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Role of government communication in achieving government projects: The case of the Big Four Agenda

Government communication has become increasingly important over the last couple of decades for several reasons (Canel & Sanders, 2012). One of these reasons is the need for transparency. In the era of increased government scrutiny and mistrust by citizens, government performance is evaluated based on its level of transparency (Bertot & Jaeger, 2010). Transparency allows the citizen to evaluate the performance of the government, and hold it accountable. Governing involves constant exchanges of information, ideas, and decisions between governors and the governed (Sanders & Canel, 2013). The ability to communicate effectively is a fundamental function of governance, yet many governments have not been able to achieve it (World Bank Briefs for Policymakers, 2010). Countries in the developing world have demonstrated relatively low capacities for deploying two-way communication.

In Kenya, government's strategic focus on the Big Four Agenda (2018 -2021) has not been effectively communicated. As demonstrated by a poll conducted by Infotrak (2018); who found out that only 47 percent of Kenyans were aware of the Big Four Agenda. Government launched various flagship projects, including Affordable housing; Universal Health Coverage; Food security; and improved manufacturing. Information about these projects has been relayed in order to create awareness, seek support and participation of the citizens, influence public opinion, provide a platform for dialogue, and communicate on the opportunities available. Communication has been done through various platforms, including traditional media, websites, the presidency, and government spokesperson (s). However, the government still struggles with the challenges of effective communication, the citizenry does not have the ability to participate in decision-making and evaluate government performances.

It is against this backdrop that this paper will critically analyze government communication on the Big Four Agenda; examine the communication strategy used in the Big Four Agenda, and assess the role of media in the big four agenda.

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