documentation Centres in Bondo and Siaya, three librarians from KNLS branches in Nyilima, Rambula and Ukwala, and one

librarian from the Siaya Community Library. The following were the findings in line with the objectives:

(a) The activities carried out by MCAs that require information –

The activities also determine their information needs and use.

- Participation in the Assembly debates and legislation upon which the County policies are based
- Participation in the departmental committee meetings that are set up to provide detailed understandings of the operations of the County
- Evaluation of the implementation of the County development projects
- Approval of the budgetary allocations made by the County Executive to the various departmental activities
- Preparation of Bills for debate
- Participation in the intergovernmental activities that help position the County at strategic levels for development
- Monitoring the development activities within the County

(b) Information sources available and accessible to MCAs –

The sources of information consisted the following:

- Government publications, which included statistical abstracts, economic surveys, development and recurrent expenditures reports, sectoral surveys (such as the Kenya Aids Indicator Survey), reviews and development profiles. The

publications provide major sources of reliable and accurate information on the operations of the government.

- ▪Daily newspapers – These were a source of current information.
- ▪Opinion leaders – These consisted of ... and provided strategic directions on projects.
- ▪Local radio stations – The stations provided sources of current information.
- ▪Internet services – This is part of the ICTs used to provide background information..
- ▪Fellow MCAs – The interpersonal discussions were a source of information on the local communities.

(c) Perception on availability of information sources–

Majority of respondent MCAs (80%) perceived availability of information to be between available and highly available in the County, hence corroborating the response by the key informants that there were lots of information within the existing systems in the County. The remaining 20 per cent MCA respondents recognised the need for marketing the information sources for greater awareness among the MCAs.

(d) Sources of information preferred by MCAs:

The sources accessed by the MCAs included the following:

- Newspapers – The MCAs consulted newspapers out of the need for customised provision of information based on their subject profiles.
- Government publications – These publications were considered to constitute a credible source of information and were preferred for helping in the oversight role.

- Opinion leaders – These leaders are a source of information for historical and emerging trends within the societies. Information obtained from them gives the exact picture of the direction the communities have taken or would prefer to take, and therefore help the MCAs plan development activities based on the needs of the population. However, these leaders, as an informal source, were not captured by the formal information systems, but as sources of information they confirm the structure of Wilson’s information seeking model where the user looks for information from both the formal and informal sources before making a decision. Apparently, the opinion leader is a rich source of non-documented information. According to the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker:

There is need to have regular public barazas to help gather information from the various Wards [and] from the general public as this will provide the MCAs with current information as it exists with the people whom they represent in the Assembly.

- Local radio stations – These provided sources of current information, and the MCAs used them to both listen to what the citizens’ opinions were as well as to communicate to the citizens. The stations, especially the vernacular ones, were helpful in capturing citizens’ views expressed through the call-in programmes.
- Internet –The internet provided background information for the activities the MCAs are engaged in, especially in the committees. The MCAs use their hand-held electronic devices to access the Internet since the County does not have an

information support system in place. Despite their preference for Internet, not many MCAs use this channel as a way of accessing information due to some technological challenges. The low level of Internet use could be attributed to the possible low level of ICT penetration within the County or inadequate training on the use of this new technology.

The high level of information gained from the opinion leaders indicates the participation of the public on County affairs. (e) *Information systems available in Siaya County –*

In addressing the sources of information available in the County, it emerged that a number existed through information systems, which included the following:

- Government information services – These consisted of such services as the Sub-County Information and Documentation Centre (formerly the DIDC), and the KNLS branch libraries.
- Community libraries and information resource centres – These provided information that relate to community development activities, school and college curricula, general readership and Internet. They play a major role in enlightening the citizens especially with regard to their daily activities such as agriculture, health and education around the
- Private entrepreneurs – These include cyber café operators who provide Internet connectivity and therefore enable the MCAs to access information universally across

the web. The cyber cafés also help the MCAs gather background information on projects before they undertake them, as well as to send and receive emails relating their work activities.

- Public media – This consists of both the print and non-print media and includes newspapers, radio and television. These provide information on the current status of project activities within the county and in other counties. The MCAs use this information for bench marking activities as well as being source of information for oversight activities.

- Opinion leaders and public meetings – Leaders comprise the retired public servants, experienced public leaders as well as community leaders who hold instructional memory for the various activities that have been undertaken by the communities; hence, they provide strategic direction to the MCAs with a view to protecting the social fabric within the communities. Public meetings or barazas organised by the chiefs provide opportunities to access information available within the communities that would guide the allocation of development projects within the communities.

The diverse nature of sources consulted by the MCAs that comprise both the formal and informal sources is supported by the Wilson's model selected to guide this study. The model shows how information seekers consult both formal and informal sources as a way of satisfying their information needs. The information required by the MCAs are scattered across the various sources and includes both documented and non-documented

types. The consultation of the varied sources by the MCAs therefore helps to ensure that information is captured from all sectors.

- Extension workers – These include agricultural extension officers, community health officers, education officers, social workers and other community based workers. They form a major information system within the communities providing information that is relevant to the rural populations and informs the socio-economic status of the communities. If well-articulated and documented, the MCAs are able to learn more about the communities they represent from the extension officers' reports.

- Assembly forums – These forums provide an opportunity for the MCAs to learn from one another and to exchange knowledge on the various activities that they undertake within their representative wards. Through this exchange, the MCAs are able. This helps ensure the beneficial activities are replicated in several wards. It emerged that MCAs prefer consulting amongst themselves before calling on additional sources of information. These consultations are healthy as they generate information that informs the MCAs' action points when it come to the development activities within their representative wards.

(e) Assessing the needs and utilisation of information by the MCAs –

In addressing this objective, the following emerged:

- Use of information by the MCAs –All the MCAs confirmed they utilised information to carry out their duties of representing their constituents, and undertaking legislative duties and oversight roles over the County Government.

- Types of information required by the MCAs – The MCAs required legislative, financial and project implementation information. Legislative information was useful in law making activities, financial or budgetary information informed the development activities being carried out by the County Government, and hence useful in enabling MCAs to provide the oversight role, while project implementation information helps the MCAs ascertain the implementation status of the projects within the County and for gauging the equitable distribution of projects. The information requirement is attributed to the various committees that the MCAs serve in. The legislative information attracted a higher percentage than the other types of information due to the fact that the new county government system requires a lot of new legislation to make it operational.

(f) The extent to which the existing information sources met the needs of the MCAs –

In addressing this question it emerged that the extent to which the existing information sources met the MCAs' needs was affected by the level of education of the individual MCA, the distribution of the information sources within the County. Thus the information requirements of the MCAs were not adequately met. The following observations were made:

- Information that was useful to the MCAs – The MCAs found legislative, oversight, projects implementation and financial information useful. Legislative information helped in legislation, oversight information helped in the monitoring and evaluation of the County Government’s implemented projects, projects implementation information was useful in the monitoring and evaluation of existing projects, and financial information was useful in the approval of budgets and assessment of the County’s audited reports and development and recurrent expenditure reports.
- Gaps experienced in information sources and how to overcome them –Over 70 per cent of the MCAs experienced gaps on their information needs despite the overwhelming affirmation on the availability of information. The MCAs felt that the County Government should avail information relating to the implementation of the projects as well as the timelines within which the projects should be accomplished.

(g) Challenges encountered by MCAs in accessing and using information sources –

In addressing this question the following emerged:

- Challenges experienced in accessing information sources –70 per cent of the respondents experienced challenges in accessing information from the available sources. The high number of members pointed to the definitions of information needs and what constituted the information needs as expressed by Kuruppu (1999) that the information needs and utilisation of an individual is based on the level of knowledge as well as the degree to which they are capable of interacting with the information systems that are in place. The County Government Act did not stipulate the level of

education required for MCAs. This contributed to the varying levels of education, which reflected on the challenges.

- Challenges experienced by MCAs in accessing existing information – The MCAs experienced challenges in accessing information from the constituents which could be availed through the establishment of libraries and information centres and also inadequate knowledge on ICT use.

(h) Strategies by the County Government for to providing information to MCAs

In addressing this research objective the following proposed strategies and measures emerged:

- Construction of libraries and community information centres in every ward – This would help promote the provision of information to the MCAs as well as the members of the public. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 devolves the establishment and running of libraries and information centres to the County Government, which should, through the County Assembly, make budgetary provisions for the establishment of these libraries and information centres. Additionally, the County Government should partner with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help establish the facilities within the rural communities.
- Establishment of research centres within the County Assembly premises –This will assist the MCAs with ready information for decision-making. The Assembly should make budgetary provisions for the establishment of libraries and research centres

- fully equipped with trained personnel and ICTs as they will assist the MCAs especially when trained assistants are engaged to carry out research on topical issues that the members are involved in from time to time.
- marketing of information services to the MCAs – Marketing play a key role in the utilisation of information based in libraries and information centres. The MCAs should access the existing information through employment of trained information professionals who should repackage it using improved ICT facilities. The professionals should offer selective dissemination of information to the MCAs based on the issues that form part of the committee deliberations.
 - Regular public meetings through public barazas – Public meetings between the MCAs and the electorate offer an opportunity for the MCAs to harvest information from the public on the prevailing challenges affecting these communities. The barazas also offer a window for public participation. The constitution supports public participation in the running of the affairs of the County Government.
 - Repackaging of information through improved ICT facilities – The use of ICT helps in the organisation and retrieval of information resources. The County Assembly should, through trained information professionals, organise the information resources for dissemination of relevant information to the MCAs at any given time that they require it. This will facilitate the MCA's access to information especially when deliberating on key issues.

- Provision of information literacy to the MCAs –The information professionals in the County Assembly should establish ways of ensuring that the MCAs are aware of the arrangements and existence of information that the assembly stocks. Information literacy will help the users to personally search for information they require. This will be made possible only if the information resources are professionally organised. The use of ICT will also help in the dissemination of information after the MCAs have been trained on the key aspects of information retrieval.

- posting of information in the local radio stations – The local radio stations provide a window through which the MCAs would access information on what is happening within the various representational wards. These stations are also used by the MCAs to disseminate information to the electorate. The County Government should develop relevant local content in collaboration with these stations. It should also sponsor programmes that are developed by the various departments to help popularise the county activities to the electorate.

According to the MCAs, the above strategies would help the County Government set up systems that would enable the MCAs accomplish their functions of representation, legislation and oversight.

5.2 Conclusions

The study results affirmed that there were gaps in the provision of information to the MCAs of Siaya County, Kenya. This meant that, first; it took long for the MCAs to

accomplish their roles of representation, legislation and oversight over the County Government. The MCAs have to spend a lot of time searching for information from the informal sources in the county, which are not fully developed and the few that exist are scattered across wide areas. These include the community information centres like Ndwarra, Ugunja in Ugenya and Ugunja sub counties.

Secondly, the information sources were inadequate for the MCAs. This meant the more MCAs were sharing the few information sources and hence slowed down their activities and therefore reduced productivity.

Thirdly, there was lack of marketing of existing information resources to the MCAs. Thus, the information resources were not fully utilised by the MCAs since they were not aware of their existence. Therefore, the MCAs spent time searching for information where it did not exist. Marketing the information resources would ensure their proper utilisation. The MCAs would also give feedback to the information professionals on additional information resources they require.

Fourthly, there was lack of information literacy with regard to the MCAs, which would work to ensure that information users are aware of ways of accessing information resources. It would also offer an opportunity for the MCAs to freely interrogate the information systems and therefore could come across some information items that they were not aware of. Without information literacy, it meant that the MCAs relied upon the information officers to access their required information. .

Finally, the County Assembly lacked a dedicated research centre for the MCAs. The establishment of a research centre within the assembly together with the employment of research officers for the MCAs would ensure speedy provision of information to the MCAs by dedicated information research officers. These officers would carry out background searches on the topics of interest to the MCAs and provide them with information in a timely fashion.

5.3 Recommendations

The study drew the following recommendations:

- (a) The County Government should set up an information support centre at the County Assembly for use by the MCAs. This will ensure that information required by the MCAs is collected and organised based on the users' needs

- (b) The County Government should engage qualified information professionals to run the information centre. The professionals will deal with acquisition, organisation and retrieval of information for the MCAs. They would also design acquisition policies based on the user profiles which would ensure that relevant information that meets the needs of the users is acquired as well as ensure the required information is availed to the MCAs in a timely fashion to facilitate legislation, representational activities and oversight over the County Government.. The professionals are also best placed to advise the County Government on the best practices on the provision of information the MCAs.

- (c) Information for the MCAs should be repackaged through the use of enhanced ICT facilities within the information support centres. This would ensure that the information is synthesised to suit the needs of the users and would help in relating the needs of the users with the information available. Use of qualified information professionals coupled with ICT could help with the repackaging process. The repackaged information could be streamed through the ICT systems to reach each of the MCAs.

- (d) The County Government should set up information centres in each ward to act as collection points for the reports from projects and activities undertaken within the ward as these are the generation points for ideas that the MCAs use to set up development agendas. There should be a good information collection and storage systems that will ensure the information generated at the grassroots is collected and organised. Since the MCAs rely on the opinion leaders for information at the ward level for decision-making, this category should be empowered so as to generate information from an informed perspective.

- (e) The County Government should collect information from the ward information centres and forward it to the County Assembly facilities for reference by the MCAs. Therefore, the ward support centres should be set up and should be well managed.

- (f) Regular public meetings should be organised to extract information from the views expressed by opinion leaders from the communities as it enables the MCAs to plan for projects that are of directly relevance to the public that they represent.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Research

Further studies should be carried out in various regions or counties in the country to investigate the need and use of information by the MCAs. Studies should also be conducted on the information seeking behaviour of MCAs in the devolved government system in Kenya.

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APPENDICES:**Appendix 1: Location of Siaya County on Map of Kenya**

Source:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/52/Siaya_location_map.png/250px-Siaya_location_map.png

Appendix 2: Siaya Location in Western Kenya



Source:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/albertkenyaniinima/6671945119/sizes/m/in/photostream/>

Appendix 3: Cover Letter to Respondents

Alfred F. Odhiambo
P. O. Box 955-00621
Village Market, Nairobi

March 17, 2014

Dear Member of the County Assembly,

I am Alfred Fredrick Odhiambo, a student in Moi University, School of Information Sciences, in the Department of Library, Records and Archives Management. I am undertaking research leading the Master of Philosophy in Library and Information Studies, My topic of study is on: “Provision of information to Members of the County Assembly in Siaya, Kenya. The results of this study will assist the county government in Siaya identify and provide information sources that will help the members of County Assembly with information for their decision making purposes. This interview will help us capture the relevant information that will help accomplish the objectives of the study. The information collected from this study will be used solely for the purposes of this research. It is my humble request that you provide answers the questions as comprehensive as possible...

Thank you.

Alfred F. Odhiambo

Appendix 4: The Structured Interview Schedule for MCAs

Gender Male () Female ()


1. What is your highest Level of education?
2. How do you rate the availability of information sources for decision making in Siaya County (where 1 is least available and 5 highly available)?
3. Which sources of information do you consult to get information?
4. Which Information Systems are currently available in Siaya County?
5. Does Siaya County have information support centre?
6. Do you use information in your day to day activities?
7. If Yes, Which types of information do you need to help you do your work?
8. Of the information types specified above, which ones do you find more useful?
9. Do you find the information sources available useful for your decision making purposes?
If NO, state why they are not useful?
10. Do you experience any gaps in information provided for decision making in your ward?
If yes, which information would you like included among the current information sources?
11. Do you experience any challenges in accessing the existing information sources?
If Yes, What challenges do you experience in accessing the existing information?
12. What strategies should be put in place to improve access to information?

Appendix 5 Structured Interview for Key Informants

1. What range of information sources is available and accessible to MCAs?
2. How often do MCAs visit information centre for information?
3. Do the information sources meet the information needs of the MCAs?
4. How can the available information sources be supplemented?
5. What challenges do the information centres face in providing information to MCAs?
6. What can be done to improve the availability and accessibility to information by MCAs?

THANK YOU

Appendix 6: Payment Receipt for Research Permit

 **KCB**

Date: 05/06/2014

C R E D I T A D V I C E
C A S H D E P O S I T

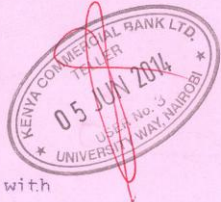
KCB UNIVERSITY WAY
Account AT KCB KIPANDE HOUSE

ACCOUNT DETAILS
A/C NO: 1104162547
A/C REF: 005241970364
NAT COMM FOR SCI ,TECH AND INNOV
Current Account-Corp Inst. Bankin


We have credited your above account with

Kenya Shillings ONE THOUSAND ONLY

1,000.00 KES
=====



CASH PAID IN BY: ALFRED E ODHIAMBO

Signature: 

2010)

Appendix 7: Research Permit From NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No.

Date:

19th June, 2014

NACOSTI/P/14/3458/2270

Alfred Fredrick Odhiambo
Moi University
P.O.Box 3900-30100
ELDORET.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Provision of Information to members of the County Assembly in Siaya, Kenya,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Siaya County** for a period ending **31st December, 2014.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Siaya County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

Said Hussein
SAID HUSSEIN
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
The County Director of Education
Siaya County.

Appendix 8: Letter from Moi University to NACOSTI



MOI UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES

Tel. 053-43720, 43620, 43231(Dean)
 Fax No. 053-4304, 43360
 Telex No. MOIVERSITY 35047
 Email: deanis@mu.ac.ke

P.O. Box 63056-00200
 NAIROBI
 Kenya

Our Ref: MU/NRB/IS/SA/14

23rd May, 2014

The Secretary
 National Council for Science Technology and Innovation
 P.O. Box 30623-00100,
 Nairobi

Dear Sir/Madam,

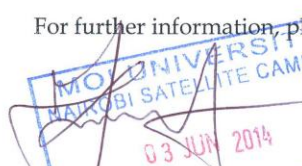
RE: ALFRED ODHIAMBO -REG. NO. IS/MPHIL/07/012

The above named person is a bona fide student of Moi University, Nairobi Campus, and School of Information Sciences Pursuing Master of Philosophy in Library and Information Studies.

Alfred has successfully defended his Thesis proposal entitled: "Provision of Information to Members of County Assembly in Siaya Kenya."

Any assistance accorded him will be highly appreciated.

For further information, please contact the undersigned.


James Kimutai
 School of Information Sciences
 Nairobi Programme Coordinator

MOI UNIVERSITY
 NAIROBI SATELLITE CAMPUS
 03 JUN 2014
 SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES
 P.O. BOX 63056 - 00200
 NAIROBI

