Governance Reforms and Rural Electrification in Kenya

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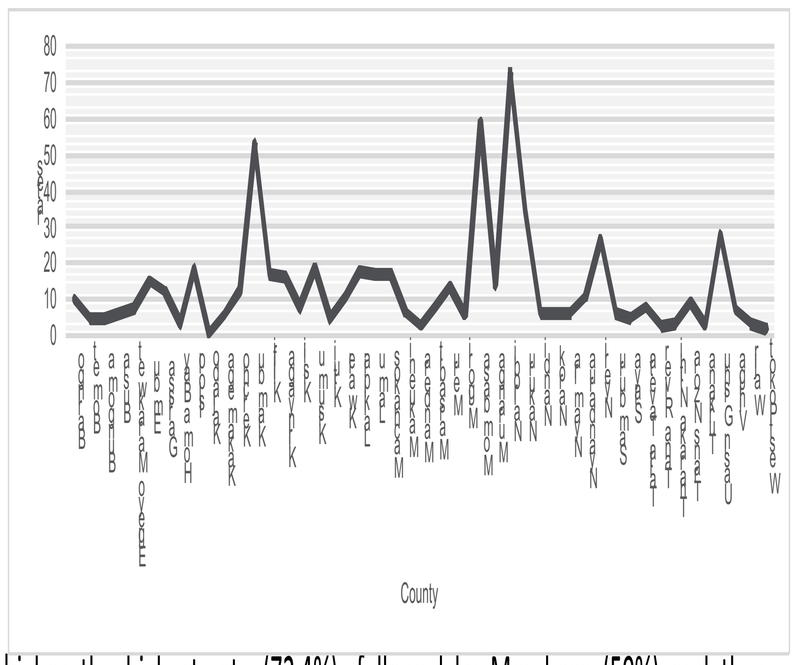
Introduction

Rural electrification in Kenya dates back in 1973. However, inspite of the government investing heavily in reforming the energy sector, governance issues have been identified as some of the factors holding back rural electrification. These includes accountability, citizen participation and decentralization of service provision institutions (Lee et al., 2016).

Through Sessional paper No.1 of 1986, the government undertook to change the law to facilitate greater citizen participation in decision making, decentralization of service provision and created institutions to guarantee greater transparency and accountability in the energy sector. This was aimed at ensuring efficient, reliable, affordable, and accessible electricity in the rural areas.

Electrifications rates (County)



Nairobi has the highest rate (72.4%), followed by Mombasa (59%) and then Kiambu at 53% while counties with the lowest electrification rates are Kajiado (0.5%), West Pokot (2%) and Turkana at 2.4%. Kakamega, Uasin Gishu and Nyandarua have electrification rates of 35.8%, 27.9%, 36.1% respectively. Nationally, reforms in the electricity sub-sector have seen gradual improvement in rural electrification rates. For instances, the rates have increased from 1.7% in 1993, to 2.9% in 2001, and later to 48.39% in 2018 (KNBS, 2019). However, this is still below that national average of 75% and urban electrification rate of 77.6%. Faster growth of urban areas, massive industrialization, and relatively high incomes of the residents, can partly explains high electrification rates in urban areas. Nevertheless, there is limited empirical evidence on the effect of governance reforms on rural access to electricity.

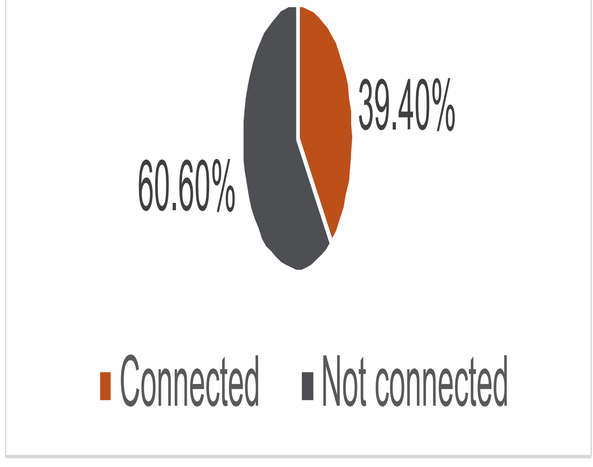
Objectives

The study sought to investigate the effect of governance reforms in electricity sub-sector on rural electricity access in Kenya. Specifically, the study investigates how stakeholder participation, accountability and decentralisation affects access on electricity in rural Kenya, and provide possible policy recommendations based on the findings.

Methodology

- The study was conducted in Kakamega, Uasin Gishu and Nyandarua counties between June and August, 2019.
- Data was collected from randomly selected 360 households with aid of household questionnaires and key informant interviews with experts from electricity institutions, NGO's and consumer organizations.
- Logistic regression model was adopted.
- The study modelled stakeholder participation, accountability and decentralisation.

Findings



Regression Results

Access to electricity	Beta	Sig.
Citizen Participation	-.143	.206
Accountability	.346	.003
Decentralization	.249	.026
Constant	-0.463	0.000
Log likelihood	463.334	
Cox & Snell R Square	.043	
Nagelkerke R Square	.059	
Hosmer-Lemeshow Test (Chi -square)	7.067	.529

Conclusions

- Governance reforms (accountability and decentralization) have a positive and statistically significant effect on rural electrification.
- Stakeholder participation is not statistically significant.

Policy implications

- Kenyan government to enhance decentralization and accountability reforms in the electricity sub-sector..
- There is need to encourage stakeholder participation(specifically, beneficiaries, civil society) in the sector.

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