

Policy Implementation Framework and Partnership for the Management of Riparian Zones: A Case of River King'wal, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Riparian zone management in developing countries is a challenging endeavour in balancing community needs with state intentions. Most of the zones tend to exist in characteristic needy contexts that drive households into encroachment and overexploitation of existing natural resources. This contradicts the policy intentions of the state for their conservation. The River King'wal riparian zone experiences anthropogenic pressures that contradict the management capacities of the state, notwithstanding the existing policy framework. This study sought to assess the partnership orientations between both actors informed by the existing policy framework for the management of the River King'wal riparian zone in Nandi County, Kenya. It was anchored in the theory of partnership and adopted a qualitative research design using descriptive research methods. The target population was 664 respondents, comprising government departments and households living along the King'wal Riparian Zone in Nandi County. The sample size was 209 respondents, comprising 195, representing 30% of the population living along the riparian zone, who were selected using simple random sampling techniques, and another 14 respondents who were purposefully selected. Qualitative data which were collected using interviews, questionnaires and focus groups discussion were analyzed and presented thematically. The findings showed that the policy framework remains ineffective in building partnerships between the state and the adjacent community. Community engagement in riparian zone management is cosmetic and non-supportive of the intentions of the state in restricting encroachment and overexploitation of the resources in the protected zone. The study recommends the deliberate capacitation of the local community to encourage it to participate in the conservation of the riparian zone.

Keywords: Community, Partnership, Riparian, Policy, State

I. INTRODUCTION

The management of riparian zones is a global requirement for sustainable resource use. Riparian zones tend to attract varied management approaches, even within states, due to the diverse anthropogenic pressures that are externally exerted. They are subjected to demand-pull factors that have largely led to unsustainable practices targeting riparian resources. Under normal circumstances, the management of riparian resources is enabled by a policy framework whose implementation draws synergies from stakeholders in a formal structural arrangement (National Academy of Sciences, 2002; Smith & Pritchard, 1992). The magnitude of role synchronization nevertheless varies due to the inherent asymmetries in power relations among the stakeholders. Riparian zone management in developed nations, such as the USA, Germany, Canada, and Great Britain, tends to serve aesthetic interests and motivate synergy between state agencies and local community structures. The ensuing partnership has enabled the sustainable use of riparian resources for mutual benefit (Hill Country Alliance, 2024, Kusler 2016). In contrast, in a number of developing countries, riparian zones are grey areas comprising overlaps of conservation interests and mundane livelihood pursuits. This has led to the uncontrolled exploitation of riparian resources in many African countries, such as Tanzania, Uganda, and South Sudan, where rivers serve as livelihood sources (Natta et al., 2003; Habel & Ulrich, 2021). In Kenya, a diversity of policies and regulations exist with a focus primarily on riparian reserve conservation, which is pursued in disregard of the motivations of the motivations of the local community. There is an apparent lack of synergy between the state and local community structures, which results in the hegemonic behaviour of the state against community interests (Matunda, 2015, Karangi, 2017).

Research on riparian zones is, however, dominated by the natural science orientation that has rationalized the biodiversity conservation themes (Habel & Ulrich, 2021; Natta et al., 2003; Holmes et al., 2008). The emphasis has been on the need to reverse species extinction and thus the tendency to emphasize 'hard fences' approaches to riparian zone management (Smith & Pritchard, 1992). The incorporation of local communities in the studies generally exposes

them through themes such as exploitation, encroachment, and poaching (Arizpe et al., 2008). Such criminalization of riparian zone-community interactions has not augured well for the management of the riparian zones (National Land Commission, 2018, Zainudin et al. 2013). This study addresses the scantily interrogated subject of formal or informal partnerships in riparian zone management. This entails the consideration of erecting ‘soft fences’ that encourage mutual benefit between the state and the local communities. Such an approach broaches the establishment of inclusive structures around riparian zones. The structures ought to cure the dominant tendency of state agencies in riparian zone management. As such, they would integrate local community leadership and organizations that act as cultural gatekeepers for resource conservation. The River King’wal riparian zone management is thus located in the foregoing context.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The River King’wal riparian zone in Nandi County experiences acute degradation and encroachment by the adjoining communities due to non-adherence to the existing policy framework. Consequently, parcels of land along the riparian zone have been privatized leading to riparian resource destruction and extinction through intensified brick making, cultivation, settlement, charcoal burning and bush clearance (Raburu et al., 2020). There is consequently an apparent disconnect between the policy intentions of the state and community motivations which, inter alia, Raburu et al. (2020) attribute to “lack of adequate and appropriate knowledge about the functions and values of wetlands” and “lack of national wetland policy and weak legal and institutional frameworks” (p.11). This study, therefore, interrogated the effectiveness of the state-community partnership in implementing the existing policy framework underpinning riparian zone management along River King’wal in Nandi County.

1.2 Research Objective

To examine the effectiveness of the partnership in implementing the policy framework for the management of river King’wal riparian zone in Nandi County

II LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This paper is underpinned by two theories that characterize the structural and institutional relationships between actors in pursuit of common goals. In this case, the actors comprised the state and the riparian community in pursuit of riparian zone conservation. The theories underscore the importance of mutual actor engagement and interest synchronization in common pursuits that are regulated by public policy regimes.

2.1.1 Theory Partnership

Partnerships entail “mobilization of a coalition of interests drawn from one sector in order to prepare and oversee an agreed strategy for a defined meaningful objective” (Bailey, 1994). It is more prominent in private-public partnership domains where it involves co-operation, that is, “to work or act together “by people or organizations in the public or private sector for mutual benefit (Holland, 1984). Partnerships are crucial in policy formulation and implementation focused on local development initiatives and requires the establishment of legally constituted partnership structures that allow for dispersal of authority and delegation of responsibility to guarantee the protection of public interest. They also facilitate access to a diverse resource pool from partners that helps in the realization of mutual benefits (Hatton & Schroeder, 2011).

The practice of partnership can be traced back to the mercantile era of Francesco di Marco Datini who is credited for having established the first business partnership in 1383 in Italy. His commercial approach has influenced its business-orientation and legalistic conceptualization (Datini, 1977). The practice is built on the notion that the combined power of the partners exceeds the sum of the value the partners could generate independently. Currently, partnerships are viewed in more interdisciplinary contexts and are applicable broadly. According to McQuaid (2009), the concept of partnership has emerged as a canon of public policy since the 1980s. Accordingly, the OECD (1980:18) considers partnerships as “systems of formalized co-operation, grounded in legally binding arrangements or informal understandings, co-operative working relationships, and mutually adopted plans among a number of institutions. They involve agreements on policy and programme objectives and the sharing of responsibility, resources, risks and benefits over a specified period of time.”

In the conceptualization of organizational partnerships and interagency cooperation, McQuaid (2009:5-15) isolates key partnership tenets including, primarily (1) flexible and responsive policy solutions (2) facilitating innovation and evaluation (3) sharing knowledge, expertise and resources (4) pooling of resources and synergy (5) developing a coherent service (6) improving efficiency and accountability and (7) capacity building. These attributes

are prominent, notwithstanding the attendant (1) Conflict over goals and objectives (2) resources costs (3) accountability (4) impacts upon other services (5) organizational difficulties (6) capacity building difficulties and gaps (7) differences in philosophy among partners (8) power relations and (9) community participation capacity.

The partnership theory enables the analysis of the partnership intentions and outcomes of the disparate legal/policy framework that regulates the management of riparian zones in Kenya and in particular along the King'wal River. The envisaged working relations and cooperation between the state and the diversity embedded in the 'local community' are not only discernible in the outcomes but also in the processes that synchronize their diverse goals and objectives. The problem in the King'wal riparian zone can thus be aptly addressed by delineating the extent to which inter-actor cooperation can be cultivated within the confines of the existing public policy framework.

2.2 Empirical Review

Riparian zones are sensitive zones that provide buffer services between a water body and its hinterland. Their management is generally embedded in the existing policies of conservation within the larger context of sustainable development. In *The Physical and Land Use Planning (Development Permission and Control) (General) Regulations, 2021*, the Republic of Kenya (2021) considers a riparian zone as a reserve or "ecological buffer of earth surface not being the bed of a stream, river, ocean, dam, natural or artificial lake, swamp or riverine wetlands measured horizontally from the highest water mark and may include part of any land parcel situated at the distance from the bank within the measurements specified in regulation 14, that is protected under the Act or its use regulated under any other written law (pg. 1861). Similar policies stipulate the mode and process of management that emphasizes conservation practices within local community contexts. This implies the nominal recognition of actors and stakeholders with disparate interests that ought to be synchronized for mutual benefit. Nevertheless, local community interests scarcely feature in the determination and use of riparian zones.

The available literature indicates some variation in the approaches to the management and utilization of riparian zones (Gonzalez et al., 2017, Iakovoglou et al., 2013). Whereas most industrialized countries perceive and use their riparian zones for leisure, sport and recreation purposes, developing countries tend to expose them to the dictates of daily livelihood pursuits including expropriation (Carter, 2010; Orr & Colby, 2004; Tadesse et al., 2013). In such circumstances, the quality and character of community engagement and partnership also tend to vary with evidence of partnership and collaboration in policy implementation in industrialized countries and, in contrast, dominance of state presence and action in policy implementation in developing countries (Doe & Khan, 2004; Gonzalez et al. 2017, Jansson et al., 2000). This is generally discernible in the European Union countries, Canada and the USA, on one hand, and Nigeria, Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana, on the other. On one part, industrialized countries encourage the engagement of community structures and interest that enable resource commitments to facilitate riparian conservation. On the other, developing countries tend to suffer from ambivalence, indecision and resource constraints thus relegating local communities in the policy making process. To a large extent, riparian zones are exposed to uncontrolled anthropogenic pressures that make sustainable development cumbersome to attain. Lack of synergy in policy making thus remains a missing link in riparian zone management.

The management of riparian zones in Kenya is nevertheless anchored in diverse policy instruments including the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, Land Act (Republic of Kenya, 2012), Water Resource Management Rules (Republic of Kenya, 2006) and Environmental Management and Coordination Act (Republic of Kenya, 2015), Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act (Republic of Kenya, 2016), among others. These instruments vest the responsibilities over riparian zones in both the National and the County governments. Resultantly, a Department of Lands, Environment and Natural Resources exists at the two levels of government to implement the disparate policies and regulations. In particular, the counties are, nevertheless, mandated to develop land use plans, including building and zoning plans, which are regulatory instruments for guiding development control (Republic of Kenya, 2021). However, laxity by county governments in developing and approving the land use plans curtails enforcement of development control measures and as a result encourages encroachment and destruction of fragile riparian ecosystems (Karangi, 2017, Barasa, 2004).

Furthermore, there are apparent inconsistencies in the objectives of the State policies on the management of the riparian zones. For instance, the Environmental Management and Coordination Regulations regulate activities which can be undertaken along the wetlands, river banks, lake shores, sea shore and any other riparian areas (Republic of Kenya, 2019). The targeted activities may include brick making, sport fishing, cultivation, commercial exploitation and construction of roads and railways. On the contrary, the Water Act (Republic of Kenya, 2002) forbids tillage or cultivation, clearing of indigenous trees or vegetation, disposal of any form of waste, excavation of soil or development of quarries and planting of exotic species on riparian lands. It is important to note that these two legislations give conflicting direction on the allowable land uses within a riparian land, thus occasioning the tangible challenges to the management of the resources in a riparian zone. The two pieces of legislations do not envisage a

possibility of having a common management strategy that can harmonize performance of the activities which are envisaged in them. Such conflicting policies have contributed to the challenges that are experienced in the management of River King'wal Riparian Zone.

It is instructive to note that the existing policy framework for the management of the River King'wal Riparian Zone is anchored on the 2010 Constitution of Kenya and the statutes envisage the involvement of local communities in policy making including being engaged in their implementation in managing riparian zones. However, there is apparent disconnect in the involvement of the local community that live along the River King'wal riparian Zone because the state's prominence in decision making displaces the active engagement of local communities.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out along the river King'wal riparian zone in Nandi County, Kenya, which experiences a high risk of degradation. The zone runs across two Constituencies; Chesumei and Emkwen and covers approximately 15km². A qualitative research design using descriptive survey methods was used in this study with a target population of 664 respondents from the people living along the riparian zone. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 209 respondents comprising the members of the local community and government agencies. Questionnaires with questions framed to generate specific and clear answers, were pre-tested in a pilot study. The data were then collected using questionnaires, interviews, informants and focus groups discussions and analyzed through content analysis using descriptive statistics; frequencies, percentages mean, and standard deviation.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Establishment of Riparian Management Committees

The diverse policy framework for the management of river King'wal Riparian Zone in Nandi County enabled the formation of a management committee whose membership included diverse members of the local community and the local administration. Findings indicated that partnerships are gauged by the level of participation of the members of the local community either in the committee or in conservation activities. This, however, was influenced by socio-economic factors which included the level of respondent's income, source of income and having undertaken training on issues related to community development. Respondents suggested that improving the management of riparian zone is a long-term task requiring new investment in effort and materials and community engagement. One respondent said:

"There are no clear laws on the governance of riparian zones. If the laws are there, then we cannot access them since some individuals have decided to encroach into the area. We do not understand what the work of the county Government is, since is the riparian zones are reserves of the government then the county officials should be in the fore front in protecting the area" (K3, Male, Aged 35Years).

Another respondent pointed out that;

"If indeed the riparian zones are government land, which need to be protected, then, we need serious law enforcers who do not favor particular individuals. Why should particular community be given access to the government land? This kind of favoritism creates a bad picture that some individuals have rights over others. For me, it is good to protect our riparian zones from invaders" (K4, Male, Aged 35 Years).

The establishments of riparian management committees contradict the findings of Raburu et al. (2020) who found a lackluster attitude towards the management of the riparian zone due to a general lack of awareness of the inherent value of the wetland.

4.2 Responsibility for Management of Riparian Zones

The study sought to determine who should be responsible for management matters as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Responsibility for Riparian Zone Management

Who should be responsible for management?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
County government	67	38.14
Church leaders	44	25.08
National government Administrators	34	19.52
Local member of County Assembly	1	1.02
Individual farmer	25	14.21
Others	5	2.03
Total	176	100.00



A majority (38.14%) of respondents were of the opinion that County government should be responsible for the management of riparian zones while 19.52% of the respondents said it should be the National government Administrators. However, 14.21% of the respondents indicated that individual farmers within the local community should be responsible for management of the riparian zone while 25.08% of the respondents said church leaders should be responsible and the respondents who said other should be responsible were 2.03%. Only 1.02 of the respondents said the local member of County assembly should be responsible for the management of the riparian zone. One of the key informants indicated that:

“Management of river King’wal riparian zone should be left to both the County and National governments and the local community alone. Bringing in other actors can only complicate matters. This is because some of them when called to assist, they begin to introduce other demands which in many cases can clash with expectations of the local people cause disharmony and jeopardize the management” (K19, Male, Aged 45 Years).

A member in a focus group discussion said that:

“Management of river King’wal riparian zone is not effective because the local community is concerned the least. I am of the opinion that the management should be left to the local community. Then the government can train and build their capacity to manage. By doing so, the local community can easily own conservation of the riparian zone and in turn they can provide a more effective management” (K5, Male, Aged 44 Years).

The findings in Table 1 are corroborated by proceedings of a national workshop for extension officers organized by Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM, 2012) which pointed out that actors perceived conservation of the environment as a preserve of government. The participants noted that, some actors believe environmental conservation is a government mandate citing 1930’s-60’s when the colonialists forced Africans to engage in public works such as terracing.

A study by Karangi (2017) reiterated the provisions of the Land Act 2012 which declared riparian zones as “government owned and thus public properties” and that they cannot be allocated for private use for ecological reasons (p.8). However, the inherent overlaps in their use and for pragmatic purposes, local community interests have emerged as legitimate reasons for inclusive management of the riparian zones. Their exclusions thus portend adverse impacts on the zones. This has further been recognized by the Green Belt Movement (2016) which avers that through the destruction of riparian zones “not only do pollutants not get filtered out, the amount of water that moves into these systems is not regulated and this can have a great impact on natural events, such as flooding which we always experience in most parts of the country during the rainy season. In some cases, the rivers and streams that once flowed in these riparian zones will also dry up leading to water shortages in households living downstream. Their conservation is therefore an inclusive responsibility for mutual benefit.

However, the responses from one of the key informers and the member of a focus group cited a different perspective. The key respondent mentioned the National and the County governments and the local community as the only entities that should be responsible for the management of riparian zones. Response from the member of a focus group indicated clearer roles of each of the entities. He suggests that while the local community should take up the role of actual management, the National and the County governments should carry out the role of building them in terms of capacity to enable effectiveness for conservation. This is also in tandem with the characterization of partnership by Mardatillah et al. (2018) in which they highlighted the essence of competitive advantage and by Willetts et al. (2020) on partnership efficiency and accountability.

4.3 Management Ability of the Local community

The study further sought to understand whether the community alone was able to manage the riparian zones.

Table 2

Ability to Manage Riparian Zone

Ability of the Community in managing alone	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	35	19.7
No	141	80.3
Total	176	100.00

Most of the household heads said that they felt that the community alone could not deal with community partnership methods. As indicated in Table 2, a majority (80.3%) of respondents said that they did not think the community alone could deal with community partnership. The respondents felt that the community could not implement management alone due to poverty prevalent in the area; they also said that the community lacked the

capacity and collective responsibility to implement management. According to Rono and Aboud (2003) economic reasons, internal policies and structural rigidities may partly account for the poor performance of local projects and consequently of rural development. They also stated that the community lacked the technical capacity and the money necessary for implementing community partnership. However, the adoption of partnership tenets as advocated by McQuaid (2009) would enable resource pooling that enhances the empowerment of local communities.

4.4 Involvement in the Management of River King'wal Riparian Zone

In order to establish those involved in the management of river King'wal riparian zone, the study sought to find out who was concerned about the management of the riparian zone. The findings are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3

Concern for the Riparian Zone

Who should be concerned the most about Management of the riparian zone?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government	69	39.2
Project officers	19	10.8
Local community	53	30.1
Non state actors	35	19.9
Total	176	100.00

As shown in Table 3, a majority of households, 39.2% stated that the government should be concerned the most about the management of the riparian zone, while 19.9% of the households mentioned the non-state actors. 30.1% of the respondents mentioned the local community as the ones that should be concerned the most. A further 10.8% of respondents said that projects officers are the ones who should be the most concerned about the management of the riparian zone.

The finding show that the local community along with other entities such as the government, project officers, as well as other non-State actors should be concerned about the management of river King'wal riparian zone in order to conserve it.

This was confirmed by a member of a focus group who said;

“Conservation of environment must be a priority for all of us. King'wal is like a mother to us, we live here and we eat from the riparian we should all protect it. I have always said that we must be part of the management” (K7, Male, Aged 22 Years)

This finding contradicts the nominal understanding of cooperative relations among actors for sustainable development. In particular, it contradicts the assertions by Rono and Aboud (2003) on the viability of local community participation in rural development. This is rationalized by historical dynamics inherent in patron-client relations that have characterized a number of community development initiatives in developing countries.

4.5 Involvement of the Local Community

The study sought to find out the involvement of the local community in the management of river King'wal riparian zone.

Table 4

Existence of Riparian Management Committee

Gender of Respondents	Frequency			Percentage (%)		
	Yes	No	Not Aware	Yes	No	Not Aware
Male	82	14	8	79	13	8
Female	54	12	6	75	17	8
Total	136	26	14			

The Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents who knew of the existence of the management committee for river King'wal riparian zone were males at 79% and females at 75%, while majority of those who disputed the existence were females at 17% to males at 13%. However, a minority of the respondents were not aware of the existence of the management committee for river King'wal riparian zone at 8% for both males and females

One of the key informants who disputed the existence of management committee indicated that:

“It is only the government agencies and the local administration that I have been hearing the talk about the management of the zone” (K8, Male, Aged 22 Years)

Another one from group discussion said;

“Who cares whether there is any management committee? I have never even heard of a single meeting held to discuss about our riparian zone” (K11, Female, Aged 35 Years).

Findings indicated that although a management committee for River King’wal riparian zone existed, some members of the local community felt that they were not involved in the management. This finding concurs with the arguments by Waweru (2015) on the factors that motivate community driven development. Key among these is the apparent ambivalence and disinterest in initiatives that connote exclusion and displacement of conventional individual practices. This generates the tendency to resist change.

4.6 Community’s Roles in State Community Partnership

To determine whether the community has roles to play in State-Community partnership in the management of river King’wal riparian zone, the study first sought to find out reason for participation in State-Community Partnership.

Table 5

Reasons for Partnership

Reason	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To get access to information	68	38.92
To receive payments	16	8.65
To receive Aid from the government	34	19.46
To get more farm income	56	31.89
Others	2	1.08
Total	176	100

The study showed that the local community tended to partner with state agencies for a variety of reasons. The findings showed that 68(38.92%) of the respondents engaged with state agencies in order to access information, followed by 56(31.89%) of respondents who said they wanted to get more farm income, while 34(19.46%) of the respondents said they wanted to receive aid from government. Further, 16(8.65%) of the respondents said they engaged with the state in order for them to receive payments. Finally, 2(1.08%) of the respondents indicated they had other reasons for participation which were less significant. These findings establish the rationale for engaging the state to be linked more to individual gain than the larger community goal of conserving the riparian zone. These ranged from improvement of farm income, getting access to information, receiving aid from government to receiving some payments. Although some of respondents related their participation in state-community partnership with improvement of farm income, almost a third of the respondents indicated they were interested in getting aid or payments from the State as incentives. This was corroborated in Focus Group Discussion and is captured in the words of a female participant who remarked;

“I have many home chores to do. I cannot sit on these committees the whole day and go home empty handed. My children will have nothing to eat. We need to attend committees where we can get something for our families” (K36, Female, Aged 34 Years).

These results demonstrate that still a large number of actors participate in riparian management with expectations of material incentives. Though this might be true in the study area, it contradicts the practices observed in Water Resource User Associations in the NaroMoru and Kapingazi where membership was not based on financial benefits thus strengthening the institutions in the protection of the riparian areas in the Mount Kenya region (Fisher, 2014). Nonetheless, Focus Group Discussions in the study area confirmed that most people engaged in many livelihood activities and did not give much priority to activities of community partnership initiatives since they did not offer financial benefits that would sort out their immediate needs. Material incentives are often perceived as tangible rewards used to induce individuals to participate in the conservation of riparian zones.

Table 6

Community Organizations in Riparian Manangement

Categories of organizations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agro-forestry	108	61.62
CBO	24	13.13
NGO	13	7.57
Others	31	17.68
Total	176	100



Regarding awareness about organizations which were involved in the management of riparian zone in the study area, the analysis in Table 6 above revealed that majority of the respondents, 61.62% were aware of Vi-Agro forestry while 13.13% were aware of CBO. A further 7.57% knew about NGO, Both CBO and NGO are local non-government agencies while Vi Agro-forestry is an international development organization.

A member of the King’wal Water Resource Users Association (KWRUA) which is formed by the local community indicated that;

“Although we have formed a CBO, we are not able to provide the necessary support which is needed for conservation of the riparian zone. Most of the resources from non-governmental agencies come from other external organizations” (Male, Aged 41 Years).

This finding shows that international donor agencies tend to have more visibility than their government counterparts presumably owing to better incentives provided by international development agencies. This was confirmed further by a key informant from the Ministry of Agriculture that people tend to participate more in international donor activities due to tokens and other incentives offered to them by International Donor Agencies. Other organizations such as World Neighbors, VIRED the Red Cross, Adventist Relief services, NEMA and WKIEMP were also mentioned and collectively accounted for 17.68%.Whereas this is the trend in the study area, it diverts from the practice in Ghana where local communities receive ‘financial and technical support’ from the state to help in conserving buffer zones for sustainable development (Government of Ghana, 2013:15). The movement towards compensation for conservation is nevertheless a growing phenomenon similar to the Environmental Funds and Payments for Ecosystem Services adopted in Latin American and Caribbean states. Accordingly, the Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) is “a way to incentivize land users to properly manage and conserve their natural environment – thus ensuring the flow of ecosystem services. These schemes compensate those who provide ecosystem services through direct payments, selling credits for carbon, biodiversity or water on international or national markets, or through other similar mechanisms” (Herbert et al., 2010:5).

4.7 Community Participation in Decision Making

The study sought to find out if the community participated in decision making on the management activities. The findings are shown in the Table 7 below.

Table 7

Involvement of Local Community in Riparian Management

How do management Committee involve the community	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Community problem Analysis	13	7.39
Determining Intervention Priorities	27	15.10
Monitoring and evaluation	23	13.06
Providing feedback	55	31.82
Carrying out riparian conservation interventions	26	15.34
Others (specify)	32	18.03
Total	176	100

As presented in Table 7, the respondents indicated that their involvements in the management programs were varied. These included community problem analysis, determining intervention priorities, monitoring and evaluation, providing feedback and carrying out conservation interventions. The Table shows that 7.39% felt that they participated in the community problem analysis while 15.10% felt they participated in determining intervention priorities.

A further, 13.06% indicated they participated in monitoring and evaluation. 15.34% of respondents said they participated in carrying out the riparian conservation interventions, while the majority (31.82%) said they participated in providing feedback to the extension agents.

One of the key informants indicated that;

“No one wants to hear about our problems. The management committee is interested on the feedback from us to the detriment of other important aspects of managing the riparian zone” (Male Aged 36 Years).

One member of a focus group indicated that;

“I think the management committee should focus on involving us in every aspect of riparian conservation, rather than on few selected issues of concern” (Female, Aged 35 Years).

From the results, majority of respondents indicated they participate in carrying out project interventions and feed-backing to extension agents. Only a small percentage of respondents indicated they participated in problem analysis, monitoring and evaluation as well as determining intervention priorities. Participation in problem analysis,

determining intervention priorities and M & E are conceptualized as stronger forms of community participation. Carrying out project interventions and feed-backing to extension agents are conceptualized as weaker forms of participation. Mutale et al. (2017) agrees with this assertion in their study in community health projects in Zambia. They assert that engaging communities through community conversations as per the Freirian transformative communication approach enables critical appraisals of their status quo and definition of solutions to community problems.

Linking these results to the typology of participation discussed in literature review, it can be argued that perceptions of participation are more oriented towards carrying out the interventions with just a small percentage feeling that they are involved in problem analysis and be determining intervention priorities. Furthermore, focus group discussion indicated that a majority viewed their involvement in these interventions is still limited to the first four levels. They participated by attending meetings, providing labour or contributions of some equipment and few of them in decision making processes which can be interpreted as passive participation, information giving, consultation, or participation as contribution (Ani et al., 2018). Indeed, these forms of participation can also be described as types of 'weak participation' or even forms of 'non-participation' (Suhaimi, 2021).

4.8 Composition of the Management Committee

The study sought to find out the composition of the management committees of river King'wal riparian zone.

Table 8

Composition of Management Committee

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Local male adults	6	40
Local female adults	3	20
Local male youth	2	13
Local female youth	1	7
Professionals	3	20
Total	15	100

The Table 8 indicated that the member of the management committee constituted 3 persons from the professional category (National government administration, County government and Forestry & wildlife) this is 20% of the committee. Member from the local community constituted 6 male adults 40%, 3 female adults 20%, 2 male youth 13% and 1 female youth 7%.

One of the key informants indicated that;

“Composition of the management committee is male dominated. Most of us as ladies are considered as having less attachment to the riparian zone, which is not true, such perceptions are quite discriminatory in my view” (K17, Female, Aged 31 Years).

A member of a focus group discussion reported that;

“Although minority in the management committee is females, this is not discriminatory in nature. The constitution of Kenya requires not less than a third of either gender in the committee which is qualified in the management committee for our riparian zone” (K24 Male, Aged 38 Years).

Findings indicated that the management committee for river King'wal riparian zone constituted those from the relevant agencies from the County and National governments as well as members of the local community. This finding compares with the technical management committees that characterize riparian management in the USA which are more focused on issues of protection and restoration rather than the mundane daily needs of the local communities (National Academy of Sciences, 2002). Though such hybrid committees exist, they are a rarity due to the citizen-centered orientation of riparian management where zone planning takes a bottom-up approach (Environmental Protection Agency (2021). In Kenya's case, according to the National Environmental Management Authority (2011), the Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) is responsible for the identification and management of the riparian zone notwithstanding the technical mandate of the District Environmental Committees. It provides that “riparian areas should be identified by the WRUAs. Management of the riparian areas should be considered once they are identified - specify activities that can be allowed in such areas such as bee keeping and indigenous vegetation through WRUAs and District Environment Committees(DECs) who can come up with by-laws. The WRUAs shall incorporate best management practices that prevent pollution of rivers, streams, wetlands, near shore waters, lake setbacks, utilize erosion control devices; integrated pest management plans, and rehabilitate disturbed areas (p.6).

4.9 Frequency of meetings

The study sought to find out how often the management committees of river King'wal riparian zone meet.

Table 9

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings	Percentage (%)
Weekly	0
Monthly	0
Quarterly	100
Annually	0

From the Table 9, members of the management committee for the river King'wal riparian zone indicated that they conduct their meetings on quarterly basis to discuss on issues aimed at the conservation of the riparian zone.

One of the key informants indicated that;

"We have been seeing the committee having meetings, but nothing significant has ever come out of their meetings that have helped to mitigate on the destruction of the riparian zone. It appears their meetings are only a way of obtaining money from the government and other sources" (K36, Male, Aged 40 Years).

One of the members of the committee said that;

"Very few meetings are held because of inadequate finances for committee meetings" (K14, Male, Aged 30 Years).

From the findings it is clear that meetings are held on quarterly basis, this is so because of inadequate financing as indicated by one of the member of the management committee. However, some members of the local community think that the meetings are not very effective in conservation of the riparian zone. The existing literature does not indicate this phenomenon though important in addressing emerging conflict issues between protected areas and the local communities.

4.10 Challenges faced by Community in Participation in Management

Table 10

Challenges of Community Participation

What do you consider as the greatest challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack Of Incentives	34	19.32
Inadequate household needs	92	52.28
Lack of time	19	10.80
Poor communication	11	6.25
Lack of skills	8	4.54
Lack of transparency	8	4.54
Others	4	2.27
Total	176	100

The study established several challenges encountered by members of the community in participating in community partnership. Some of the challenges indicated, included inadequate household needs which was mentioned by majority of the respondents at 92 (52.28%), lack of incentives for members of the community to promote conservation of the riparian zone was mentioned by 34(19.32 %) of the respondents, 19 (10.80%) of the respondents mentioned lack of time, while 11 (6.25%) mentioned poor communication. Lack of transparency and lack of skills were at a tie as they were both mentioned by 8(4.54%) while 4 (2.27%) of the respondents mentioned other forms of challenges.

The Devolution and Public Participation in Kenya, Civic Education Handouts for Participants (2016) highlights other challenges that have affected the participation of the communities in most projects such as difficulties in accessing resources, high cost of participation, inadequate representation, structural barriers within government, restrictions on timelines and inadequate de-centralization of public consultations. These were corroborated by discussions during focus group discussion with community during the study. A female participant in a focus group discussion had this to say;

"I heard about the management from my neighbor who was planting some shrubs in his farm. When I inquired I was told that they were informed by the ministry of agriculture people at the 'baraza'. I am



just a woman and I don't attend these 'barazas'. I don't get any information about when these 'barazas' are held. Besides, I have a lot of house chores to do" (K6, Female, and Aged 38 Years).

Communication and access to information is important and essential for effective community participation. The sentiments expressed in the above narrative demonstrate lack of or poor communication of information in the community. It further insinuates that women particularly, do not have good access to information as these are passed in 'barazas' where most women do not attend. This observation is supported by a study by Koech (2020) in Nandi who observed that public meetings 'barazas' are considered a male activity. This means that females get information from their male counterparts who may not necessarily pass the correct messages. Additionally, the high level of poverty as observed from the low income levels also influenced participation in community partnership in the river King'wal riparian zone.

A key informant from the community observed that,

"We are preoccupied with finding something for the family to eat by end of the day, and do not find it prudent to 'sit' in meetings then you come out of them empty handed" (K6, Female, Aged 34 Years).

The discussants pointed out from focus group discussions that formal and informal employments such as passenger bicycles commonly known as 'bodaboda' and small scale retail trading that many people engaged in to earn some living left them little time to participate in management activities. An interview with a key informant from an international NGO working in River King'wal Nandi County also revealed that many projects officers were not specifically trained on participatory forms;

"For many of us when you talk of community participation, we can only go as far as we understand what participation means to us. Many of us have not been trained on participatory forms. I cannot afford to go for the trainings on my own as they are too expensive" (K4 Male, Aged 35 Years).

Further, it was clear from interview with key informants from Ministry of Agriculture, local and international NGOs in the area that they were lacking structures in their organizations to foster effective community participation especially in decision making. Where such structures existed for instance, management committees or stakeholder forums, some key issues such as the type interventions or technologies to be adopted had already been pre-determined by the projects leaving only the question of where the intervention will be carried out or how the programmes will be 'rolled out'. This finding is corroborated by Kiraka et al. (2005) in a study which found that many development agencies tend to push their agenda for stakeholders to consume.

A key informant from a development agency remarked;

"We need to participate in managing our organizations. We need to be more transparent in the affairs by identifying and involving beneficiaries in all aspects in of activities, including new ideas and initiatives and sharing budgets" (KI, Male Aged 34Years).

From the above narrative it can be deduced that some NGOs have limitations as vehicles of participatory development. This is supported by a report by Rietberg-MacCracken (1996) which acknowledged that some NGOs have limited financial, technical and management and capacity for participatory development. Given such constraints some NGOs may circumvent participatory processes since such processes require reasonable time and financial resources.

4.11 Corruption and Management of River King'wal Riparian Zone

The study sought to find out if corruption is affecting the management of river King'wal riparian zone and the perceived forms of corruption. The findings indicate that there is practice of corruption which is negatively affecting the conservation of the riparian zone. 162 (92%) of the respondents said there is rampant corruption in the way the riparian zone is managed while only 14(8%) indicated a different view. The study sought to find out if there were corrupt practices and the perceived form of corruption which were affecting the management of river King'wal riparian zone.

Table 11

Perception of Corruption in Riparian Management

Respondents	Percentage (%)		
Is there corruption?	Yes	162	92
	No	14	8
	Total	176	100

Majority of the respondents at 92% indicated the existence of corruption affecting the management of river King'wal riparian zone. A small number of respondents at only 8% said there was no corruption.

A member of a focus group discussion said,

“Corruption here is the order of the day, not every member of our community has equal opportunity to utilize the riparian zone” (FGD 17).

Table 12

Perceived Forms of Corruption

Form of Corruption	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Financial	88	50
Nepotism	21	12
Favoritism	51	29
Others	16	9
Total	176	100

Findings indicated that corruption practices which are perceived to be rampant in the management of the river King’wal riparian zone included, financial, nepotism, favoritism and other forms of corruption. The table show that corruption in financial matters is the leading form with the majority 88(50%) of the respondents mentioning. This was followed by favoritism which was mentioned by 51(29%) of the respondents, nepotism was mentioned by 21(12%) of the respondents while 16(9%) of the respondents indicated other forms of corrupt practices. However the findings do not agree with the findings of a study carried out in Tanzania by van Koppen et al. (2004), which found majority of actors did not perceive corruption to be a problem in the largely corruption prone rural water supply settings, and the findings of Okumu (2018) whose study in Nyakach district on the adoption of community partnership technologies observes thus, few people identify corruption as a major problem and so rendered the adoption of community partnership technologies very low. Theoretically, the actors who perceive corruption as a problem having negative impacts on productivity and expect positive returns from conservation are likely to decide in favour of adopting available conservation technologies (Berhanu & Swinton 2003, Boyd & Slaymaker 2000). Conversely when actors do not acknowledge corruption as a problem, they cannot expect benefits from participating in the conservation process. Households are more likely to participate in management when they recognize corruption as a problem. Corruption is perceived as a problem which hinders participation in community partnership in the management of river King’wal riparian zone.

Perceiving corruption as a problem by actors is an important determinant of conservation practice. According to Nkonya et al. (2018) farmer’s awareness of land degradation as a problem and management techniques as a solution is key in influencing household’s decision to participate and invest in community partnership. Moreover, undertaking community partnership involve costs thus actors are unlikely to invest in the interventions if they do not believe it is a problem or if they are not certain that it will lead to some beneficial change.

One respondent said that;

“Although we are faced with challenges of land degradation, we need to protect the riparian zones. But since we have managers who are corrupt and for them corruption is not a big problem, the riparian zones are no longer protected and managed well. We need to seek other intervention measures to help the community in safeguarding the zones” (K4 Male, Aged 35 Years).

Viewed from an investment perspective, Wagayehu and Drake (2003) argue that actors will not be interested to invest in public awareness and bear the risk associated with it if they do not perceive significant threat posed on productivity due to soil erosion. Corruption affects the ability of land to support growth of crops. It reduces the inherent productivity of land, both through loss of nutrients and degradation of physical structure. This in turn may result in a rise in the cost of agricultural production or conservation. Understanding actors’ perception of corruption and its impacts is thus an important aspect in promoting Community Partnership Technologies. Additionally, corruption is an insidious and slow process therefore actors need to perceive its severity and associate yield loss before they can consider participating in resource mobilization community partnership practices. However, while conceding that correct perception of corruption as a problem is necessary, Tesfaye and Debebe (2013) observe that it is not sufficient condition for actors to willingly participate in public awareness. A respondent noted that;

“If we ensure there is no corruption, as a community we eliminate the invaders of this land. Corruption does not yield any good fruits to us a community but instead it is bringing divisions amongst us. We are tired by these people who want to benefit a section of the community. For instance am not ready to take part in safeguarding the zones” (K22, Male, Aged 35 years).

Participation of the Community in the management of river King’wal riparian zone was majorly perceived as weak forms of participation. This was so because the government made decisions about the management of the riparian zone in exclusion of other actors. Even though the community felt that they had a role to play in the

management and conservation of the riparian zone the study indicated that they were left out by the State majorly on decision making.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

State-community partnership in implementing the policy framework for the management of river King'wal riparian zone was not effective, it was perceived as weak. This phenomenon largely empowers state agencies to determine the direction of riparian zone management at the expense of local communities. Further, income levels, sources of income and training of beneficiaries in management had influence on participation of the local community in the management and conservation of river King'wal riparian zone.

5.2 Recommendations

The need to build capacity of members of the local community through training and provision of incentives is highly recommended as it could encourage them to participate in the implementation of the policy framework for the management of river King'wal riparian zone for mutual benefit. This was so because most of the households had low level of income, as a result they engaged themselves on forms of economic activities which were injurious to the riparian zone. They also had little attention to the conservation activities since they were busy with other chores for the livelihoods of their families.

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