

Two Decades of the Application of the Open Performance Review and Appraisal System in Tanzanian Local Government Authorities: A Synopsis of Predicaments and the Way Forward

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Abstract

The Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS), was introduced by the Tanzania government to manage employees' performance and develop a performance management culture in the public sector (ministries, departments, agencies, and local government authorities). Local Government Authorities (LGAs) have been implementing this mandatory performance management tool since 2004. However, evidence suggests that the LGAs have not been able to create a genuine and effective OPRAS, despite the efforts taken to impose its implementation. In this regard, this study intended to provide an account of the predicaments experienced by the LGAs in OPRAS implementation and then recommend how LGAs can ensure effective implementation of the performance management system. A desktop review was employed complemented with interviews with 20 Human Resource and Administration Officers responsible for enforcing OPRAS implementation to inform the findings. The findings suggest that the LGAs have been trailing in the implementation of OPRAS due to numerous setbacks inter alia, employee skepticism of OPRAS, insufficient budget allocation, incompetence of staff in operating OPRAS, inadequate leadership commitment, and interference of political and contingent activities given the nature of decentralization of the LGAs. It is imperative to provide timely and adequate allocation of resources, improve leadership commitment, and ensure staff frequent staff capacity building for LGAs to implement a performance management system successfully.

Keywords

Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS), local government authorities, Tanzania

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Introduction

The introduction of Open Performance Review and Appraisal System (OPRAS) in Tanzania public service dates back to July 2004, when it was adopted through Establishment Circular No.2 of 2004 as an integral part of Performance Management System (PMS), with an intention of managing performance of public servants in Tanzania. OPRAS was introduced with envision to promote performance and enhance accountability of public servants. This prospect is built on the features of the tool itself which include openness and participatory in the performance management process, feedback and regular communication between employees and supervisors.

In order to achieve the above objective, the adoption and implementation of OPRAS was made compulsory, enforced through the Public Service Legislation (Section 22(1) of the Public Service Act No.8 of 2002; the Public Service (Amendment) Act, Number 9 of 2007, and Public Service Management and Employment Policy, pp.27-28).

Therefore, OPRAS has been implemented in the Tanzanian public service from July 2004, which is two decades now. The primary goal of implementing ORAS is to advance performance management practices that advance workers' performance in the direction of better public service delivery. OPRAS could have been successfully implemented, allowing evaluation of its impact on better public service delivery in Tanzanian LGAs. Experience, however, suggests that the adoption of OPRAS in Tanzania's public sector has not yet produced the expected results in LGAs. More importantly, evaluations of OPRAS implementation in Tanzania have revealed that there is a discrepancy between expected outcomes and actual OPRAS application during service delivery. This ineffectiveness in the operationalization of OPRAS has been repeatedly reported by the National Audit Office. For instance, in the financial year 2013/2014, the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) of Tanzania found no proof of the use of OPRAS tool in several institutions (CAG, 2015). In this regard, therefore, this paper seeks to answer the question why is the implementation of the OPRAS in the LGAs in Tanzania ineffective, thereby highlighting the challenges limiting its effective implementation.

Methodological Note

This paper is mainly informed by the desk research methodology. It entails review of written documents; National Audit reports from Controller and Auditor General publications, conference papers and research reports on the subject matter accessed through Google Scholar. The basis that secondary sources give for a researcher to build arguments that may lead to the solution of the subject under study makes them just as important as primary sources. By using secondary data, researchers can expand on previous findings, producing more insightful and superior outcomes (Moore, 2006). The reason this approach was chosen was that, in the twenty

years since OPRAS was first introduced in Tanzania, a number of studies have been carried out and data has been collected and compiled regarding the tool's application in public service. Therefore, the information and findings from the documents were important in describing the predicaments of OPRAS in local government authorities.

To complement the information obtained from those secondary sources, the study used consultations and interviews with 4 Heads of Human Resource and Administration (HHRAs) and 16 Human Resource Officers (HROs) from Mbinga District Council, Babati Town Council, Kondoa District Council, Nyasa District Council and Kongwa District Council. Therefore, the interviews involved 20 officers who comprised of 5 females (25%) and 15 males (75%) including all 4 HHRAs. This confirms the observation made by Yoon (2016) which revealed that in Tanzania there is a female underrepresentation in decision making bodies.

These interview respondents were sampled purposively as they are directly responsible in administering implementation of OPRAS. Therefore, this sampling approach was used strategically to sample participants who are relevant to the study objective (Bryman, 2008). The interviews were conducted in 2022 in the respondents' offices in which semi-structured interview questions were designed to encourage the respondents give their views and share their experience regarding implementation of OPRAS in their LGAs.

To start with, the paper conceptualizes OPRAS thereby providing its meaning, features and purpose. It also puts the discussion of OPRAS into perspective by examining the implementation process and key elements of OPRAS. It is on these elements that we set out to present an orderly account of the two decades of OPRAS implementation in Tanzanian LGAs, keeping in perspective a discussion of the predicaments that encounter OPRAS implementation, and the last part presents the way forward for LGAs to fully realise potentials of OPRAS.

Conceptualization of OPRAS

The main concept of this paper is OPRAS. Then, it is vital to shed light to this basic concept and exhibit the exclusive features that establish the relevance of OPRAS as a performance improvement tool in LGAs.

The Meaning of OPRAS

OPRAS is an open, formal, and systematic procedure designed to assist both employers and employees in planning, managing, evaluating and realizing performance improvement in the organization with the aim of achieving organizational goals (URT, 2011).

In line with the above definition, URT (2013) provides the main features of OPRAS to be characterized with the following: First, transparency, which enables both the employer and the employee to openly discuss and reach an understanding on the organizational and personal goals to be achieved throughout the year; Second, involvement, in which employees take part

in the process of setting goals, performance targets and criteria, as well as determining, assessing, and recording performance; Third, accountability, which entails that each employee signs an annual performance agreement and report on how they performed in relation to the goals they had set and the resources assigned to each activity; Fourth, ownership, which demonstrates connections between personal goals and the general company goals over time. This is intended to make the employee more aware of their own role and contribution, which will increase their dedication to accomplishing organizational objectives.

By fostering and supporting a high-performance culture with responsibility among public employees, OPRAS seeks to enhance the standard of public services in Tanzania. In order to accomplish this, it is planned to increase institutional performance by tying compensation to performance, aligning the institutional plan to individual responsibilities, creating a culture of feedback, exchange, and communication between supervisors and subordinates, and supporting the identification of the subordinate's strengths and areas for development.

OPRAS Implementation Process

The annual procedure that governs OPRAS entails Performance Agreements, which are agreements between supervisors and subordinates regarding: (1) what the subordinate will do, (2) what the subordinate's objectives are, (3) how the subordinate will be evaluated, and (4) the resources that will be made available;

The process concludes with the end-of-year appraisal, which evaluates the subordinate's performance, after the initial agreement has been reviewed and, if required, changed. By these actions, OPRAS is anticipated to develop a shared vision, understanding, and agreement regarding the outcomes to be attained, as well as the approach, deployment, assessment, and review of activities for continuous improvement in service delivery standards.

Key Elements of OPRAS

Setting of Annual Performance Targets

This is a crucial component of OPRAS done at the planning stage. The targets are used to evaluate the performance of every public employee by comparing accomplishments to predetermined performance targets as outlined in the Strategic Plan. Individual employees' annual performance goals are derived from overall direction and objectives of the institution, its departments, divisions, and units. The link between organizational goals and personal goals is finally established through this process.

Aspects of evaluation

Evaluations are OPRAS' second important component. There are altogether six aspects of evaluation in OPRAS as follows:

The first aspect is that OPRAS offers an opportunity to assess the whole level of accomplishment obtained by a certain employee over the year. The main focus in this aspect is how the employee utilizes resources in terms of quantity, quality, and effectiveness.

Second, the attributes of good performance which evaluate the traits and qualities of Public Service employees. The qualities of good performance are intended to inspire employees and cultivate a positive attitude toward their work. They do, however, discourage behavior that is contrary to accepted standards of decency and public service principles. Integrity, commitment, discipline, the capacity to work well in a team environment, and the ability to build positive relationships with coworkers both inside and outside the public service are among the traits that stand out.

Third, the chance to appeal; another feature added to the OPRAS is an appeal process in the event that an employee and their immediate supervisor disagree about the evaluation results.

Fourth, developmental measures. OPRAS gives the supervisor and employee a chance to talk about and decide on steps to strengthen performance deficiencies in order to better position the individual for future organizational responsibilities.

Fifth, feedback. OPRAS gives employees the chance to provide feedback to employers on problems they encountered during the evaluation period and suggest improvements.

Lastly, in addition to salary advancement, rewards also include non-salary progression. Because of the implementation of OPRAS, a public servant's pay progression is no longer automatic like it formerly was. Salary increases will be provided to employees who do well in order to promote performance. Poor and very poor performers will not be given pay raises as a sign of their performance levels. In addition to monetary rewards, OPRAS stipulates that outstanding and above average performers will also receive bonuses and non-financial rewards.

Historical Background of OPRAS in Tanzania

Following the comprehensive Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP), OPRAS was introduced in Tanzania as one of the means of creating a Performance Management System. (PMS). OPRAS was intended to be a key component in enhancing service delivery. Its implementation in institutions of the public sector complied with both the Public Service Act, No. 8 of 2002 and the Public Management and Employment Policy of 1999.

The widespread adoption of PMS throughout the world in the late 1950s and 1960s as a measure to enhance public sector performance which was seen as essential to fostering socioeconomic development led to its proliferation in the majority of African states. The local government authorities to make and carry out decisions with regard to the interests of the public needs are included in the public sector, which is made up of a number of organizations. When compared to commercial management, its primary purpose is to supply citizens with goods and services based on the realization and representation of public interests. (Haque, 2001).

Following the widespread adoption of the PMS and its introduction in Tanzania in the late 1980s, the Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP) was implemented from 1993 to 1998, and the Public Service Reform Program (PSRP) was later introduced in 2000. OPRAS was introduced in 2004 along with the PSRP was a new tool for managing individual performance in the public sector institutions. The Performance Improvement Model (PIM), which was seen as a crucial model to the adoption and fostering of the performance management culture in the public Service, was implemented using OPRAS as one of the main instruments under the PSRP. (Bana, 2009).

OPRAS was implemented in all Ministries, Independent Departments and Agencies, Regional Secretariats, and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to enable proper and more effective use of human resources and to increase the effectiveness of the performance management system (URT,2013). The goals of OPRAS were expected to increase resource management, transparency, and accountability for the efficient and effective provision of high-quality services to the general population. Tanzania first used OPRAS at the national level before expanding to the regional and local levels. Currently, the system has been utilized by the public sector for 19 years.

Results and Discussion

Institutional Setup of OPRAS in LGAs

The first research objective was to understand the way OPRAS is institutionalized, that is how it operates. The associated research question was how is the OPRAS institutionalized in the LGAs? This question was asked to all 20 respondents. Three aspects were examined with a view to understanding how OPRAS is institutionalized: (1) The degree to which OPRAS is understood by staff in the LGAs. (2) The degree to which OPRAS is implemented in the LGAs, and (3) The process of OPRAS that is how OPRAS is carried out in the LGAs.

The Degree of Familiarity of OPRAS among Employees in the LGAs

Possession of knowledge and good understanding of OPRAS has critical impact in its implementation. To understand the degree to which OPRAS, as a performance management tool is shared and internalized by employees in the LGAs, all 20 respondents were asked to assess the degree to which they felt that they understood the OPRAS. In this respect, the responses revealed employees had little knowledge regarding practical implementation of OPRAS. One of the interviewees for instance commented that “Most of our staff have limited understanding of this system. You can see some of them filling the same goals every year, although organizational goals change year after year. But we have to implement it with all these difficulties”. This makes it evident that the extent of OPRAS knowledge among the staff leaves a lot to be desired. When asked the causes for little internalization of the system among the employees, most respondents reiterated that training has not been sufficiently done to reach all LGAs staff. One Head of Human resource and Administration in an interview had this comment: “education on OPRAS has not effectively reached rural workers who comprise majority of the council workers including teachers and nurses who are found nearly in every administrative sub area. Some employees name OPRAS forms hopeless forms”. Whether this sounds ironic it might have quite hindering impact in the implementation of OPRAS. These findings echo other studies for instance, Mpululu (2014:50-52) and Mtasigazya (2021:63) whose findings advanced insufficient training among common staff as one of the factors limiting effective implementation of OPRAS in the local government authorities. Despite the fact that OPRAS has been implemented in the LGAs almost two decades since its inception, majority of staff remain unfamiliar with this performance management tool.

The Degree of Implementation of OPRAS

The ineffectiveness in the operationalization of the tool in public service has been repeatedly reported by the National Audit Office. For instance, in the financial year 2013/2014, the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) of Tanzania found no proof of the use of OPRAS tool in several institutions (CAG, 2015).

Likewise, in the financial year 2014/2015, the CAG’s audit report for 2 Ministries and 5 Regional Secretariats, 64 per cent (119) of the 187 personal files in the sample lacked evidence of the implementation of OPRAS instrument for performance evaluation. In 2015/2016, the audit report of 36 councils in Tanzanian Mainland showed that performance evaluation of public servants was either not done at all or was not done effectively (CAG,2017).

Similar findings were observed in 2016/2017 (CAG, 2018) where the majority of the public institutions did not provide evidence for the implementation of OPRAS in evaluation of employee performance. The repeatedly reported ineffective OPRAS implementation in both Central and local government authorities (LGAs) indicates lack of compliance with the Public

Service Act (2002), Public Service Regulations (2003), the Standing Orders for Public Service in Tanzania (2009), and the OPRAS Guideline for the Application of OPRAS in Public Services (2011) (URT 2002, URT 2003, 2009, URT 2011) which set OPRAS as mandatory instrument for assessing public employees' performance. We can make inference from these findings that in the LGAs the scope and pace of OPRAS application is yet to gain a momentum.

Interview with Human Resource Officers in Babati Municipal Council and Kondoa District Council echo these observations. For instance, one Human Resource Officer asserted: "employees are filling the OPRA forms reluctantly unless it comes to their knowledge that they are due for next promotion, then they can complete the forms with a serious tone". The interview went further explaining that "OPRAS implementation is mainly observed in some departments located at the council headquarters". This is congruent with the observation of Issa (2010) who found that only about 50 percent of Tanzania's public organisations are implementing OPRAS in some manner. This tells that some of the employees use OPRAS just because it is the requirement but not as a tool to guide them in execution of their daily duties and support achievement of organisational goals.

The Process of OPRAS

The United Republic of Tanzania in 2006 and 2013 issued OPRAS guidelines to guide its implementation. The process has to start with performance agreement where superiors agree with their subordinates on the objectives and standards of performance to be achieved, how performance will be assessed and what resources will be available. However, the findings portray that the implementation of OPRAS in most of the LGAs is not in compliance with the guidelines.

A review made by the researcher to 95 OPRAS forms completed by the employees in one of district councils and found that 57 forms equal to 60 percent of the reviewed forms did not indicate resources required accomplishing the agreed goals, and some forms were not signed by the end of financial year.

This finding is consonant to other studies for instance Mtasigazya (2021:66) who found that 90 percent of the respondents in Kinondoni Municipal Council asserted that they did not fill OPRAS form on time. The interview with sampled Human Resource Officers rendered similar observations in this respect. These findings imply that the process of OPRAS implementation takes place haphazardly and not in any manner routed in a way that starts with joint objective setting.

Major Predicaments OPRAS Encounters in LGAs

Studies for instance, Mwanaamani (2013), Mwita and Andrea (2019), and Mtasigazya (2021), reveal numerous problems and challenges deterring successful implementation of OPRAS in LGAs. The list is too long to be accommodated by this section; hence, a few of them

will be dealt with. The list engages skepticism on OPRAS among employees, competency of LGA staff in the implementation of OPRAS, budgetary constraints, quality of leadership in the processes involved in OPRAS implementation, non-adherence with OPRAS guidelines, clarity of performance standards to employees, and interference with political activities and other urgent but ad hoc activities.

Skepticism on OPRAS among Employees

OPRAS was introduced in 2000's as a tool of enforcing employee performance in the public sector. Being a relatively new system in the public sector, OPRAS was received with a skeptical eye among the staff. The staffs think that OPRAS was introduced as a tool to punish less productive employees-the observation that is entrenched in the Human Resource Compliance Report by the President's Office Public Service Commission (2013). The employees feel if fully implemented OPRAS would jeopardize their security of tenure. Different studies reveal that the purpose of OPRAS in the public service was not effectively communicated to the employees in the councils (Mtasigazya, 2021:61). This finding can be linked to reluctance of LGAs staff in taking effective implementation of the tool. This has been one of the factors limiting effective implementation of OPRAS in the public service, LGAs in particular, as such a negative stance towards OPRAS culminated in reluctance of staff, thus affecting their commitment to its implementation. It is quite difficult for a reform to register success stories without full support from organization members, which depends on the extent to which organization members are set ready to welcome such changes (Piderit,2000).

Competency of Staff in Implementing OPRAS

According to reports, the adoption of OPRAS in the public service was accompanied with series of training to equip the implementers with required skills to effect the implementation of the system. That notwithstanding, studies have revealed that the competency of LGAs staff in carrying out OPRAS processes has been questionable (Mtasigazya, 2021:63). The councils have not embarked on serious and consistent training to maintain staff knowledge on OPRAS. As asserted by Tefurukwa (2014:6) Tanzanian government employees, particularly the lower cadres, were not well trained. The heads of department that attended the training did not share the information with their subordinates. In the end, OPRAS implementation in several government departments and agencies never received significant consideration. This is coupled with little orientation program for new employees that makes them less familiar with the system as new users. This factor among others seems to limit the active engagement and contribution of staff in the whole process of OPRAS implementation. Consequently, as noted from studies, this results in unsuccessful execution of the planned goals. The majority of the workers are not even able to

complete filling the OPRAS forms as required due to lack of pertinent skills needed to operationalize the OPRAS.

Insufficient Budget Allocation

It appears evident from several studies for instance, Mwita and Andrea (2019) and Mtasigazya (2021) that in the LGAs money and other resources are not always sufficient to fully carry out the set of objectives and targets to be achieved by individuals in respective departments. Financial resource affects availability of material resources that are necessary to carry out the targets set of the departments to achieve the mission of the councils. Limited financial resources hinder operationalization of several objectives and thus remain in OPRAS forms without implementation. That is to say, OPRAS objectives are sometimes less achieved for reasons beyond the reach of the individual staff. This is underscored by Mwita and Andrea (2019:172) observe that 68% of respondents opined that resources are not adequately supplied. Mtasigazya (2021:69) echo this finding as he asserts that 60% of respondents in Kinondoni Municipal Council reiterated that financial resources were insufficient to realise the planned objectives. These findings substantiate with Mwanaamani (2013) who in examining the difficulties in Tanzania's district councils in managing OPRAS and found that budgetary limitations have a negative impact on OPRAS management and prevent staff from achieving their set goals.

Commitment of Leadership in Monitoring OPRAS Implementation

Being a new system in the public service in Tanzania, the implementation of OPRAS called for high commitment on the part of leaders to ensure its effective implementation. Studies on OPRAS implementation portray that some leaders in the LGAs do not exercise great responsibility to guide the subordinates on the implementation of OPRAS. The council leaders do not demonstrate exemplary leadership in taking the OPRAS implementation serious and binding for the staff to comply. One of the requisites for implementation of OPRAS is good and effective leadership as it plays essential role to inspire the individuals to participate fully in its implementation. A leader may have great influence in the successful implementation of OPRAS through playing as a guide figure, showing the direction the followers have to pass through in the course of implementation of the system in the council. However, as noted from the studies some of the officials and senior staff in the councils do not exercise closer supervision to enable full operation of the OPRAS.

One Human Resource Officer interviewed had this to comment: “You know this tool is tedious to implement, we normally insist our staff to fill the forms as a requirement for promotion. This tool is just hopeless”. This finding resembles Mtasigazya (2021:63), who found that at Kinondoni Municipal Council 90% of top management members lacked commitment in

monitoring and enforcing effective implementation of the performance management tool. One of the possible explanations for this result is that members of top management are unwilling to commit their effort to supervise the implementation of the system. This might result from the fact that the openness implied in OPRAS may be interpreted as jeopardy to the powers of top management members.

Non-Adherence to OPRAS Guidelines

OPRAS guidelines prescribe requisite procedures to effect implementation. For instance, it calls for involvement of employees in the process of setting objectives, discussing on the type of resources to be supplied to achieve the objectives and agree on mutual basis the modality of assessing the performance. Different studies for instance Elitumainiet et al. (2021:141-143) indicate that in most cases the employees are not involved in performance agreement and reviews are rarely conducted to agree on performance scores.

All Human Resource Officers interviewed asserted that it was the superiors who determined the objectives and passed to the subordinates. This indicates that the mutual involvement implied in the OPRAS is not abided by as required by the legislations which govern the implementation of this performance appraisal system. Public Service Regulations (URT 2003), Regulation 23 for instance, requires the public servant and his supervisor to sign a performance contract every year. Also OPRAS guideline (URT, 2011) provides that all public servants and their managers have to develop their personal objectives based on strategic planning process and organisation's respective service delivery targets.

The guideline adds that to develop individual performance plan both the subordinate and the manager need to agree on performance objectives, performance targets, performance criteria and required resources in order to achieve the set objectives and targets. It is apparent that effective employee participation in performance agreement is sine qua non for understanding the direction the employee has to excel in the course of implementing the set targets.

Comprehensive employee participation is of paramount importance for the employees to feel they are part and parcel of the organisation and thus enhance their morale and motivation to work toward attainment of the agreed objectives. As Jyothi and Venkatesh (2006) observed that comprehensive and effective participation of individuals in developing performance standards is vital for the employee to be clear of expected standards of performance. This is among the key elements of a valid and reliable performance appraisal. The authors further add that, the development of fair, reliable, valid and useful performance standards is enhanced by employee participation, as workers possess the requisite unique and essential information necessary for developing realistic standards. Surprisingly, this is not the case in the LGAs. One of the possible reasons for this result is that the participatory culture is yet

to uproot the top-down decision making experienced in the traditional performance appraisal as Waal (2007) noted that western performance management systems cannot well be implemented in developing countries due to cultural differences.

Interference with Political Activities and Contingent Demands

The LGAs staffs have multiple accountabilities to multiple superiors. Council staff have to always give priority to immediate tasks most of which are contingent or unplanned and do not form part of OPRAS objectives. These activities interfere with the staff capacity play an active role toward realization of the set targets. For instance, political directives from senior government officials to the LGAs disrupt staff progression to achieve OPRAS objectives as intended. There are myriad of other non-programed or ad hoc tasks which divert a lot of financial and material resources that might be used to accomplish the individual employee's OPRAS objectives. This situation is typical in a district council. Managers are always exposed to making contingent and non-programed decisions. From interview with the sampled heads of department it was revealed that the work of staff in LGAs is governed to a large degree by events over which they have little control and by a dynamic network of interrelationships with other government and political authorities.

Moreover, the non-programed activities disrupt the scheduled time required to fill the OPRA forms and conducting mid-year reviews. As a result, OPRA forms are not filled in the beginning of financial year (July) as stipulated in the OPRAS guideline. Some of the forms are filled in September and others October and November. With such haphazard process the OPRAS implementation turns out to be a formality of filling the OPRAS forms while not meeting the performance targets.

Rewarding of Performance

By its structure, OPRAS requires rewards to be directly linked to performance result. It gives powers to supervisors to recommend or suggest the most suitable reward, developmental measures or sanctions to be taken on the employee to reflect the level of agreed performance targets in line with the requirement of regulation 22 of the Public Service Regulations 2003.

According to studies for instance, Mwita and Andrea (2019), (Ilomo and Anyingisye, 2020) and Mtasigazya (2021) the appraisal process hardly led to the employees' rewarding, development and retooling. Some of employees, ignored the OPRAS process because they did not receive feedback on their performance it did not lead to the promised development (Ilomo and Anyingisye, 2020:116-117), Mtasigazya (2021:64). The question then arises whether OPRAS can enable the LGAs reap the expectations envisaged. This confirms the study by Mwita and Andrea (2019:172) which reveals a significant gap with compensating employees based on performance reviews. Employee desire to achieve their goals was found to be impacted by the

lack of integration between rewarding and OPRAS results. Lack of a link between OPRAS and both financial and non-financial rewards is a demotivating factor in the realization of OPRAS goal.

Conclusion and Way Forward

This study confirms that OPRAS as a Performance Management tool is facing several challenges in the LGAs that call for corrective measures for effective performance of the LGAs staff. Although OPRAS as a performance management tool installed in the Public Service in Tanzania embraces some vital features that could enhance staff performance in the LGAs, its effective implementation leaves a lot to be desired. This is attributed to the challenges discussed in the findings of this study.

The study therefore offers the following recommendations:

First, in order to face-lift the OPRAS implementation dilemmas experienced in the LGAs, it is imperative for the government to enact policies and legislations that create avenues for sound OPRAS or other Performance Management System implementation. Institutional rules, regulations, and other factors have to create enabling and compelling environment for every individual to take an active part in the performance management processes.

Second, any performance management system should be shared and internalized by employees. Successful implementation of a performance management system needs substantial knowledge on the part of subordinates and supervisors. This should be coupled with continuous capacity building to staff at various levels to enhance understanding and ownership of the performance management system. Armed with requisite knowledge, workers would likely become devoted to take an active role and facilitate successful implementation of the performance management system.

Third, comprehensive and effective participation of subordinates in performance agreement is no option. The performance of employee depends on, among other factors, the involvement of the employee in developing performance targets, performance standards and setting job expectations. The involvement of the employees in this process is of vital importance to make them aware of their job duties and responsibilities which might result in high performance. The realization of departmental and organisational goals may be enhanced by employee participation because once one knows what, how, why and when to achieve, one is likely to be motivated to strive for the accomplishment of the goal.

Fourth, the role of effective leadership and commitment to supervision of the OPRAS should not be overlooked. Effective leadership is a tool for cohesiveness and provides a sense of direction and vision to individuals at work. For successful implementation of a performance management system good leadership traits are vital to convince the employees on the potential of implementing OPRAS to the effective achievement of the set goals. The Council Management Team (CMT) should play a great deal of role to supervise the process of OPRAS implementation.

And, fifth, successful OPRAS implementation requires timely allocation of sufficient resources. The goals stated in the forms need to be put into operation through coordination of human resources, money, and material resources. The government should ensure availability of enough resources to the LGAs in sufficient quantity, quality and on time so that OPRAS implementation can count for success. At district council level the council directors, the heads of department and council management team must ensure adequate resource allocation to respective departments to prompt operation of the plans so that OPRAS does not remain a formality culminated in filling OPRA forms and keeping them in shelves without tangible results.

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