

**LOW VOTER TURN UP AND THE RIGHT TO VOTE  
CASE STUDY: KAMULI VILLAGE KIREKA PARISH**

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**2014 - M062 - 20017**

**UGANDA MARTYS UNIVERSITY**



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**CASE STUDY: KAMULI VILLAGE KIREKA PARISH**

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## **DEDICATION**

To my late father PPK, you are truly above rubies.

And my mother, Elizabeth B Magoba, what a treasure you are!

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ACHPR</b>	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
<b>ACHR</b>	American Convention on Human Rights
<b>ADR</b>	Assistant District Registrar
<b>CCEDU</b>	Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda
<b>DR</b>	District Registrar
<b>EC</b>	Electoral Commission
<b>ECA</b>	Electoral Commission Act
<b>ECHR</b>	European Convention on Human Rights
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>IDEA</b>	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
<b>PPOA</b>	Political Parties and Organizations Act
<b>UDHR</b>	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nations

## ABSTRACT

There has been a steady increase in the number of registered voters in Uganda since the first parliamentary election at independence in 1962. Despite the increase in the number of registered voters, there has been a marked decrease in voter turnout. The objectives of the study aim to establish why citizens are keen on registering but do not turn up to vote and how this impacts on the right to vote. The thesis aims to describe and analyze why registered voters shun elections increasingly. The material was gathered in a single case study through qualitative interviews with registered voters in Kamuli village, Kireka parish, Kira municipality in Wakiso district and key informants in stakeholder organizations like CCEDU, the electoral commission and local leaders. The material has been presented according to the three themes, namely motivational factors to register to vote, perception of the right to vote and reasons for the low voter turnout.

The study was conducted through a single case design in Kamuli village. 46 respondents were interviewed through random and purposive sampling by use of interview guide designed to help the researcher probe and acquire the necessary information. The data was processed, managed and analyzed through the qualitative interpretative approach and transcribed into the various categories and themes to match the study objectives of motivation to register to vote, perception of the right to vote and the reasons for low voter turn-up.

The study found that citizens register to vote because of emotional attachment to certain fixations such as candidates rather than a civic duty to enhance development. The right to vote was not appreciated as a civic constitutional right because of the glaring hatred and ignorance of the entire electoral process. The low voter turnout was found to be caused by social, political and economic factors which ranged from intimidation, poverty, electoral maladministration and ignorance among others.

The study recommends that citizens be sensitized and provided with civic education to enable them appreciate the civic duty to register to vote and the corresponding right to vote. It is further recommended that the electoral be facilitated sufficiently so that it carries out its constitutional duty as required. The institutional short falls in the electoral body should be addressed to make the electoral process attractive. Lastly, individual issues which cause voter apathy be addressed by the concerned government agencies to make the right to vote attractive.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Chapter one highlights the back ground of the study from a historical view point and lays down the contextual setting required for the research problem. It describes and sets the objectives, research questions, the scope, the significance and justification of the study. The chapter further defines the key terms and lays down the conceptual framework upon which the study is best analyzed. Chapter two reviewed the literature and the emphasis was on identifying relevant previous work on human rights, the registration of voters, the right to vote, voter turnout and the criticisms from the scholars, civil society organizations and human rights organizations in the area of study. Chapter three presents a detailed description of the research methodology which lays down the framework through which the research was connected. It includes the research design, the area of study, the study population, sampling procedures, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis, management and processing, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study. Chapter four presents the results of the research study together with the discussions of the findings. The presentation, analysis and discussion of the study findings are in line with the research objectives as guided by the research questions. In order for the researcher to thoroughly explore the objectives of the research, the researcher has presented the key factors which motivate citizens to register to vote; how registered voters perceive the right to vote and the factors that hinder registered voters from exercising and enjoying their right to vote. Chapter five presents the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research. The summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations are in line with the research objectives as guided by the research questions.

The study on the Impact of Low Voter turnout on the right to vote is intended to investigate the reasons for the marked decrease in voter turnout in Uganda since the first parliamentary election at independence in 1962 (IDEA 2011), despite the steady increase in the number of registered voters over time. The subsequent parliamentary elections in 1980 for the Milton Obote II regime, the presidential and parliamentary elections since 1996, and the local council elections since 1996 have not been any different (Monitor 2015). It is not clear why the voter turnout has been on the decrease yet the number of registered voters at every election period is on the increase, Electoral Commission (2014) and the impact it has had on the exercise of the right to vote is not known. So what does this trend imply on the voter's right to vote; is there denial of the right to vote after registration or is it simply voter apathy or a combination of factors? This research report is divided into five chapters, references and appendices.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Human rights are commonly understood as those freedoms or entitlements which are inherent in the mere fact of being human and are based on the belief that every human being is entitled to enjoy his/her rights without discrimination, OHCHR, (2015). They are characterized by being inherent to all human beings by virtue of humanity; are inalienable and equal to all. According to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993), article 5 thereof, they are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated OHCHR, (2015). The basis of fundamental human rights is human dignity which is inviolable and it must be respected, promoted and protected, Human Dignity Trust (2014). The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined this principle in its preamble thus: 'recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'. This is the basis of human dignity and it is from this that the principle of inviolability is derived, Young German (2013).

Zappala (2003) points out that, human rights evolved from due process origins in the English Magna Carta of 1215, where no free man would be imprisoned or deprived of liberty except by legal judgment of his peers and by law of the land. According to Safferling (2001), the evolvement was crystallized during the enlightenment period of the English petition of right of 1628, the United States (US) Constitution of 1787, the French declaration of the rights of man and the citizen of 1789 and the US Bill of Rights of 1791. It is during this period when rules were created to limit the power the state could have over the liberty and security of the person. These legislations were the precursors to many of today's human rights documents and one of the distinctive features of these rights was the rudiments for the right to vote. It was not until the end of the Second World War in 1948 that the bulk of these rights as they are known today were consolidated into one universally accepted document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The atrocities of the second World War 1939-1945 led to the development of the United Nations Charter in 1945 and the UDHR in 1948, OHCR, (2015). The UDHR marked the emergence of the International status of human rights as we know them today. The UDHR contains two distinctive parts: the first is the protection of individual civil and political rights and the second is both individual and collective, OHCR(2015) economic, social and cultural rights. These two parts have been concretized into two international covenants: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). They were adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 and are binding to all states signatory thereto including Uganda, OHCR (2015).

According to Cerna (1994), regional instruments including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (African Charter), have borrowed extensively from the UDHR, ICCPR and the ICESCR with modifications to suit local desires.

The history of the right to vote globally is characterized by social conflict in the quest for equality. However, this notion is rather foreign in the African context in general and Uganda in particular. The African continent has been called by one historian 'the social laboratory of humanity where art, trade, small-scale manufacturing, medical knowledge, religion, state systems, history and legend all flourished before the formal political take-over of the continent by European powers in the late nineteenth century' Redding (2008). The entire continent was comprised of tribal kingdoms and chiefdoms who knew nothing about modern day democracy. According to Bansah (2015), after the imposition of colonial rule, the entire African culture and traditional governance structures were besieged by Europeans who had ulterior motives. The Europeans then imposed westernized democratic values like the right to vote at independence at a time they were compelled to leave Africa, *ibid*. Like all western democratic values, and as it happened elsewhere in the colonized world, the right to vote was imposed on Uganda at independence through the 1962 Independence Constitution.

According to article 25 of the ICCPR, the right to vote as a civil and political right is a fundamental right to ensure that individuals can influence governmental decision-making through taking part in the conduct of public affairs and genuine, transparent and periodic elections. The right to vote is a preservative of all other rights and is enshrined in article 21(3) of the UDHR which states thus;

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures, (UDHR; 1948: 3).



According to articles 1, and 25 of the ICCPR, underlying this right is the notion that all people possess an inalienable right to self-determination, and that every citizen should take part in the government of his or her country. Free, fair and unadulterated elections are an essential element of these rights and form the basis of the right to vote. Globally, the right to vote was born out of social conflict to achieve universal equality coupled with social and political emancipation to realize civil rights and political freedoms.

According to Pintor, (2004)

the history of voter enfranchisement and universal suffrage is part of the history of the quest for and achievement of civil rights and political freedoms. The demand for voter enfranchisement cannot generally be separated from a broader demand for social equality and the general struggle for rights and freedoms.

He further observes that the history of the right to vote is basically a story of social conflict in the quest for universal suffrage and equality in the western world. He notes that this was an important aspect of the social and political emancipation of newly emerging social classes during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He points out that the emerging classes were first the urban middle class, then the industrial proletariat and then the peasantry.

He narrates further that between 1870 and the 1940s, universal suffrage was established for males in Austria, Denmark, Italy, France, Spain, and Switzerland. During the same period, male adult suffrage was extended to the entire male adult population in countries like Belgium, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and Sweden. He concludes that while in many of these countries women's right to vote was legally established after the First World War, Switzerland and Liechtenstein only enfranchised women in 1971 and 1984 respectively.

The right to vote is further guaranteed under article 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), but not explicitly. Article 13 refers to "...a right to participate freely in the government... either directly or through freely chosen representatives..."

However, Chapter 5 article 59 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda represents an explicit right to vote. It represents a pillar of electoral rights, which must be observed to ensure peaceful participation in politics, good governance and the rule of law in accordance with standards of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), as pointed out by Goodwin, (2007).

Domestic legislation has, in the case of Uganda, extensively incorporated Human rights in the Republican Constitution of 1995. This is to be found in Chapter four titled “Protection and Promotion of Fundamental and other Human Rights and Freedoms” in articles 20-58 and other articles elsewhere in the constitution. It is within this context that the right to vote which was first recognized at independence in 1962 is embedded and included in article 59 of the Constitution, (1995).

The right to vote in Uganda was first recognized and provided for in the 1962 Independence Constitution. Under the 1962 Independence Constitution in article 44 thereof, provision was made that ‘a person who had attained the age of twenty- one years, was a citizen resident in Uganda six months prior to the date of registration, had a right to be registered as a voter for purposes of elections.’ The 1962 Independence Constitution was replaced with the 1967 Republican Constitution under which the 1980 General elections were held.

The 1967 Republican Constitution was in turn replaced by the 1995 Republican Constitution and which makes provision for the right to vote [article 59 (1)], the duty of a citizen to register for elections [article 59 (2)] and the duty of the state to facilitate voter registration and enjoyment of the right to vote [article 59 (3)]. According to Chapter 5 article 59 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda as amended, it is the duty of every citizen of 18 years or above to register as a voter for public elections or referenda and the duty of the state to facilitate and ensure that all citizens qualified to vote, register and exercise their right to vote.

The duty to ensure citizens exercise their right to vote has been operationalised under the Electoral Commission Act (ECA) Chapter 140 sections 18 and 19 laws of Uganda, which mandates the Electoral Commission (EC) with a duty, to register ECA, (1996) citizens in conformity with the 1995 Constitution, and to compile, maintain and update a voter's register of all persons entitled to vote ECA, (1996); and as well formulate and implement voter educational programs and conduct civic education, Constitution (1995), to ensure citizens exercise and enjoy their right to vote.

The right to vote has therefore been constitutionally recognized in Uganda since independence in 1962, together with the duty of a citizen to register and the duty of the state to facilitate the enjoyment of the right. The constitutional recognition of the right marked the beginning of voter registration for elections in Uganda and the enjoyment of the right to vote and it has since, become a Constitutional requirement that a person must register to enjoy the right to vote. So since independence, Ugandans have grudgingly used foreign values to determine their leadership. Little wonder that at independence Buganda as a region did not participate in direct national elections, Kanyeihamba (2002). Since independence however, registered voters have increased at every election although the voter turnout has been decreasing.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Despite the increase of registered voters over time, the presence of the enabling Constitutional safeguards and the facilitating provisions of the Electoral law, there has been a marked decrease of voter turnout in Uganda since independence, Constitution (1962). For instance in 1996, there were 8,498,382 registered voters and of these 73% and 61.7% voted for presidential and parliamentary elections respectively. Similarly in 2001, there were 10,775,836 registered

voters and of these 70.4% and 58.5%, Electoral Commission, (2015) voted for presidential and parliamentary elections respectively. In 2006 and 2011 the presidential percentages dropped further to 69% and 59% respectively. These indicate that whereas registered voters have been increasing, the voter turnout has been declining.

This persisting situation of increasing registered voters and low voter turnout has raised concern about the exercise and enjoyment of the right to vote by citizens. The Supreme Court (2006), Stefanska (2011), Sekagya (2010) and Mpagi (2015) of Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU) have all raised concern about voter turnout and the exercise of the right to vote but without providing reason why so many register yet those who turn up to vote continue to decline.

Whereas the EC has over time registered eligible citizens in a bid to participate in the elections and referenda, factors contributing to the low voter turnout at every election and its effect on the right to vote have not been assessed to come up with a clear justification. This study has therefore investigated the implication of low voter turnout and assessed its effect on the exercise and enjoyment of the right to vote.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 Overall Objective**

The objective of the study was to investigate the reasons for the low voter turnout and its implication on the exercise of the right to vote in the midst of the growing number of registered voters.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study**

- i. To investigate into the motivation for the voters to register to vote.
- ii. To assess how the registered voters perceive the right to vote.
- iii. To find out the reasons why registered voters do not exercise their right to vote.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. What motivates citizens to register for elections?
- ii. How do the registered voters perceive the right to vote?
- iii. What causes registered voters not to exercise their right to vote?

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study addressed the low voter turnout in Uganda and its effects on the right to vote of registered voters. It further addressed efforts by the EC and other stake holders in upholding the right to vote.

##### **1.5.1 Conceptual Scope**

The key concept of the study was the right to vote within the context of the low voter turnout of voters in Uganda. The study sought to establish how the EC has ensured that the right to vote is protected, promoted and respected.

##### **1.5.2 Geographical/Spatial Scope**

The study was conducted in Wakiso District with particular reference to Kamuli village which is in Kireka parish in Kira Municipality.

##### **1.5.3 Time Scope/Temporal Scope**

The study was intended to cover the election periods of 2001 - 2016. This period is significant because Uganda has had regular first order and second order elections to decide who will have

the political power as well as which policies will be pursued. Secondly, it is in this period that multiparty democracy was restored and it is in this period that good governance has been tested and challenged through democratic means. According to Nwauwa (2003), before 1962, Uganda was a British protectorate under colonial dictatorship which was characterized by appointed governors who had no regard for African tradition and they thereby ruled by issuing arbitrary ordinances without consultations. In this scenario, the governors owed their loyalty to those who appointed them, and therefore registration of voters and the right to vote could not arise in this period.

As a consequence of this unpleasant history, Uganda has since 1962 been grappling with the appreciation of western concepts of democracy in which is embedded the electoral rights which include the right to vote. It is therefore within this context that the right to vote in Uganda was studied.

### **1.6 Justification of the Study**

Uganda's political history has vacillated between multi-partyism, one-partyism, military regimes, the Movement regime and now again multiparty democracy (Makara 2010). Since 2005 when the Political Parties and Organizations Act (PPOA) effectively legalized the existence of political parties, Uganda is now under multiparty democracy (Constitution, 1995) and the constitution requires that democracy be exercised through participation in elections (Constitution, 1995). The evidence available is that there is limited participation because of the low voter turnout in elections vis-à-vis the increasing number of registered voters. The study was done at that time because there was limited participation of voters in election which impacts on good governance and the right to vote. Public discourse about the low voter turnout has raised concern of voter disenfranchisement and the exercise of the right to vote.

The issues of the declining voter turnout despite the increasing number of voters on the voters register impacts negatively on matters of good governance and the right to vote, key pillars in democracy.

According to the Supreme Court (2006), ‘Electoral Commission erred and failed to comply with the law during the conduct of the 2006 election when it disenfranchised voters by deleting their names from the voters register and denied them the right to vote.’

Mpagi (2015) noted that voter apathy was evident in 2011 presidential, parliamentary, local council elections and more recently in the by elections in Amurru and Busia districts. Voter turnout data for Uganda (IDEA 2011), since 1962 reveals significant reduction in numbers of registered voters who turn up to exercise their right to vote. The public discourse on voter apathy and the data on voter turnout made inquiry into the increasing low voter turnout and its effect on the right to vote imperative.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Kothari, (2004) quotes Hudson’s maxim that “all progress is born of inquiry, doubt is often better than over confidence, for it leads to inquiry and inquiry leads to invention.”

With that in mind, the study contributed valuable knowledge to the concept of the right to vote as understood in the Uganda context and how the issue of low voter turnout has impacted on it.

The study was able to open up scholarly debate on the rights of the ordinary citizen as a human being entitled to human rights just like everybody else and in particular the right to vote. It has further contributed to literature on low voter turnout and the right to vote in Uganda.

The study suggests significant policy statements through its recommendations in light of what motivates voters to register to vote but fail to turn up at election time so as to improve and enable citizens enjoy the right to vote as enshrined in the Constitution. A policy brief was extracted on the right to vote and as such could inform policy formulation in Uganda.

The study added value to my professional status and advancement by adding an MA in Human Rights to my Curriculum Vitae and contributed to the critical mass required in the fight for human rights emancipation and liberation within the African context.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

**Ballot** – Action or system of secret voting.

**Candidate** – A person who seeks or is nominated for a political office.

**Constituency** – a body of individuals entitled to elect a representative to a legislative or other representative body.

**Democracy** – A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation.

**Disenfranchise** – to take away the power or opportunity to vote.

**Election** – a systematic process by which voters cast ballots for candidates or positions on issues.

**Proportional representation** – An electoral system in which political parties are represented according to the number of people who voted for them

**Respondent** – Someone who answers questions, on a questionnaire or during an interview.

**Suffrage** - the right to vote gained through the democratic process



**Votability** – ability to vote after registration

**Vote** – A formal indication of somebody’s choice or opinion, in an election or referendum.

**Voter roll** – A list of persons registered to vote in a particular constituency or polling station for a particular election.

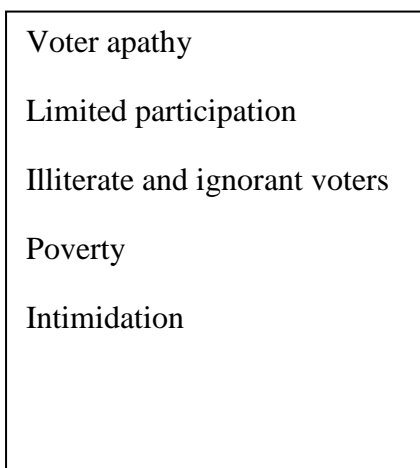
**Voter registers** – Are the consolidated, official lists of all persons eligible to vote.

**Voter turnout** - is the percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election.

## 1.9 Conceptual Frame work

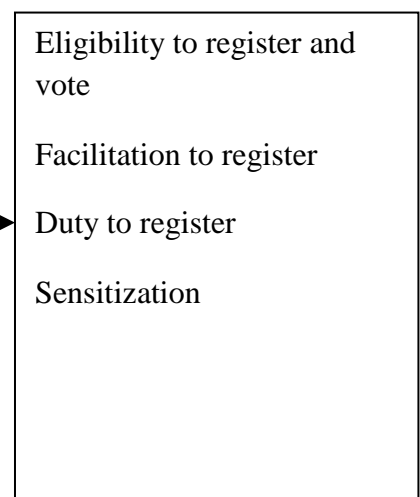
**Factors causing**

**Low Voter Turnout**



**Conditions for enjoying**

**Right to vote**



**Electoral Management Process**

Civic education

Registration of eligible voters

Complaints management

Conduct of elections

The registration process of voters and right to vote are in built within the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Constitution (1995) and the enabling Electoral Commission law Act of 1997 (ECA) of parliament, ECA (1996). These form the basis of the conceptual framework for the enjoyment of the right to vote. The registered voters exercise their right to vote and determine the rate of voter turnout. Turnout in an election is thus thought to be a measure of political participation, the legitimacy of the government and generally how well a democracy functions, (Rose, 2004). Low turnout on the other hand is thought to signal that something is wrong in society.

The registration of voters in Uganda is a constitutional mandate of the Electoral Commission [Constitution 1995 article 61(1e)], a duty of the state to facilitate the registration [Constitution 1995 article 59(3)] and a duty of every eligible citizen to register in order to enjoy the right to vote [Constitution 1995 article 59(1&20)]. The right to vote is a constitutional preserve of citizens of eighteen years of age or above.

The registration of voters is guided by the ECA which makes provision for the processes required from the national level down to the villages at the grass root level where the actual registration takes place. According to sections 20, 21 and 22 of the ECA, registration of voters is conducted by the District Registrars (DR), Assistant District Registrars (ADR) and update officers who have the duty to take charge and custody of the district voters register, register applicants and update the register in accordance with the ECA, on a continuous basis. The EC further has a constitutional mandate to hear and determine election complaints arising before and during polling [Constitution 1995 article 61(1f)] and to conduct civic education as one of the ways of facilitating the citizen in not only registering but also enjoying the right to vote [Constitution 1995 article 61(1g)].

The conduct of electoral activities is the context within which the concept of the right to vote is evaluated to ensure it is protected, promoted, respected and enjoyed. These include the registration of voters, the display of the voter register and civic education of those to exercise and enjoy the right to vote, among others. These will ultimately determine voter turnout at an election which will affect the right to vote. The evaluation of the right to vote has as a consequence attracted criticism from human rights activists, like CCEDU (2015), Sekagya (2010), Stefanska (2011), and Supreme Court (2006) prompting this study. The study is intended to find out the effect registration of voters has on the right to vote to cause low voter turnout. The legal framework is satisfactory but according to *Ibid* Sekagya, the Supreme Court

and civil society, despite the enabling law, voter turnout is declining yet the electoral register of voters is expanding. There was need to investigate the causes of the low voter turnout and recommend solutions to improve the electoral process and ensure the protection, promotion, respect and enjoyment of the right to vote.

The notion of the right to vote implies knowledge of the civil rights in a proper democratic set up. In Uganda, majority of the population is not only ignorant of the law but civil rights as well. The EC which is mandated to conduct civic education as one of the ways of facilitating the citizen in not only registering but also enjoying the right to vote has not measured up to the task (*Ibid* Sekagya). The citizens view the legal institutions and the law they enforce as alien and do not have the economic means to pursue claims of violations before courts of law, but are by and large ignorant of the processes. According to Onyango (2005), Uganda's experience with both elections and constitutionalism has largely not been positive and that even before independence, electoral policies, institutions and practices were fraught with problems.

The EC has been conducting registration of citizens who are eligible for voting prior to every election process. It has conducted display of voters register to enable eligible voters confirm their participation and enjoyment of the right to vote. It is the duty of every eligible citizen to not only register but also confirm their presence on the roll during the display exercise. It is within this process that the EC is enjoined to not only conduct civic education but to as well handle the complaints management of those who have issues related to their eligibility so that they are enabled to enjoy their right to vote. All this is conducted to a citizenry which is by and large illiterate and ignorant of the processes and the right to vote.

This contextual framework forms the basis of the study of the effect of the low voter turnout on the voter's right to vote. This is in view of the constitutional requirement that a citizen can

only enjoy the right to vote when his/her name appears on the roll of voters before an election  
[section 19 (2) ECA].

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed literature related to human rights in general and the right to vote in particular. Emphasis was put on identifying relevant previous work on human rights, biased to the right to vote, the registration of voters, voter turnout and the criticisms from the various scholars, civil society organizations and human rights organizations on the area of study.

The review was hypothesized under the objectives of the study and focuses mainly on the process of registration of voters, the right to vote and how voter turnout impacts on it.

#### **2.1 Motivation for Registration of Voters**

Evrensel (2010), states that voter registration is understood as the process of registering eligible voters, while the voters' register or voters' roll is the result of this process, and that both the process and the result of registration need to be accurate, sustainable and politically accepted. Voter registration was first formalized in the western world during the enlightenment period (1685 – 1815). A related definition is offered by Bodnár and Kaszás (2009) that voter registration is a process where the electoral management collects data of those individuals who are eligible to vote. Individuals who are eligible to vote are the people who meet the suffrage requirements such as minimum age; residency and citizenship established by constitutions or electoral acts, *Ibid* Evrensel.

In the United Kingdom, voter registration was first introduced The Great Reform Act (1832) which required that only those persons registered to vote could do so. Voting rights then applied to only adult males who rented propertied land of certain value.

Prior to 1832, people who claimed to be qualified voters simply presented themselves at the polling station to vote and eligibility was at the discretion of the returning officer as to who was permitted to vote, The Electoral Commission UK (2015).

Today, voter registration in the UK is mandatory and violators are liable to summary conviction and a fine. The head of the household was until 2014 required to list eligible voters in his household but now individual electoral registration is according to The Electoral Commission UK (2015), possible and can be done online.

In the US, voting was a privilege of America's white, wealthy and elite men and in 1776, Huskerson (2014), only white, male property owners were permitted to vote. It was widely believed that granting the right to all would be a great detriment to governance and total democracy was considered the equivalent of mob justice and anarchy. By 1787, there were still no laws regarding who could vote most states favoring white men of property, wealth and education; no wonder only 6% (six per cent) of the population was permitted to vote for George Washington. The relics of voter registration originated in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by wealthy white politicians to ensure that non-citizens did not vote. Beginning 1870 through the First World War, most states chose to register voters to avoid conflicts between disenfranchised voters and election officials, Huskerson (2014).

Traditionally in the US, voter registration was done at government offices to enable one to vote, but by the National Voter Registration Act (1993), state governments were compelled to provide uniform registration services through various centers. Online registration is also now common in a number of states and ten states require Election Day registration.

Voter registration is a concept that was introduced in Africa by colonial governments with the introduction of democracy and the right to vote. Democratic principles and the right to vote were introduced at various times in African countries and with these was voter registration.

In Kenya, *Women Suffrage and beyond (2011 – 2015)*, for example, the right to vote and stand for office had been given to European women in 1919; in 1956, those rights were extended to African men and women under conditions related to educational level and property ownership hence the need for registration. In 1963, all Kenyans, regardless of color and other previously restricting factors, were given the right to vote and stand for election all of which required registration.

*Ibid* Evrensel has observed that voter registration is the most complex process within the electoral cycle and adds that it is highly expensive and should only be undertaken where the benefits outweigh the costs. She goes on to explain the reasons for registration as follows; to provide information that assists with election planning and logistics; sensitize the public to their electoral rights; separate the function of determining whether a person meets the eligibility criteria to participate in voting from the function of controlling balloting; augment controls on fraudulent attempts to vote, such as ineligible persons voting, impersonation, or voting for an electoral district for which the voter is not entitled to vote; assist in providing data for the determination of equitable electoral district boundaries; determine voter allocation to polling stations; support the transparency of the process; and play a major role in voter education.

Wall (2009) has identified the guiding principles for voter registration to include integrity, inclusiveness, credibility, accessibility, transparency, accuracy, accountability, sustainability, stakeholder participation, information privacy, administrative/political feasibility and cost effectiveness among others. These he asserts, should be based on the particular circumstances



in each country, taking into consideration the legal framework; the available time and financial resources; the historical and political context; and the level of skills and other capabilities.

In Uganda voter registration was first recognized and provided for in the 1962 Independence Constitution. Under the 1962 Constitution article 44 thereof, provision was made that ‘a person who had attained the age of twenty- one years, was a citizen and had been resident in Uganda six months prior to the date of registration, had a right to be registered as a voter for purposes of elections.’ The 1962 Constitution was replaced with the 1967 Constitution under which the 1980 General elections were held and was in turn replaced by the 1995 Constitution now in force.

The 1995 Constitution makes provision for the right to vote, the duty of a citizen to register for elections and the duty of the state to facilitate voter registration and enjoyment of the right to vote (article 59). It is under the provisions of the 1995 Constitution that elections were held in 2001, 2006 and 2011. And it is under the very Constitution that the EC has released a roadmap for the 2016 general elections.

According to the 1995 Constitution article 59(2), it is the duty of everyone of 18 years and above to register for public elections and referenda. The 1995 Constitution further makes it the duty of the state to create the enabling environment necessary for citizen to register and exercise the right to vote. Therefore, to be eligible to participate in an election and to exercise and enjoy the right to vote, a citizen must be registered. It also goes without saying that, voter registration is intended to ensure that everyone entitled to vote can do so, to prevent ineligible persons from voting, and to guard against multiple voting by the same individual. It is imperative that a voter’s register is accurate, open and transparent to ensure that all qualifying citizens enjoy the right to vote. In conformity with the 1995 Constitution, Parliament of Uganda enacted the

Electoral Commission Act 1997 to among others facilitate the process of registration of voters for purposes of enabling citizens to enjoy the right to vote.

According to the Electoral Commission Act section 18 the Electoral Commission is mandated to compile, maintain and update national voters register, on a continuing basis, of all persons entitled to vote in any national or local government election and to maintain a voter's roll for each constituency and polling station. Voters are continuously registered by the electoral commission as mandated by law. The law equally provides for the ability of the commission to maintain a voter's roll at each constituency in Uganda. Uganda electoral commission had been using photographic voters- and identification system (PVRIS) in voters registration and identification but this was replaced by the biometric voter registration (BVR) in 2011/2012 elections (IDEA 2011). The EC uses a manual system for registering and identifying voters at polling stations and any person registered as a voter and whose name appears in the voters' roll of a polling station, and who holds a valid voter's card shall be entitled to vote at the polling station. This is the only form of identification needed according to the law.

Under sections 19 of the Act, the Commission is further mandated to register all eligible citizens and to do all that is convenient to enable registered voters exercise the right to vote. Under a self-initiated registration system which Uganda maintains, electors must take the initiative and register themselves by applying.

Any system a country uses to create and maintain a voter register should be clear, transparent and accurate. Voters should have an easy way to check for mistakes and have corrections made. When lists are prepared for each polling station, they should be posted publicly well before an election so eligible citizens can easily check whether they are properly registered. The Commission is under duty in section 24 to display the voters roll for voters to check the

authenticity of their registration. Non-compliance with this provision of the law will often lead to complaints and lack of authenticity in an election.

In the recent past, the Electoral Commission has been accused of disenfranchising voters by deleting their names from the voters register and denied them the right to vote Supreme Court (2006), inflating the voters register and according to Stefanska (2011) complaints of credibility and accuracy of the voters register, missing names, double registration, not accessing or identifying polling stations. These attacks on the Electoral commission are not in themselves enough without a study and analysis into the causes of these and other irregularities which have allegedly caused low voter turnout and denied citizens the right to vote. All the 46 respondents were registered voters who fit into the desired end state of the topic.

It was therefore imperative that the study was conducted to address the causes of the persistent issue of low voter turnout yet the number of the registered voters has since been increasing and its impact on the enjoyment of right to vote. This if addressed will go a long way in filling the gap and finding viable solutions on the low voter turnout and the exercise and enjoyment of the right to vote.

## **2.2 Voter Perception of the right to Vote**

The Human Rights Advocate (2010) defines the right to vote as a basic human right that empowers citizens to influence governmental decision-making and to safeguard their other human rights. It has been world widely acclaimed as a right that protects all other rights, *ibid* and has been included in all international instruments although its derogation remains wide spread.

The right to vote derives its legal basis from and is asserted in article 21 of the UDHR which provides among others that;

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures. (UDHR: 1948)

Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) codifies the right to vote as a civil and political right, a fundamental right to ensure that individuals can influence governmental decision-making through taking part in the conduct of public affairs and genuine, transparent and periodic elections. The right to vote is a preservative of all other rights and is also known as suffrage, which is commonly associated with the right to vote in political elections and also refers to the act of voting in such an election.

Furthermore, the right to vote is protected under several regional human rights instruments, including Article 13 of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), Article 23 of the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR), and Protocol One of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Historically, the right to vote has been associated with the struggle for political survival through race, gender and other social dimensions.

According to Pintor, (2004), the history of the right to vote is basically a story of social conflict in quest for universal suffrage in the western world. He further notes that this was an important aspect of the social and political emancipation of newly emerging social classes during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He points out that the emerging classes were first the urban middle class, then the industrial proletariat and finally the peasantry.

Between 1870 and the 1940s, universal suffrage was established for males in Austria, Denmark, Italy, France, Spain, and Switzerland. During the same period, male adult suffrage was extended to the entire male adult population in countries like Belgium, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and Sweden. *Ibid* concludes that while in many of these countries

women's right to vote was legally established after the First World War, Switzerland and Liechtenstein only enfranchised women in 1971 and 1984 respectively.

In the US, the story dates back to 1776s when only white males who owned property and were Protestants had the right to vote. African Americans, women and other races were only allowed to vote in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That notwithstanding however, the right to vote is not held equally in the US today and important to note is that it is not provided for in the US Constitution (1776).

The African continent experienced suffrage as and when individual countries became independent. Prior to independence, African countries were characterized by African political traditions comprised of kingdoms and chiefdoms before colonialism, and colonial dictatorship during the colonial era, *Women Suffrage and beyond* (2011 – 2015). Therefore the right to vote in Africa was a strange western tradition which was, unlike in the western world, not borne out of social conflict, but granted to all irrespective of status and awareness.

Africa as a continent has subsequently embraced the right to vote and guaranteed it under article 13 of the African charter but not as explicitly as is provided for in the UDHR and ICCPR.

The right to vote in Uganda was first recognized and provided for in the 1962 Independence Constitution. Under the 1962 Constitution article 44 thereof, provision was made that 'a person who had attained the age of twenty- one years, was a citizen and had been resident in Uganda for six months prior to the date of registration, had a right to be registered as a voter for purposes of elections...' The 1962 Constitution was replaced with the 1967 Republican Constitution under which the 1980 General elections were held.

The 1967 Constitution was in turn replaced by the 1995 Constitution which makes provision in article 59 for the right to vote, the duty of a citizen to register for elections and the duty of the state to facilitate voter registration and enjoyment of the right to vote. It is under the

provisions of the 1995 Constitution that elections were held in 2001, 2006 and 2011. And it is under the very Constitution that the EC released a roadmap for the 2016 general elections. It is therefore imperative that for a citizen who fulfils the Constitutional requirements, one must be duly registered and appearing on the voters register before enjoying the right to vote.

In Uganda, the enjoyment of the right to vote has been very murky given the way it was introduced, the diverse traditions and the tumultuous history the country has undergone through since independence. According to CCEDU (2014), since 1996, the question of a clean and credible voters register in Uganda has been a questionable issue time and again. *Ibid* reports that hundreds of voters were turned away from the polling stations across the country on account of their names missing from the voters roll. These voters it is reported had originally been on the 1994 Constituency Assembly (CA) voters register but were omitted from the 1996 'corrected version' of the national voters register. This alleged omission resulted into denial of the constitutional right to vote which should have otherwise been enjoyed. These are very serious issues of disenfranchisement which call for investigations to establish the impact of the process of voter registration on the right to vote and voter turnout. Of the 46 respondents who participated in the study, only 33% representing 15 respondents had an idea on what the right to vote with the majority having just emotional attachment to candidates as the reason to register to vote. Then again CCEDU observes that, the number of registered voters decreased from 10.7 million registered in 2001 to 10.4 million in 2006. These discrepancies raise serious questions of enjoyment of the right to vote being impacted on by the process of registration which in turn affects voter turnout. What is the correlation between the registration process, the right to vote and voter turnout?

### **2.3 Why Voter Turnout is Low**

According to Rose (2004), voter turnout is one measure of electoral participation usually expressed as the percentage of eligible voters who cast a vote or 'turn out' at an election. The number of those who cast their vote includes those who cast blank or invalid votes, as they still participate.

Robust voter turnout is fundamental to a healthy democracy and low turnout is usually attributed to political disengagement and the belief that voting for one candidate/party or another will do little to alter public policy and it is a widely held view that established democracies tend to have higher turnout than other countries, Fairvote (2014). The reasons for voter participation vary from country to country but Holmberg and Oskarsson, (2004) have identified three general explanations, and these are: Institutional, Contextual and Individual explanations. Institutional explanation concerns itself with how the administration works, when elections are held and how easy it is to vote and the frequency of voting. Contextual explanations on the other hand have two sub-categories; the political and the social one. The political takes into account the elections themselves – if it is a first or second order election (is it a general election or one to elect people in the municipality?), how the campaign is conducted, and the parties actions and how they are viewed by the electorate. The social category deals with the general turnout, the motivation and the participation of people around the voter. Finally, the individual explanation deals with the voter and the individuals place in society which may include the following; the social status, integration, political interest and feelings of voting as a duty, Gerber et al (2008). Lehman et al., (1995), identifies other individual characteristics like education, class, gender and age as equally important in determining how and if people vote. According to CEDDU (2014), in Uganda, the corporate class regards election time as a holiday and do not care to turn up and vote since the results will not affect their livelihood.

*Ibid* Rose has observed that Western Europe has more long-established democracies than any other region of the world yet turnout has varied from country to country and he identifies the following reasons for the variations: compulsory voting, citizens are materially better off, free elections are long established, elections are held on a rest day, government is important for the citizens material well being.

In Uganda, the issue of low voter turnout has of recent come to the forefront leading to a campaign dubbed TOPOWA; CCEDU (2015) aimed at trying to reach out to the growing number of people who are apathetic to elections for various reasons. TOPOWA is aimed at voter mobilization to ensure that the historical tendencies of low voter turnout are overcome. According to the Vice Chairman of the electoral commission, citizens should follow up their registration by voting and he noted "it's unfair to register, remain with number and not use it *ibid*." The campaign points to the question that was lingering in mind that 'why if people are registered to vote don't they exercise and enjoy their right to vote?' Why do we have a situation of increasing registered voters and yet the voter turnout continuously decreases? What could be the potential causal link that runs between voting system, voter turnout and the right to vote? The 46 respondents who participated in the research revealed that low voter turnout was largely caused by institutional factors like the administration works of the electoral process, contextual like the way the electoral commission conducts the elections and individual like the social status of the electorate interest and various characteristics.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed description of the research methodology which lays down the frame work through which the study was connected. It entails the research design, area of study,

population of study, sampling procedures, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis, management and processing, ethical considerations and limitations.

### **3.1 Research Design**

The single case design, which is a detailed study of a chosen social unit (Payne et al, 2004), and involves systematic gathering of information (Berg, 2001), is defined as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used' (Yin, 1989). This single case study was used because of its focus on a single unit, small scale; detail basis and can disapprove a general statement, (Payne et al, 2004).

Critics allege that the 'poor relation' status of case study research results largely from the charge that case studies lack objectivity and cannot be generalized, case studies lack a sufficient sample size for statistical testing and lack rigor, (Yin, 1989). Criticisms notwithstanding, case studies do provide some of the most attracting and creative research in the social sciences (Miller and Brewer, 2003). The design will be used with the qualitative approach to detail the impact of the registration process on the right to vote on the residents of Kamuli village, the area of study.

According to (Payne et al, 2004), the qualitative approach is ideal for community studies, ethnography and participant observation among others, and helps to investigate how ordinary people observe their lives and what meaning they attach to the interactions; qualitative approach is based on intensive study of as many features as possible of one or a small number of phenomena and in this case the registration process and its impact on the right to vote. The core concern of the qualitative approach is to seek out and interpret the meanings that people bring to their own actions, rather than describing any regularities or statistical associations

between ‘variables’. What do the people of Kamuli village understand by the registration process of voters and how do they relate it to the right to vote? Their participation was treated as part of an entire social process and context and not just as an isolated happening.

*Ibid* concludes that, the qualitative approach sets out to encounter social phenomena as they naturally occur, operate at a less abstract and generalized level of explanation, utilize non-representative, small samples of people, focus on the detail of human life and rather than starting with a theoretical hypothesis, and trying to test it, they explore the data they encounter and allow ideas to emerge from them using inductive logic, that is to say reaching conclusion based on the study.

This design was used to understand how the conduct of the registration process has impacted on the right of registered voters to vote in Kamuli village. Payne observes further that this design ‘helps dramatize and sort out issues’, and in this case of the registration process and the right to vote, by proving or refuting the generalized concerns. Berg (2001), concludes that this opens the way for discoveries and recommends viable solutions.

### **3.2 Area of Study**

The area of study was in Wakiso district, Kyaddondo East constituency, Kira sub-county, Kireka parish and special focus was devoted to Kamuli village where the researcher has been resident for the last 18 years. The area of focus was largely cosmopolitan, composed of almost all ethnic groupings in Uganda, a center for the disabled, a school for persons with special needs and highly populated. The parish also has many schools, places of worship and vocational training institutes.

### **3.3 Study Population**

The target population consisted of 40 ordinary registered voters in Kamuli village and identified 6 key informants the local council chairman, officials from the EC, leaders of NGOs and identified civil servants within and out of the area of study. This population was chosen to be able to give an insight into the trend of voter turnout in the village in particular and elsewhere generally, and how voter turnout impacts on the exercise of the right to vote.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedures**

According to Kothari (2004), a sample design is a plan for obtaining a sample from a given population and refers to the procedures the researcher adopts in selecting the number of items to be included in the sample (sample size) and this is determined before data collection. There are many sample designs but one needs to select a reliable and appropriate one for the research. He goes on to add that, in developing a sample design, one should define the objects, sampling unit, source list, size, (which should be optimum by being efficient, representative, reliable and flexible) parameters of interest, budgetary constraints and sampling procedure.

The study mixed both probability and non-probability sampling methods including systematic sampling, purposive sampling and simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants with particular emphasis to officials of the Electoral commission (employees of EC like the DR), Civil Society Organizations and local leaders in Wakiso district, Kira Municipality, Kamuli village. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample with the registered voters within Kamuli village. Convenient sampling was used with the Electoral commission leadership (Commissioners). The sample size was forty six (46) respondents. The sample size was based on the availability of resources, manpower considerations, budget, ethics and sampling frame.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

Data collection is the gathering of specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts, (Kombo et al, 2009). In collecting data a researcher must understand what is required, how to obtain it, have a clear vision of the instruments to be used, the respondents and the selected unit.

Data is collected for various reasons, but salient among these are; the stimulation of ideas, to influence legislative policy, to highlight a situation and create awareness for improvement among others. Researchers use primary and secondary sources of data. Kothari (2004), says that primary data is information gathered directly from respondents whereas secondary data is collection and analysis of published material and information and other diverse sources of documents or electronically stored information. The study was conducted using data collected from primary sources who were largely the 46 registered respondents.

Kothari (2004) observes that there are several methods of collecting primary data which include; the observation, interview, questionnaire methods, whereas secondary data collection method is by compilation.

#### **3.5.1 Interview**

Interviewing is defined simply as a conversation with a purpose to gather information, Denzin (1978) and Marshall and Rossman (1999). The interview method involves oral-verbal stimuli and reply in oral-verbal responses. The interview can be personal which is by face to face contact or by telephone means and is usually structured with predetermined questions (Berg, 2001). Interviews are more suitable for questions that require probing to obtain adequate information. This was the method that was employed to extract data from the respondents.

Walliman (2011) argues that the use of interviews to question samples of people is a very flexible tool with a wide range of applications and he identifies three types of interviews often used as: the Structured interview which comprises of standardized questions read out by the interviewer according to an interview schedule, the unstructured interview which is a flexible format, usually based on a question guide but where the format remains the choice of the interviewer, who can allow the interview to ‘ramble’ in order to get insights into the attitudes of the interviewee and the semi-structured interview which contains structured and unstructured sections with standardized and open type questions.

Walliman (2011) observes that interviews are, particularly useful when qualitative data are required and can be used for, either general or specific subjects in nature. Interviews are advantageous in that the interviewer is in a good position to judge the quality of the responses, to notice if a question has not been properly understood and to encourage the respondent to be full in his/her answers. Face-to-face interviews was carried out in a variety of situations: in the home, at work, outdoors, on the move and was used to interview people both singly and in groups and the use of visual signs, such as nods, smiles helps to generate good responses. All the 46 respondents were interviewed using the face-to-face approach in a variety of situations and were held singly in all situations.

### **3.5.2 The Key Informant Interview**

Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community UCLA (2010). This method was used to interview 6 of the respondents who included the Local council Chairman, Leaders from Non –government organizations (NGOs), officials from the Electoral Commission and selected civil servants.

According to (Payne et al, 2004), key informants are those whose social positions in a research setting give them specialist knowledge about other people, processes or happenings that is more

extensive, detailed or privileged than ordinary people, and who are therefore particularly valuable sources of information to a researcher.

There are two common techniques used to conduct key informant interviews: Telephone Interviews and Face-to-Face Interviews.

The main purpose of Key informant interviews includes getting information about a pressing issue or problem in the community from a limited number of well-connected and informed community experts; understanding the motivation and beliefs of community residents on a particular issue; getting information from people with diverse backgrounds and opinions and be able to ask in-depth and probing questions; discussing sensitive topics and getting respondents' candid discussion of the topic.

The advantages of this method are that: detailed and rich data can be gathered in a relatively easy and inexpensive way; it allows the interviewer to establish rapport with the respondent and clarify questions; it provides an opportunity to build or strengthen relationships with important community informants and stakeholders; it can raise awareness, interest, and enthusiasm around an issue and the interviewer can contact informants to clarify issues as needed. The disadvantages are that selecting the "right" key informants may be difficult so they represent diverse backgrounds and viewpoints; it may be challenging to reach and schedule interviews with busy and/or hard-to-reach respondents and it is difficult to generalize results to the larger population unless interviewing many key informants. The disadvantages notwithstanding however, the advantages for the Key Informant Interview method outweigh and make it imperative for its applicability for the study.

The research was conducted using the primary data collection method which specifically focused on the interview method and data compilation and analysis.

The interview guide and the Key informant interview guide were the main instruments used since the study was mainly concerned with sharing experiences. The sample size of 46

respondents was large enough and given the time constraint, the interview method was the most ideal instrument for collecting data.

### **3.6 Data Processing, Management and Analysis**

Kothari (2004) reiterates that data analysis is the processing, displaying, organizing, relating and interpreting data in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan and further observes that data is first processed and this involves editing, coding, classifying and tabulation for ease of analysis.

Kombo et al (2009) adds that data is organized by getting it from its raw form to information, information to facts, facts to knowledge which is new information, new experiences and views.

Qualitative researchers use various procedures to analyze their data so as to get it from its raw form through to knowledge. Miles and Huberman (1994) identify three major approaches to qualitative data analysis: interpretative approaches, social anthropological approaches, and collaborative social research approaches. According to Berg, these three approaches lead to a standard set of analytic activities arranged in a general order of sequence as follows: data are collected and made into text in the form of field notes or transcripts; this is followed by codes which are analytically developed or inductively identified in the data and affixed to sets of notes or transcript pages. At this time the process of attaching names and categorization of data or themes is done. Materials are then sorted by these categories, identifying similar phrases, patterns, relationships, and commonalties or disparities.

The sorted materials are examined to isolate meaningful patterns and processes and finally identified patterns are considered in light of previous research and theories, and a small set of generalizations are established. This process reduces data through thematization of the objects to related categories so that it is interpreted and explained meaning fully.



Data collected in relation to what motivates voter registration were coded, categorized and named as such since it answered that particular theme. This ensured that voter registration related data was analyzed relevantly.

Secondly, data related to the question of perception of the right to vote and the measures to ensure it is enjoyed were coded, categorized and named as such to answer the theme of the perceptions to the right to vote. Thirdly and finally, the question of failure to vote by registered voters was coded, categorized and named as such to analyze the theme as required to enable the understanding of low voter turnout.

In this study, the independent variable voter turnout was categorical while the dependent variable the right to vote was continuous. In this situation, Kothari (2004) advises that it is suitable to analyze data using inferential and thematic analysis. Inferential analysis is important because it helps us draw conclusions about the declining voter turnout despite the increasing numbers on the voter register for us to be able to know whether the right to vote is enjoyed or not. Thematic analyses on the other hand helps in classifying major themes or topics for the research and identify associations between them for conclusions. Thematic analysis guided in the low voter turnout as a theme and the right to vote as the other.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical Considerations involved introducing the purpose of the research to the respondents and its nature so as to obtain their consent. The major ethical problem in this study was the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents. This was ensued by seeking the necessary permission and non-disclosure to all respondents concerned. Obtaining a valid sample involved gaining access to specific individuals and offices. This may infringe on their privacy, therefore confidentiality was of paramount importance in the study.

The researcher sought permission from the Electoral commission and was given assurance of confidentiality which enabled respondents to express themselves and give accurate information and also gain access to the restricted facilities like the offices and updates centers. The researcher further obtained permission from the key informants to be able to use their names and the data they provided.

Lastly, all works and sources referred to during research were properly and clearly acknowledged with the academic integrity required of such works and sources.

### **3.8 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the Study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impact or influence the interpretation of the findings from the research. Limitations include money, time, personnel, tools and techniques involved in the study.

The research was conducted in a semi-cosmopolitan area which requires money to fund all related activities and to ensure that the exit from the research area is favorable. The funds available for both research and compilation were limited, so it was imperative that the research was conducted promptly and with precision to avoid unnecessary expenditure. Where necessary, funds were borrowed to ensure that the desired end state is achieved.

The tools and techniques required for the study like Atlas TI for qualitative analysis were not easily available. To acquire one required a lot of money and which caused delay in the analysis. To subvert this, it was necessary to hire one or find cheaper alternatives.

Finally, without prejudice to the foregoing, 2015/2016 was an election year and doing electoral related research was exciting and challenging so it had to be done cautiously to avoid suspicion and issues which would compromise integrity and honesty.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research study together with the discussions of the findings. The presentation, analysis and discussion of the study findings are in line with the research objectives as guided by the research questions. The chapter starts with presentation of the basic demographic characteristics of the respondents. The discussion of the factors leading to low voter turn up despite voters being registered to vote has also been presented. In order for the researcher to explore the objectives of the research, the researcher has presented the key factors which motivate citizens to register to vote; the perception by the registered voters of the right to vote and the factors which hinder registered voters from exercising their right to vote.

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presents the social demographic characteristic of the respondents. The researcher aimed at establishing the gender, age, educational level and employment status of the respondents in relation to their voting rights. The findings are presented in sub-sections below.

##### 4.1.1 Gender

This research study was comprised of 46 respondents categorized as key informants and ordinary registered voters. Of these, 6 respondents were key informants and 40 were ordinary registered voters. Accordingly, of the 46 respondents, 25 respondents were male and 21 respondents were female.

**Figure 1: Gender of the respondents**

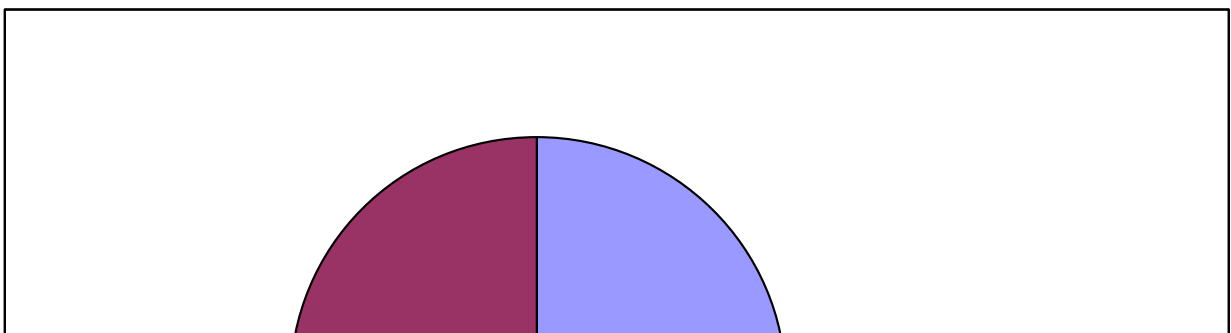
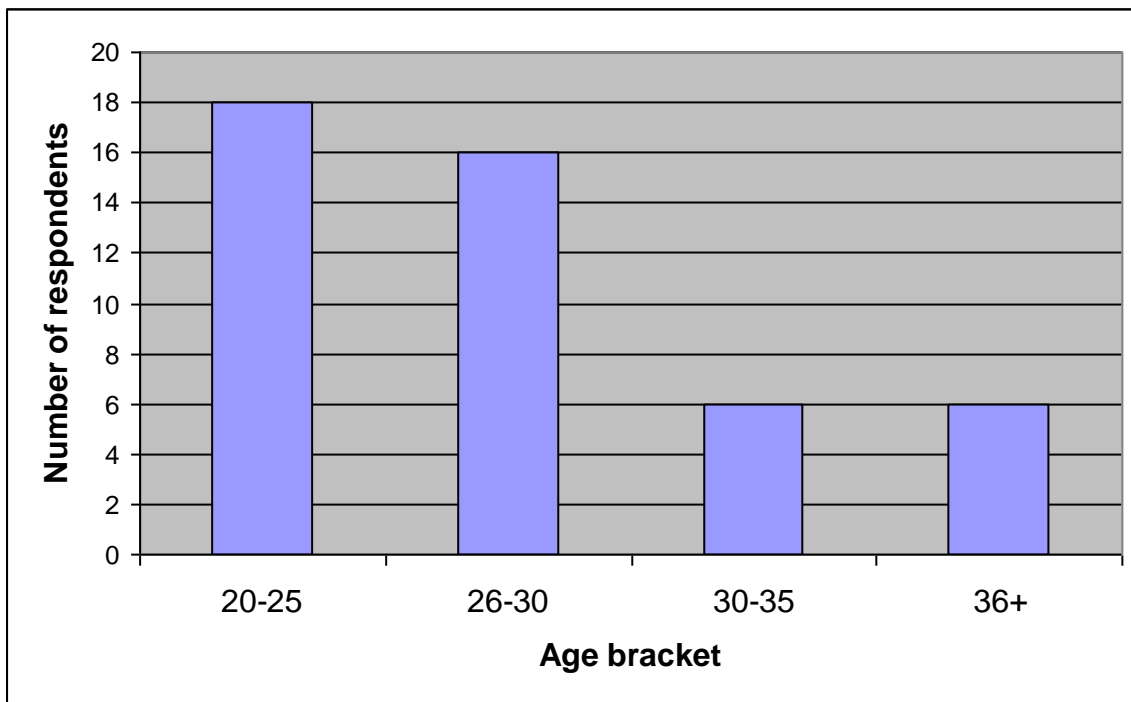


Figure 1 above (pie chart), indicates that of the 46 respondents who were interviewed, 25 respondents representing 54% were male and 21 respondents representing 46% were female. Therefore the representation of respondents by gender in this research study was fairly balanced. This gives an impression that the participation of both male and female in the voting exercises is fairly balanced although the males tend to be slightly more interested in the exercise as opposed to their female counterparts.

#### **4.1.2 Age of the Respondents**

In this research study, the researcher targeted the age brackets of those who had attained the voting rights status in accordance with article 59 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. Therefore in order to get an informed research study, the researcher intentionally and imperatively selected respondents who had attained their eligibility to vote as prescribed by the Constitution. Consequently the age of the respondents were categorized in the age brackets of; 20-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36+, the voting age.

**Figure 2: Showing the age brackets of respondents**



As indicated in the bar graph above (figure 2), of the 46 respondents who participated in this research study, 18 of the respondents representing 39% were in the age bracket of 20-25 years. This was followed by the age bracket of 26-30 years, where the number of respondents was 16 in number, making a percentage of 35% and lastly, the age brackets of 31-35 years and 36+ years each was represented by 6 respondents making a percentage of 13% each. This implies that this research study was dominated by the age bracket of 20-25 and 26-30 years who are the youth representing 74%, and all the respondents had attained the required voting age in accordance with the Constitutional provisions. Therefore this gives an impression that, the biggest percentage of registered voters in the study area in particular and Uganda in general, is dominated by the youthful age of 20-30 years. This is also in agreement with the 2014 population census which established that the youthful age takes the biggest percentage of the Ugandan population, The New Vision Newspaper (2013).

### 4.1.3 Education levels of respondents

The education levels of respondents in this research study were categorized starting with Primary, Secondary, tertiary institutions, University and None (meaning those who did not indicate their education level).

**Figure 3: A bar graph showing the education level of respondents**

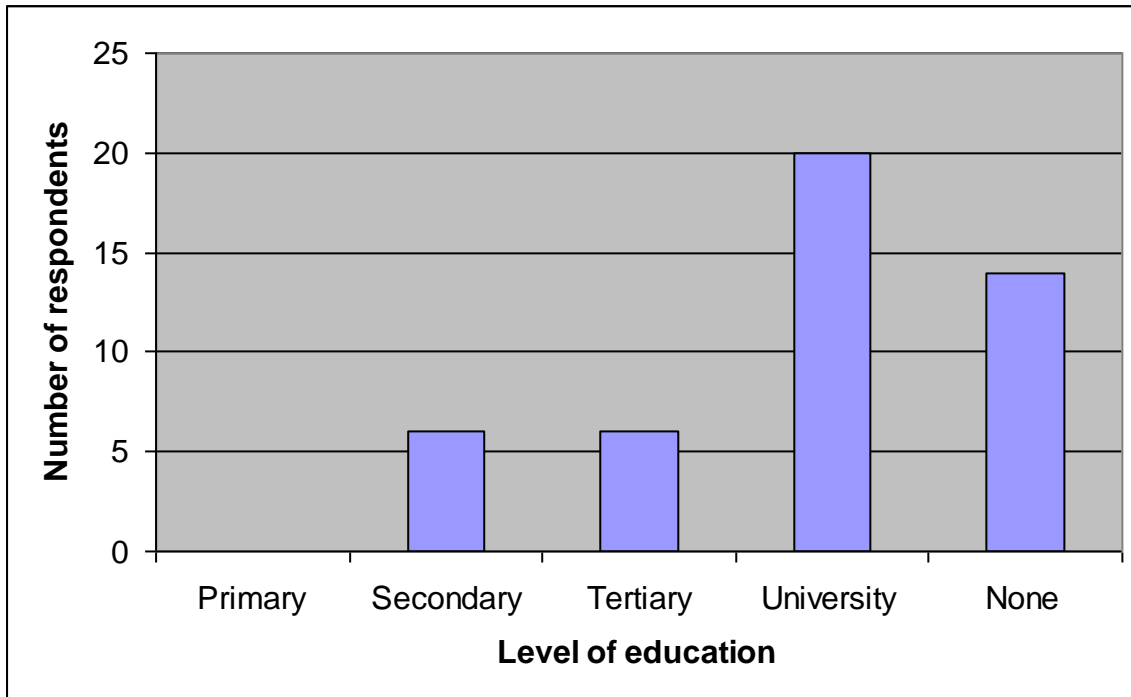


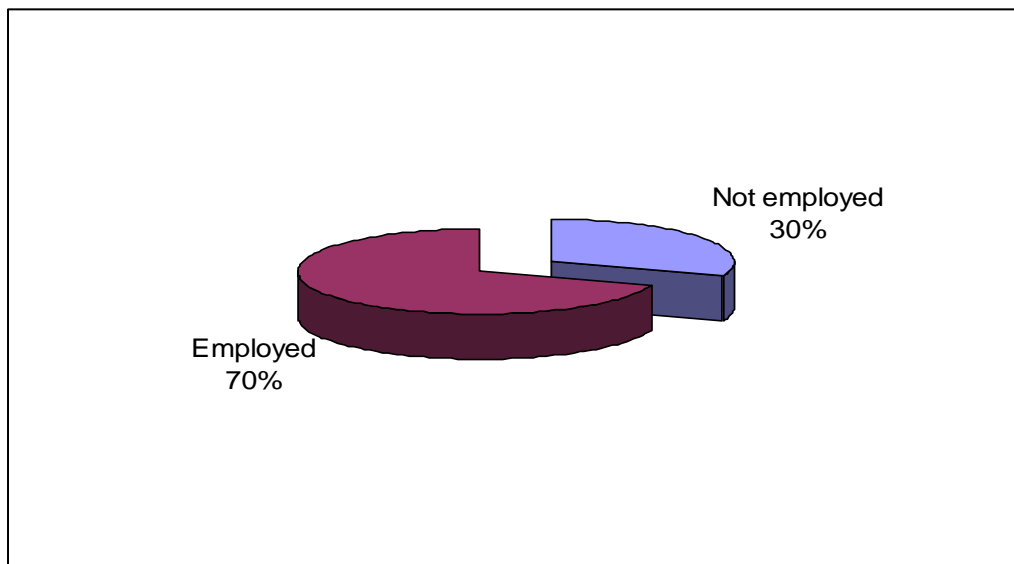
Figure 3 above indicates that, of the 46 respondents who participated in the study, 20 of them representing 43% were university graduates, this was followed by those who stubbornly declined to reveal any education level (but could talk in English) who were 14 respondents making 30% and those in secondary and tertiary were 6 respondents each making a percentage of 13% each. Finally none of the respondents reported to have attained primary level as his or her highest level of education. Therefore in this research study, the majority of the respondents were educated persons dominated by university graduates. This gives an impression that most educated people take the responsibility of registering as voters which gives them the mandate

to exercise their right to vote and those who are not educated are influenced by those educated to go and register for voting.

#### 4.1.4 Employment Status

In regard to the employment status of the respondents, the findings revealed 30 percent of the respondents were unemployed while the biggest percentage of 70% was employed. The researcher further analyzed the nature of employment status of respondents.

**Figure 4: A pie chart showing employment statuses of the respondents**

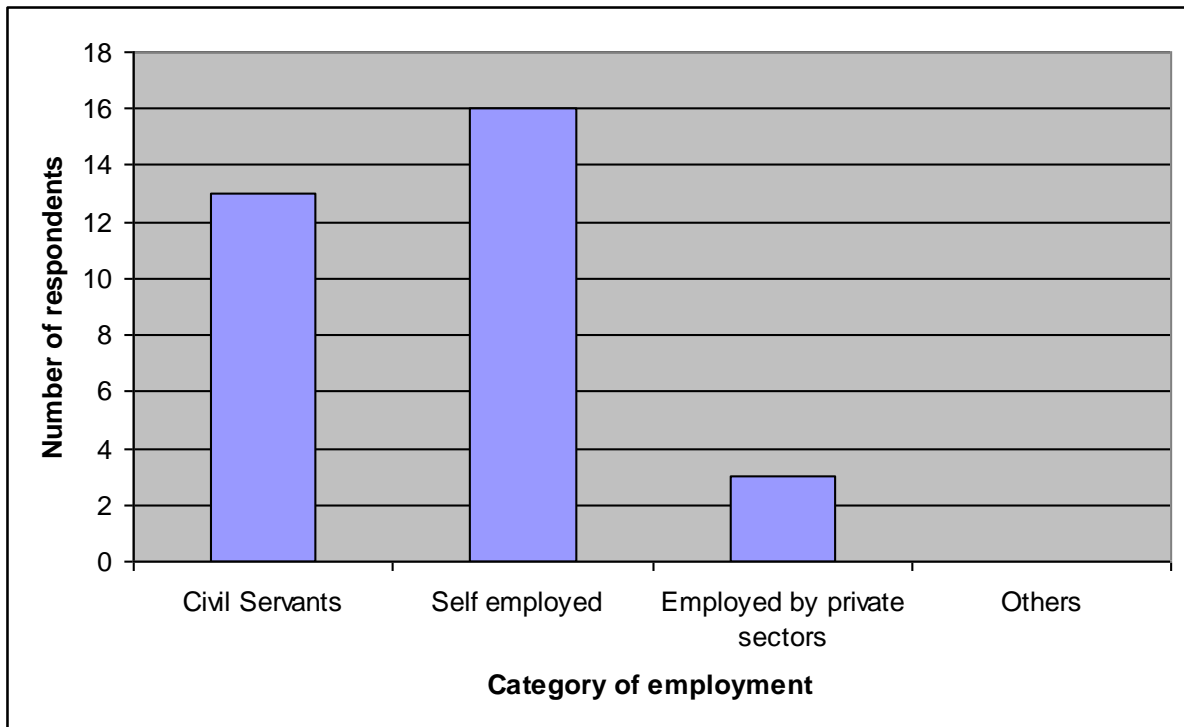


#### 4.1.5 Nature of employments of respondents

As seen in the pie chart above, 32 respondents which was represented by 70% of the respondents reported to be employed and working to sustain their lives. The nature of employment of the respondents were categorized as civil servants, self employed, employed by private sectors and others.



**Figure 5: A bar graph showing employments status of respondents**



The findings revealed that of the 32 respondents who were employed, 16 of them representing 50% were self employed. In this context self employed means respondents who own personal businesses like retail shops, food stalls, road side vending, shoe repairs, bars, and restaurants. 13 respondents representing 41% of the employed respondents reported to be civil servants, meaning they were employed and serving the government of the Republic of Uganda and 3 of the respondents representing 9% of the respondents were employed by other private sectors, meaning, they were employed by companies and civil society organizations. From this, a conclusion can be made that the biggest percentage of registered voters is self employed. This in one way or the other may affect the level at which voters turn up to register and eventually voter turnout to vote and participating in the voting exercise as they claim to be busy with their private businesses. However, what could be underlying the claim to be busy is the poverty level as put by one of the key informants Edgar Musasizi “people are preoccupied with looking for

survival. Citizens live a subsistence life which is preoccupied with survival which affects their morale of participating.’

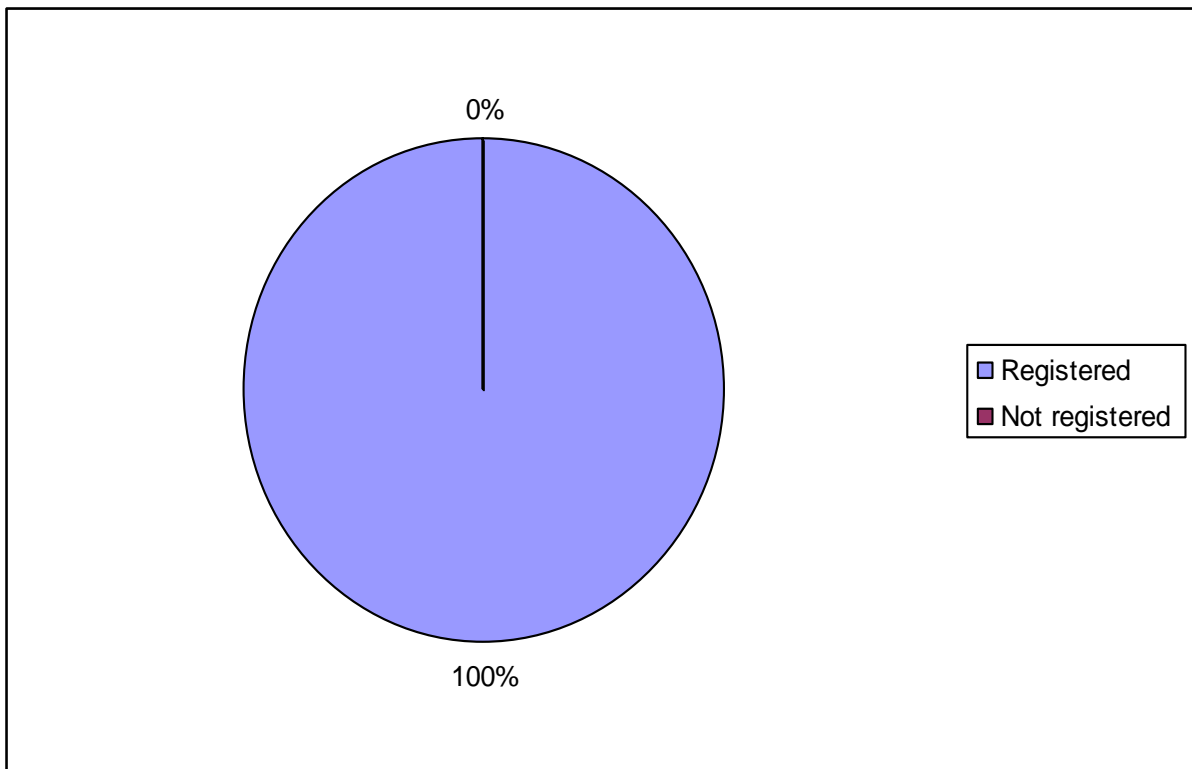
#### **4.2 Motivational factors to register to vote**

In this research study in order to establish what motivates citizens’ to register to vote, it was imperative to know the registration status of the respondents, the reasons why the respondents registered to vote, for how long they had been registered voters and the ways through which citizens who are not registered can be encouraged to register to vote. According to Bryan et al (2011), we can dramatically boost turnout simply by reminding people to “be a voter” rather than “to vote.” This he argues leads people to think about their social identity and to view themselves as good citizens worthy of social approval. To tell a person to be a voter is to encourage them to register to vote if they are not registered. Musasizi Edgar (key informant) observed that ‘people register to vote in order to determine their destiny in terms of effective governance, better leadership and participation in the political processes’. Ntambi Robert (key informant) added that ‘it is their right because without registering they cannot vote, and others to secure identity cards or voters card as a status thing’. Finally, Chrispy Kaheru (key informant) said that it is ‘a civic duty, people want to fraternize, others respond to a government call and that those who have attained age want to be recognized as voters’.

##### **4.2.1 Voting Registration Status of Respondents**

The voting registration status of the respondents was categorized as registered voters since all respondents were registered and the target group for the research was registered voters.

**Figure 6: A pie chart showing registration status of respondents**

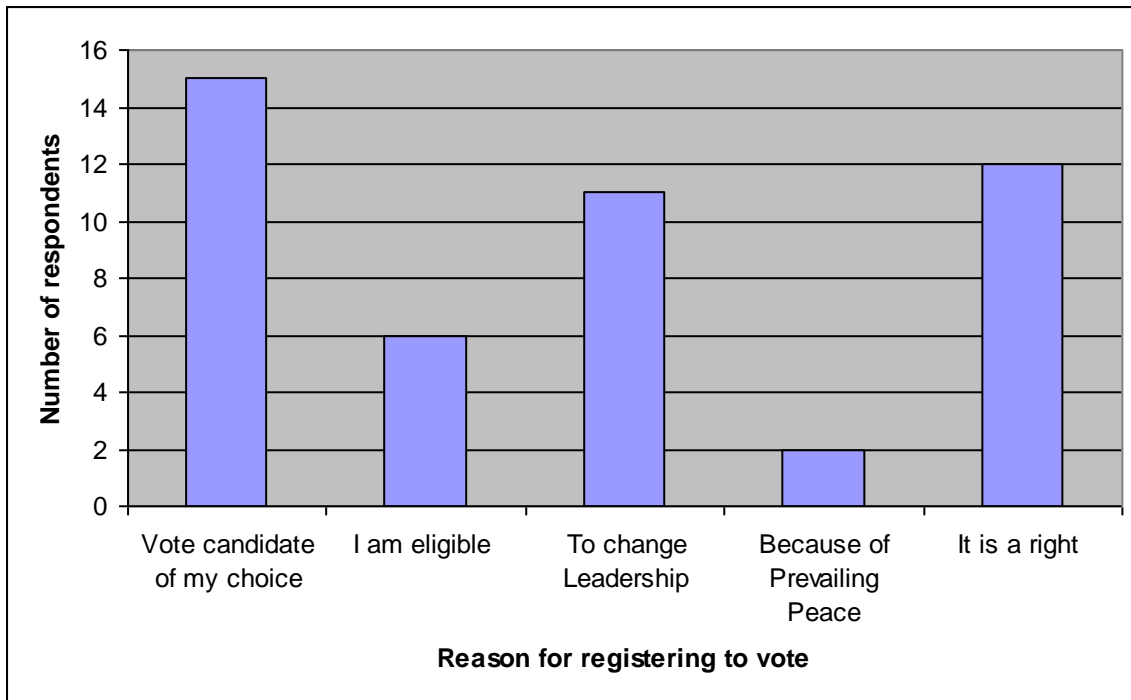


As seen in the above pie chart, all the 46 respondents who participated in this research study were registered voters. Therefore this implies that 100% of the respondents who participated in this research study were registered voters.

#### **4.2.2 Motivation to Register to Vote**

The research study was interested in establishing among others, what motivate citizens to register to vote. The findings of the research study indicated that the reasons why voters were inspired to register to vote included; voting candidates of their own choice, being eligible to vote, to change leadership, to maintain prevailing peace and finally that voting is a constitutional right.

**Figure 7: A bar graph showing reasons for registering to vote**



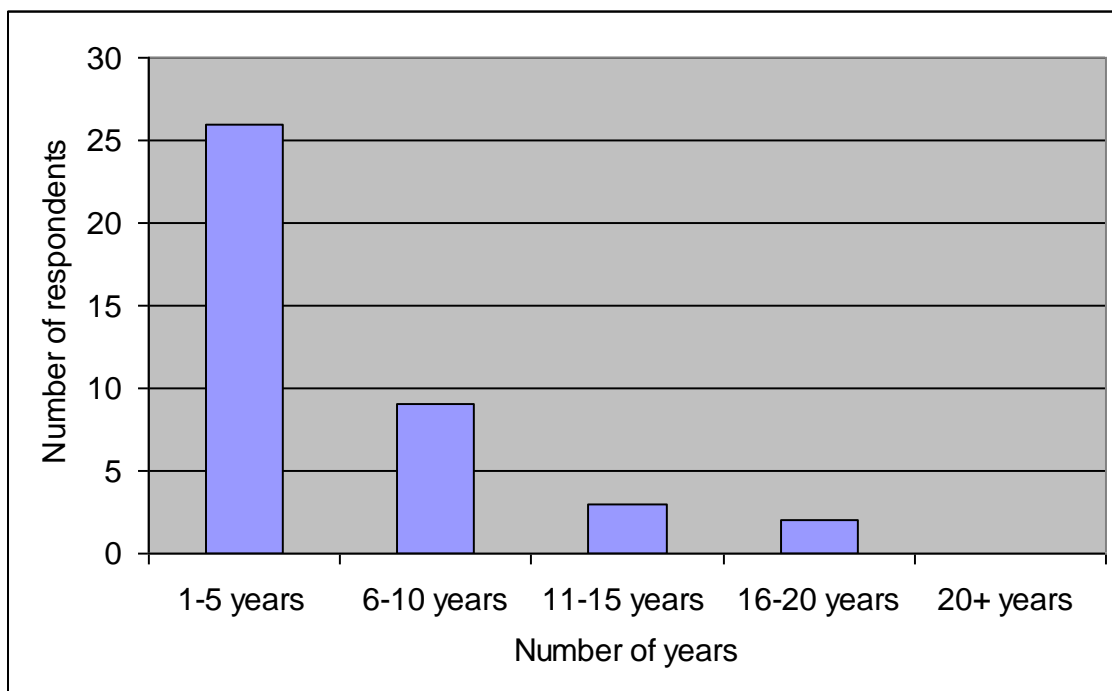
As indicated in the bar graph above, there were many reasons as to why people registered to vote. Out of the 46 respondents, 15 respondents representing 33% indicated that the reason why citizens registered to vote was solely to vote candidates of their choices, these were the majority. This was followed by 12 respondents who indicated that it was their right to register to vote with a percentage of 26% and 11 respondents representing 24% indicating that their motive to register for voting was none other than to change the existing leadership. The next category of 6 respondents representing 13% indicated that they registered to vote because they were adults (18 years) and therefore eligible to vote. Finally only 2 respondents representing 4% indicated that they registered to vote to maintain the prevailing peace in the country. Therefore it can be concluded that the main motivating factors which inspired people to register to vote were; voting candidates of their own choices, because it was their constitutional right and finally to change the prevailing leadership. It can further be deduced that the majority of

respondents would decline to exercise their right to vote in the event that the candidate of their choice is not contesting as opposed to enjoying their right to vote.

#### 4.2.3 Period respondents have been registered

This question was asked with the aim of establishing the number of years the respondents have been on the register of voters since they first registered to vote. This question was specifically for the target ordinary registered voters who were 40 in number. They were categorized in the brackets of 1-5 years, 6-10years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years and 20+ years. The table below indicates the number of years the respondents had taken since they first registered to vote.

**Figure 8: A bar graph showing the period respondents have registered to vote**



As indicated in the above bar graph, of the 40 respondents, 26 of them representing 65% had been registered for a period ranging from 1-5 years, this was followed by those ranging from 6-10 years who were 9 respondents representing 23% and 3 respondents representing 8% had been registered for a period ranging from 11-15years, and only two respondents representing 5% were recorded to have been on the register for the period ranging from 16-20years and none

was reported to be falling above 20 years. This implies that those on the register for the period ranging from 1-5 years dominated this research study and since the last voting was conducted five years ago, it is very clear that the research study was dominated by those who were freshly registered to vote for the first time, and are mainly the youth of age between 18-30 years. This gives an impression that there is always an increase in the number of registered voters at every election to cater for the fresh voters who are not only motivated to vote for the first time, but are also enthusiastic to be called voters. Registering to vote does not however mean that they will vote because research has showed that young people shun elections for a lot of reasons like being too mobile by changing addresses (PBS Newshour Extra, 2014), they are disengaged and mistrust politics (Hudson, 2010), they do not feel they have much of a stake in society (Economist, 2014) and yes they do not feel that there is anyone worth voting for. Further that the researcher could not at this stage establish why registered voters do not vote since all the other respondents who have been on the register for more than 5 years had been voting previously.

#### **4.2.4 How voter registration status is established**

The knowledge about the voting status of the voters was established through consultations from the key informants who included local leaders, electoral commission officials, and civil society personnel. According to the responses recorded by the researcher, the knowledge of the voters eligibility to vote depended on electoral commission which is mandated to issue verification means through which the voters are made aware whether they are eligible to vote or not. Below are the means through which respondents knew that they were eligible to vote.

##### **4.2.5.1 Issuing of Voters card**

Musasizi Edgar, a key informant and one of the respondents, said that in preparing for the 2001 general elections, the Electoral Commission of Uganda, registered all citizens of voting age and issued them with voter's cards. He further adds that, during the 2001 elections period, a voter's card was instrumental in letting citizens of Uganda know that they were registered voters and eligible to vote. Respondents (5 representing 13%) who had been registered for the period ranging from 11 – 20 years were in agreement with Musasizi's assertion about the voters' card that it was indeed instrumental in informing the citizens that they were registered voters and eligible to vote. Given that the majority of the respondents were registering for the first time, a voter's card did not feature as one of the ways in which they established their voter registration status.

#### **4.2.5.2 Display of voters register**

According to Chrispy Kaheru one of the key informants, 'the majority of the registered voters know that they are registered to vote through voters register placed at the polling station before the actual dates for elections. In this process, the electoral commission is always charged with the duty of printing out voters registers, posting them to the respective polling stations and attaching polling assistants to help voters in establishing whether their names appear in the voters register. All respondents and key informants were in agreement with this observation that it is the most common way in which registered voters know their registration status. Davis Asimwe, another the key informant expressed the same view about the display of the voters register

#### **4.2.5.3 Voter location slip**

A voter location slip is a piece of paper given to a voter indicating the particulars of the voter and the polling station where the voter is entitled to exercise his or her voting rights. According to Ntambi Robert, a key informant, the system of voter location slip was introduced by the

electoral commission in the 2016 general elections where all voters were given voter location slip with details of the polling stations where they were going to cast their votes. Therefore in order for the voters to know that they were eligible to vote, the voter location slip was a requirement in the absence of any other system. The research study established through all the respondents that the voter location slip was another innovation by the electoral commission to enable registered voters aware that they were registered to vote and to enable them cast their vote on Election Day.

#### **4.2.5.4 The Electoral Commission web page**

According to the key informants (Chrispy Kaheru, Muwanga Moses, Edgar Musasizi and Davis Asimwe), the electoral commission designed a web database where all registered voters could establish their registration status. The online (EC, 2015) tool was designed to help voters easily check their votability without having to line up at the various registration centers. However, this means of verification was only meant for the elite class as it involved the knowledge of use of information and communication technology and of which the majority of the registered voters could not easily access. Therefore the implication with this kind of method in accessing the voter registration status was not easily accessible to most of the voters given the costs involved in accessing internet and the illiteracy levels of the voters in using the internet and indeed 20 of the ordinary voters had not even heard about it and the rest only had a vague idea.

#### **4.2.5.5 Text messages**

Out of the 46 respondents who participated in this research study, 18 of them representing 39% reported that the use of text messages by the Electoral Commission to establish registration status of the voter was yet another method used to verify whether the citizens were registered or not. This method involved the use of a mobile phone by sending a text message of the Voter Number, Application ID or National Identification Number (NIN) to 8228 of the voter to verify

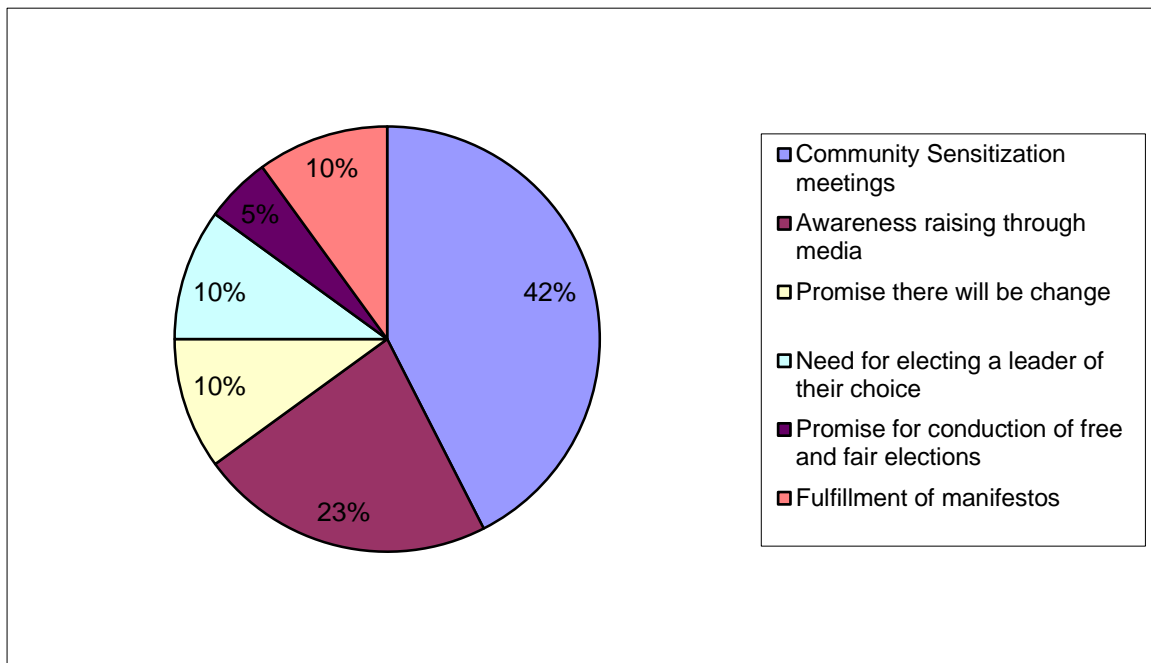


and establish the registration status. However it was noted that this method was complicated and the majority of respondents did not take it as the best method to verify their voting registration status. According to the respondents, the challenge with this method was that sometimes, the text message requests could not respond immediately or totally fail to give responses. This in one way or the other discouraged the majority of respondents from using this method of knowing their voter registration status.

#### **4.2.6 Encouraging citizens to register to vote**

According to the responses recorded in the research study while interviewing the respondents on the best method to be adopted to encourage citizens to register to vote, the following were suggestions made by the respondents to be the means through which citizens can be encouraged to register to vote and these included; sensitization meetings at community level, awareness raising through media, promise there will be change, promise to conduct free and fair elections, and fulfillment of candidates manifestos.

**Figure 9: Pie Chart showing the methods to encourage registering to vote.**



As indicated in the above pie chart, of the 40 respondents who participated in this research study, 17 of them representing a percentage of 43% indicated that, conducting community sensitization meetings was the best way through which citizens can be encouraged to register to vote. 9 respondents representing 23% suggested that the use of media in information dissemination with the aim of encouraging citizens to register to vote was paramount. While, promise there will be change, need for electing leaders of their choices and fulfillment of manifestos was each represented by 4 respondents giving a percentage of 10% each and only 2 respondents suggested promising citizens to conduct free and fair elections was the only way through which the citizen could be encouraged to register to vote. Basing on the above analysis of finding, it is very clear that sensitization of the citizens through community meetings and the media can influence the citizens to register to vote.

In Uganda the right to vote is exercised by all Ugandans who are above 18 years. However little or no attention has been given to the citizens to be encouraged to exercise their rights to

vote. That's why there is always a low voter turnout in exercising their voting rights. According to the respondents interviewed, the following came up as measures to be effective to encourage voters to exercise their rights to voting.

#### **4.2.6.1 Conduct of voters' sensitization meetings:**

With interaction with the different respondents, it was established that voters' sensitization to exercise their right to vote was not done at all. The electoral commission has put less emphasis on voter education which in one way or the other has left the majority of the voters ignorant about the importance of registering to vote. Therefore there is a need to conduct massive voter sensitization where the citizens should be told the importance of voting and the consequences of not getting involved in voting. Consequently before any election exercise is conducted, the electoral commission should conduct community or village level sensitization meetings with the aim of educating the voters which will encourage them to get involved in voting. According to Chrispy Kaheru one of the key informants, there should be 'civic conscientization, voter education programs, civics in educational curriculum and laws deliberately tailored to explicitly bring out the right to vote with sanctions'. Jenifer Nantale (key informant) added that 'schools and churches can be very critical as centers for mobilization'.

#### **4.2.6.2 Awareness rising through media**

In this research study, media was seen as the most effective way of encouraging citizen to get involved in the voting exercises. According to the respondents interacted with, this can be done through holding talk shows on radios or Television stations and other community radios. With interaction with a number of respondents, it was realized that the candidates use media as their campaigning platforms other than educating the citizens why they should be involved to voting. The findings indicated that, the electoral commission uses the media to tell the voters the dates when they should go voting but not the reasons why citizens go to register to exercise their

rights to voting. Therefore the use of media for awareness rising should be appropriately used to disseminate messages which should encourage the voters to exercise their rights to vote other than only being used as campaigning platforms.

#### **4.2.6.3 Vote for change**

With interaction with a number of respondents, it was realized that citizens are disappointed with the outcome of the elections which in most cases are not in accordance with their expectation and yet their voting intentions were focused to vote for change in leadership. These whose expectations are not realized discourage those who are not yet registered. This implies that the mindset of some citizens is fixed to change in leadership other than the potentials the candidates can contribute to the wellbeing of the country.

#### **4.2.6.4 Fulfillment of manifestos**

According to respondents, candidates present their manifestos during campaigns which indeed promise to tackle problems affecting their communities. These manifestos contribute to their being voted in those political positions with the voters expecting the fulfillment of their manifestos in return. According to some respondents, when they are voted into those positions the manifestos are put aside till when their terms of office come to an end. This implies that these respondents are not informed about their inherent duty to register to exercise and enjoy the right to vote.

#### **4.2.6.5 Conducting free and fair elections**

To some citizens, their perception to the entire electoral process in Uganda has been that, no free and fair elections have been conducted. The electoral process in Uganda is always characterized by competing parties accusing each other of vote rigging at different levels of the electoral process. Consequently to some voters this has contributed to enactment of leaders not

of choices. Accordingly this has discouraged a number of voters to exercise their right to vote giving reasons that, their vote is meaningless as the elections are conducted in favor of some candidates in most cases incumbents and the element of merit is ignored. Therefore according to respondents, promising citizens to conducting free and fair elections will be the only measure to encourage voters to exercise their right to vote. Muwanga Moses a key informant said that voter registration should be ‘convenient, flexible, a civic duty which should be ongoing and the institution carrying it out should be credible’.

#### **4.3 Perception of the right to vote**

According to Musasizi Edgar a key informant, the right to vote is ‘the power of a citizen or a registered voter to participate in the political process of his/her country or society through his or her vote and involves the participation of individuals in the choice of their leaders’. Musasizi adds that to ordinary citizens, it is ‘their God given opportunity to check on the excesses of their leaders, to remove those who have not served their wishes, give others the opportunity to eat and to get fresh promises in as far as development of their community is concerned.’ Moses Muwanga another key informant said that the right to vote is ‘a constitutional right to chose leaders and is enforceable should one be disenfranchised.’ Chrispy Kaheru also a key informant said that it is a ‘right that pertains to somebody exercising their civil duties to chose a leader’ and according to him, the citizen understands the right to mean ‘the ability to register to vote and be able to vote without restraint, without interruption or intimidation and the ability to feel the weight or impact of the vote cast.’ Ntambi Robert the LC 1 Chairman said that ‘citizens do not understand the right to vote. They vote for the sake of it, they do not understand the issues of voting, populism is what people vote for.’

The Human Rights Advocate (2010) defines the right to vote as a basic human right that empowers citizens to influence governmental decision-making and to safeguard their other

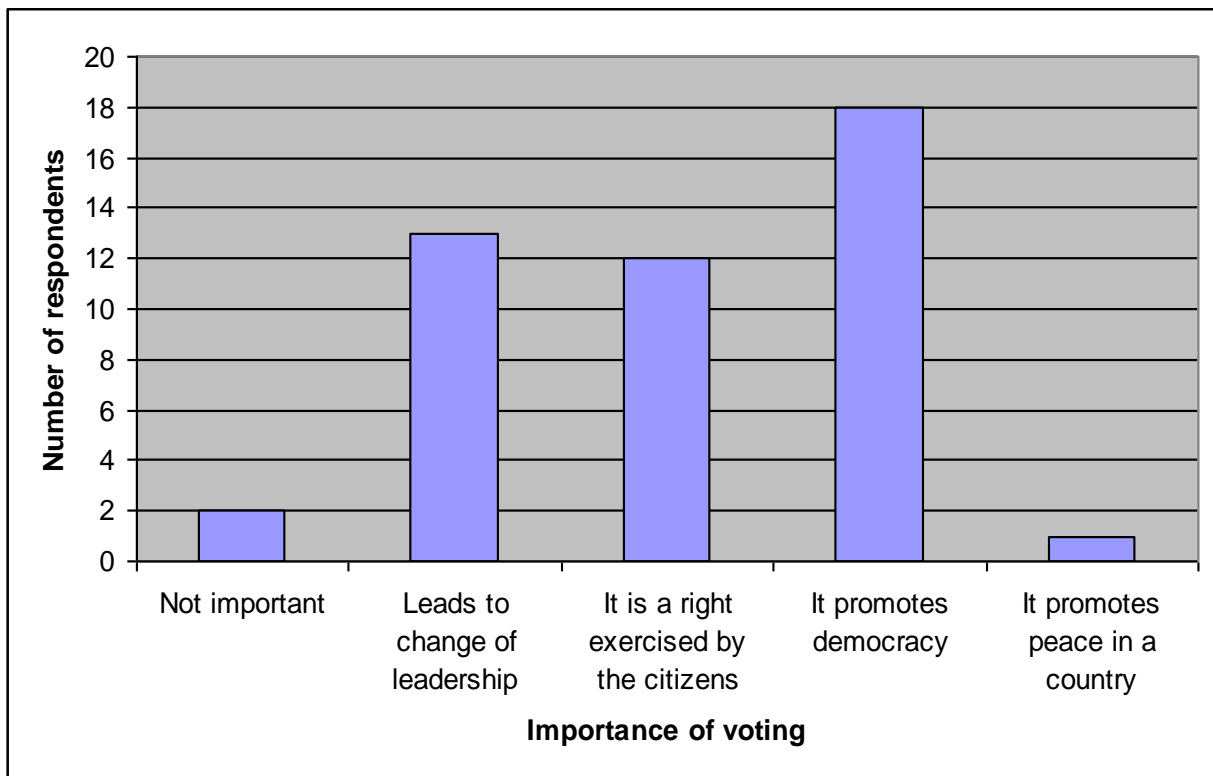
human rights. It has been world widely acclaimed as a right that protects all other rights (Human rights library, 2003) and has been included in all international instruments although its derogation remains wide spread.

The right to vote derives its legal basis from international (UDHR, 1948 and ICCPR, 1966), regional (ACHPR, 1981) and national (The Constitution 1995) instruments and has historically been developed through social conflict in a quest for universal suffrage. In this sense of influencing governmental decision making and safeguarding other human rights the respondents registered mixed responses and reactions because the majority think they vote for politicians to enjoy as opposed to service delivery.

#### **4.3.1 Importance of voting to citizens**

The importance of voting was perceived by the different respondents in the ways categorized below and showed the ignorance levels about the perception of the right to vote.

**Figure 10: A bar graph showing the importance of voting to respondents**



The bar graph above indicates the responses through which the different voters perceived the importance of voting. Of the 46 respondents who participated in this study, 18 of them representing 39% perceived the importance of voting as a way of promoting democracy in the country, while 13 respondents representing 28% perceived the right to vote as the only way through which the existing leadership can be changed. 12 respondents representing 26% perceived the importance of voting as the way of exercising their rights as citizens and 2 respondents representing 4% did not realize any importance of voting because in their opinion they do not benefit and only one respondent expressed the opinion that voting was important as it promotes peace in the country.

### 4.3.2 Understanding the right to vote

The research findings on how different voters perceived the right to vote were categorized according to the responses given by the different respondents. At least four categories of responses frequented the findings and these were; something done out of will, personal decision, constitutional right and portraying democracy. The table below indicates the responses on how the voters perceived the right to vote.

**Table 1: Showing the perception of the right to vote**

<b>Perception</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Something done out of will	3	7
Personal Decision	26	57
Constitution right	14	30
Portrays democracy	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

### 4.3.3 Personal decision

Of the 46 respondents who participated in the research study, 26 respondents representing 57% of the respondents perceived the right to vote as a personal decision that there is no influence from any other party other than taking a sole decision to vote as an individual. Therefore the right to vote is exercised without any forceful means, meaning a voter can choose to vote or not to vote. However, according to Mr. Ntambi Robert the chairman LC I of Kamuli – Kireka, a key informant, ‘sometimes different political parties come up to influence different voters to vote for their parties as they de-campaign their opponents.’ Hence sometimes it is not personal decisions to exercise the right to vote but the influence of other political parties. This calls for



sensitization to do away with undue influence so that voters are enabled to exercise their civic duty and enjoy their right to vote unfettered.

#### **4.3.4 Constitution right**

Fourteen respondents representing 30% of the respondents perceived the right to vote as a constitutional right. The right to vote as a constitutional right is provided for in article 59 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda which provides that any adult that is of 18 years and above is entitled to exercise his or her voting rights. This provision makes it a civic duty of every citizen of 18 years and above to register to vote in an election or referenda. It is indeed a constitutional right which should be exercised to influence governmental decision making and safeguard other human rights

#### **4.3.5 Portrays democracy**

Three respondents representing 7% of respondents perceived the right to vote as the only means through which citizen of any country can enjoy and exercise democracy in their country. It was said that in any democratic country the citizens should exercise their voting rights other than dictatorship. According to Brewster (2005), voting is Democracy, and to have a successfully run democratic system you need the support and votes of the citizens. He adds that a 'democracy is a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections'. Therefore for any democratic country, the right to vote is mandatory to all citizens of voting age in as much as it is a civic constitutional duty.

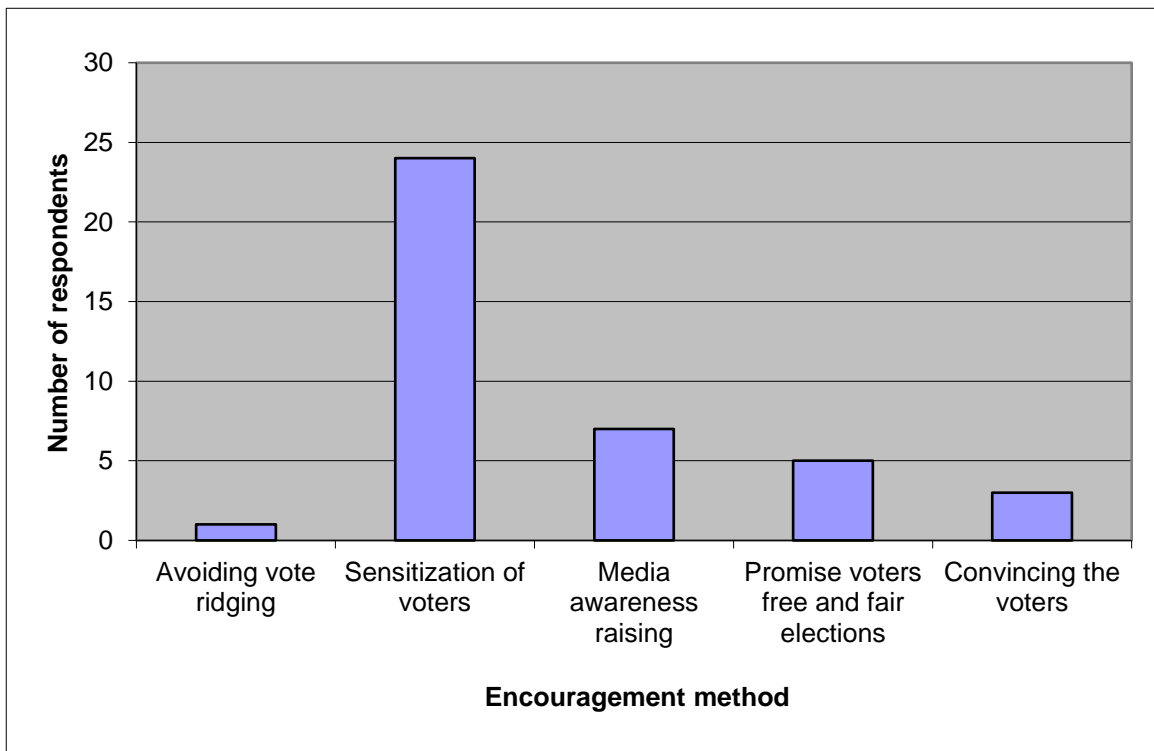
#### 4.3.6 Something done out of will

Three respondents representing 7% of the respondents perceived the right to vote as something done out of will. According to one respondent Mr. Kaheru Chrispy, this relates to the will of an individual depending on one's mind set in terms of benefits, this delivers a direct response of what one wants in terms of "will I see change in what I want". This one is about the ability to feel the weight/impact of the vote cast. This kind of voter can choose to boycott voting or cast his or her vote because then it is a matter of will as opposed to duty.

#### 4.4 How citizens should be encouraged to vote

According to responses captured from the respondents, citizens can be encouraged to vote through; promising voters that there will be no vote rigging, sensitization of voters, media awareness raising, promise voters free and fair elections and convincing voters to vote.

**Figure 11: A bar graph showing the means to encourage citizens to vote**



As seen in the bar graph above, of the 40 respondents who participated in the research study as ordinary registered voters, 24 of them representing 60% mentioned that sensitization of voters should be emphasized or given priority if voters were to participate in the process of elections. This was followed by awareness rising through media, where 7 respondents representing 18% emphasized on it to be given priority. 5 respondents representing 13% mentioned that promising voters of free and fair elections was the only way to encourage voters to go voting. While 3 respondents representing 8% suggested convincing of voters (voter mobilization) to be only the remedy to encouraging voters to vote and finally only 1 respondent suggested that, by avoiding vote rigging was the only way to encourage voters to vote. Reflecting on the above analysis, it implies sensitization of voters should be given priority as a means through which voters can be encouraged to go for voting. All the responses ideally reflect a lack of or need of sensitization.

#### **4.5 Why Registered Voters Do Not Exercise Their Right to Vote**

The research study findings indicate that the factors hindering registered voters not to exercise their right to vote range from social, political and economic factors. These factors are explained as below;

##### **4.5.1 The culture of voter bribery**

The researcher while interacting with the respondents discovered that the culture of voter bribery has to some extent contributed to failure of registered voters to exercise their right to vote. In trying to assess the extent to which this was true, the researcher recorded 23 respondents which is 50% saying voter bribery was a common practice during the election period. The existence of this culture was apparent in the minds of the respondents. The respondents argued that when they vote for particular candidates they expect to get services, but candidates have been a disappointment when they have failed to deliver after assuming

power. Consequently, the culture of voter bribery prior to election as a quick benefit from a candidate who is to be voted into office has gained prominence. This implies that the respondents in particular and registered voters in general, seek for and receive, bribes in form of money or any other petty merchandise in order to exercise their right to vote. Therefore it can be deduced from this that those who do not benefit from this bribery do not cast their votes since there is no direct benefit realized.

#### **4.5.2 Disappointment from the previous elections**

The research study indicated that 8 out of 46 respondents representing 17% felt that disappointment from results of previous elections have contributed much towards registered voters failing to exercise their right to vote. According to Mr. Kasagga Brian one of the ordinary respondents, he noted that, ‘registered voters go to vote with higher expectations that the candidates of their choices will win the elections. However, when elections results turn out not in favor of the candidates of their choices, the voters’ automatically loose morale and get disappointed and the end result is boycotting the voting exercise with the ideology that the candidates of their choice will not win the elections’. This implies that the political culture of the country is yet developed and calls for sensitization and civic education to ensure registered voters in particular and citizens in general appreciate democratic principles.

#### **4.5.3 Distance to polling centers**

Many registered voters fail to exercise their right to vote due to the long distances to the polling centre where they registered. Musasizi (key informant) said that ‘some polling stations are from given voters making mobility and issue’. According to the other respondents, many registered voters living in the urban areas registered to vote up-country. When the time for voting comes, traveling to upcountry to cast their votes becomes a problem due to the costs of transport involved. This implies that many registered voters miss out to exercise their right to vote due

to long distances to travel and this calls for enrollment of electronic method of voting which allows a registered voter to cast his/her vote while at any particular place in Uganda.

#### **4.5.4 Voter Intimidation**

According to respondents interviewed, voter intimidation has contributed a lot to registered voters failing to exercise their right to vote. Intimidation from either the candidates or supporters of a particular candidate is always common during the election period. This in one way or the other puts the voters at a distance to exercise their right to vote. Chrispy Kaheru (key informant) of CCEDU observed that ‘voter intimidation, violence, hate speech and a polluted environment during voting time all contribute to voter intimidation and cause registered voters not to exercise their right to vote. Kaheru cited the case of Luwero woman member of parliament by election in 2014 where there was massive deployment of troops, intimidation and violence before the election. Edgar Musasizi noted that in the recent past there has been a lot of intimidation campaigns geared by personnel from government, the opposition and ruling party, he quoted the advert of skulls from Luwero and northern Uganda as such example of intimidation. Therefore, from the responses as presented intimidation is one of the factors which contribute to low voter turnout and should be addressed to ensure that registered voters are not denied the exercise of their right to vote. This factor is a political explanation as identified by Holmberg and Oskarsson, (2004) that, how the campaign is conducted, the candidate’s actions and how they are viewed by the electorate affects voter turnout. In our case we have seen that intimidation turns away voters and therefore contributes to low voter turnout.

#### **4.5.5 Incompetency of contesting candidates**

Of the 46 respondents, 5 respondents representing 11% revealed that they boycott exercising their voting rights because of incompetent candidates who have no capacity to implement their expectations. Musasizi (key informant) observed that ‘voters are disgusted by the conduct of

their leaders who they vote into leadership positions but do not deliver. So they get demoralized from further participation.’ Consequently voters with this perception fail to exercise their right to vote due to the fact that they believe, the candidates who come up to stand for specific positions are not capable to deliver services to the citizenry and they therefore decline to vote and hence contribute to low voter turnout. This kind of scenario calls for government intervention in sensitizing the electorate on the importance of the right to vote, the role of leaders in a democratic dispensation as opposed to the role of government to deliver services.

#### **4.5.6 Misleading of voters**

All respondents who participated in this research study indicated that, the struggle to win elections by candidates is always accompanied by dissemination of wrong information given to the electorate with the aim of tarnishing the name of a competing candidate and winning over voters. Such information include ‘failure to go for burial and to build roads by members of parliament’ as was revealed by Ian Kisule one of the respondents. In addition to that, the electoral process is as well labeled partisan by some voters with negative attitudes towards the election and this contributes to discouraging voters from participating in the election process. It was noted that in most cases the technique of giving misleading information to voters is used by the prospective winning candidates with the aim of reducing the number of votes from their opponents which paves the way of winning. Therefore the dissemination of wrong information to registered voters contributes low voter turnout as would be voters are swayed from exercising their right to vote. It is imperative that government and the electoral commission get involved in active voter mobilization to counter the misleading information so that voters do not shun elections.

#### **4.5.7 Inconveniencies in the electoral process**

The research study findings indicated that the respondents were unanimous about inconveniences in the electoral process to the registered voters. Issues like poor timings of voting, frustration of voters by election officials, long queues on Election Day and time wasting were cited. According to the respondents, there are a lot of delays caused by inaccuracies in the register, poorly trained and incompetent polling assistants who take a lot of time in screening the names in the registers, and poor facilitation of the electoral commission to conduct continuous update of the voter register. These inconveniences put together contribute to voter apathy and hence low voter turnout. According to Muwanga Moses (key informant), the 'process is inconvenient to the electorate, time wasting, and people feel that their desire will not be reflected because of a conceived idea that elections will be rigged.' They in his words 'question the credibility of the processes'. Chrispy Kaheru added that in 'Butebo in Budaka district the electorate in 18 polling stations chose to stay away because a day before elections one of the candidates had been nullified as a candidate by the Electoral Commission. In addition, Musasizi (key informant) notes that 'the vagaries of nature like the weather and poor roads affect voter access to the polling stations to be able to vote in time'. This implies that the inconveniences coupled with the question of credibility will invariably lead to low voter turnout and hence call for ways of addressing them to enhance voter turnout. These factor an institutional explanation because all the questions arising point to inadequacies in the Electoral body (EC), (Holmberg and Oskarsson, 2004).

#### **4.5.8 Voters Health statuses**

It was also sighted that under certain circumstances that some registered voters do not exercise their right to vote due to their health status. Most of the seriously sick and bedridden registered

voters are unable to reach the polling station to exercise their right to vote. According to the responses from the key informants, the factor of poor health status mostly affected registered voters of the elderly age, Edgar Musasizi (key informant).

#### **4.5.9 Voter ignorance**

During the study, it was also established that ignorance of voters about exercising their right to vote was another contributing factor towards the failure of a number of registered voters to exercise their right to vote. Ntambi Robert (key informant) noted that ‘they do not understand the issues of voting because ignorance is paramount, they believe in immediate material benefit, so they would rather not vote without benefit.’ Masasizi on his part added that ‘they do not understand and appreciate the rationale of registration and voting’ and Nantale Jennipher said ‘they think it is useless and votes will be rigged in favor of the opponent’. And yet those who are seemingly informed like the corporate class think according to Chrispy Kaheru that ‘it is a holiday since it is not life threatening for them to take part’. These interactions with key informants indicated that this was as a result of the failure of the electoral commission to effectively conduct voter education and continuous sensitization and where voter education was done, the mode of education was not efficient and effective to inform registered voters. Therefore this calls for the electoral commission to seriously take voter education and sensitization as a key factor towards raising awareness of registered voters to exercise their right to vote. This can probably be done through organizing community sensitization meetings on the relevance and benefits of exercising the right to vote on a continuous basis.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research. The summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations are in line with the research objectives as guided by the research questions. In order for the researcher to thoroughly explore the objectives of the research, the researcher has presented the key factors which motivate citizens to register to vote; how registered voters perceive the right to vote and the factors that hinder registered voters from enjoying their right to vote. The research study interviewed 46 respondents who are registered voters.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The findings were categorized as motivation to register to vote, perception of the right to vote and the reasons for low voter turnout.

##### **5.1.1 Motivation to register to vote**

The research study established that citizens are motivated to register to vote by reasons which included the following; emotional attachment to candidates, because of being eligible to vote, to change leadership, to maintain prevailing peace and finally that voting is a constitutional right. Key informants observed that citizens register to determine their destiny, for social status, as a civic duty, because of publicity and because others have registered as a form of social identity to fraternize with civic engagements and others because of being called upon by the local, cultural or religious leadership.

According to the responses recorded by the researcher, the knowledge of the voters eligibility to vote depended on electoral commission's mandate to issue verification means through which the voters were made aware whether they were eligible to vote or not. The means through which respondents know that they are eligible to vote include; issuance of voter card, display of voter register, issuance of voter location slip, display on the EC web page and text messages sent by the EC to the voters.

According to the responses recorded in the research study while interviewing the respondents on the best method to be adopted to encourage citizens to register to vote, the following were suggestions made by the respondents to be the means through which citizens can be encouraged to register to vote and these included; sensitization meetings at community level, awareness raising through media, promise there will be change, promise to conduct free and fair elections, and fulfillment of candidates manifestos. Others identified by the key informants included; voter education programs, civics in educational curriculum, deliberately tailor the laws to explicitly bring out the right to vote as mandatory with sanctions for those who fail and to deal with the political culture to respect the sanctity of elections so that it is emphasized that they are competitive and cannot be judged and lastly that registration should be convenient, flexible and an ongoing process.

### **5.1.2 Perception of the right to vote**

The perception of the right to vote was explained by the respondent each giving their understanding of it. According to Musasizi Edgar a key informant, the right to vote is 'the power of a citizen or a registered voter to participate in the political process of his country or society through his or her vote and involves the participation of individuals in the choice of their leaders'. Musasizi added that to ordinary citizens, it is 'their God given opportunity to check on the excesses of their leaders, to remove those who have not served their wishes, give

others the opportunity to eat and to get fresh promises in as far as development of their community is concerned.’ Chrispy Kaheru also a key informant said that it is a ‘right that pertains to somebody exercising their civil duties to chose a leader’ and according to him, the citizen understands the right to mean ‘the ability to register to vote and be able to vote without restraint, without interruption or intimidation and the ability to feel the weight or impact of the vote cast.’ Ntambi Robert the LC 1 Chairman said that ‘citizens do not understand the right to vote. They vote for the sake of it, they do not understand the issues of voting.’

According to the responses given by the ordinary voter, four categories of responses frequented the responses and these were; something done out of will, personal decision, constitutional right and portraying democracy as the way they perceived the right to vote.

Finally, all the respondents were interviewed on the importance of voting and came up with varying answers thus; as a way of promoting democracy, as a way of changing existing leadership, exercising their right as citizens, that it promotes peace and some did not realize the importance of voting at all, yet they are registered voters.

### **5.1.3 Reasons for low voter turnout**

The research findings established that various factors hinder registered voters from casting their vote when it is time for elections. These range from social, political and economic and include; intimidation and misleading behavior by political actors, apathy arising from disappointments as a result of unrealized expectations from previous elections, bad administration of the electoral process, poverty as citizens live a subsistence life which is characterized by looking for survival on a day to day basis, disgusted by the conduct of their leaders who are voted into leadership positions but do not live up to their expectations, voter ignorance of the rationale for registration and voting, voter bribery and finally poor health status.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The research study has led the researcher to the following conclusions in line with the research objectives as guided by the research questions which required to establish what motivates citizens to register to vote, how they perceive the right to vote and why after registering voters do not turn up to vote.

### **5.2.1 Motivation to register to vote**

The voter registration is understood as the process of registering eligible voters, while the voters' register or voters' roll is the result of this process, Evrensel (2010). This process was first introduced in Uganda in 1962, and heard of again after 18 years in 1980. It was not until 1996 and with the introduction of the Electoral Commission that what we have to date as a regular and continuous system which is seemingly consistent begun to develop. So the process of voter registration is about twenty years even though Uganda is 54 years.

The research revealed that what motivates citizens to register varies and is not standard. These have ranged from civic duty to social identity without a clear government policy, yet it a Constitutional requirement under article 1(4) that "the people shall express their will and consent on who shall govern them and how they should be governed, through regular, free and fair elections..." this article is reinforced by article 59 which makes provision for the right to vote and a duty on both the state and the eligible voter to ensure article 1(4) is put into effect.

Citizens are by and large ignorant of their civic duty enshrined in the constitution to register to vote and the government together with the electoral body which is mandated to carry out this function has not been of help to the citizen hence the confusion among the respondents. The research study indicated that citizens were inspired because of emotional attachment to

candidates and barely as a constitutional civic duty. This calls for intervention to focus the citizenry on their civic duty to get rid of the confusion and set a national standard.

### **5.2.2 Perception of the right to vote**

The Human Rights Advocate (2010) defines the right to vote as a basic human right that empowers citizens to influence governmental decision-making and to safeguard their other human rights. It has been world widely acclaimed as a right that protects all other rights (Human rights library, 2003) and has been included in all international instruments although its derogation remains wide spread.

The research study revealed that the concept of the right to vote is not understood by the registered voters. Whereas the majority of the respondents (70%) viewed it as freedom to vote or not to vote with mixed responses and reactions because they feel that they vote for politicians to enjoy as opposed to service delivery. This perception was best explained by the Local leader Ntambi Robert (key informant) the Local Council 1 Chairman who said that ‘citizens do not understand the right to vote. They vote for the sake of it, they do not understand the issues of voting.’ Indeed from the findings, 70% of the respondents majority of who were university graduates gave answers like ‘it is something done out of your will and it is a personal decision.’

There is therefore no standard perception of the concept of the right to vote among the electorate in the area of study Kamuli village in particular and Uganda in general. The poor perception of the right to vote contributes to the lack of interest in registration to vote and low voter turnout.

### **5.2.3 Low Voter Turnout**

Rose (2004) observes that, voter turnout is one measure of electoral participation usually expressed as the percentage of eligible voters who cast a vote or 'turn out' at an election. The

number of those who cast their vote includes those who cast blank or invalid votes, as they still participate.

The research study revealed that citizens have varying reasons for not turning up to cast their vote even when they are aware of the election. These included institutional weaknesses within the EC and how it organizes the electoral process. In this aspect, respondents were unanimous about the high level of inconveniences encountered in the electoral process.

The contextual reasons concerned the political elections themselves and the social dealing with the voter in terms of turnout, motivation and participation. In these were aspects like misleading of voters, intimidation and ignorance of the electoral processes and rights.

Finally, individual reasons in the turnout which ideally deals with aspects like the social status, political interest, integration and feelings of voting as a duty, which included emotional attachment to candidates, inducements and health status of voters.

The research study revealed that those aspects affected voter turnout and contributed to the fact that despite the growing numbers of voters on the voter register the voters do not feel compelled to go and cast their vote. If those aspects are not addressed, the voter turnout will always decline despite the increase in voter registration.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The research study has led the researcher to the following recommendations in line with the research objectives as guided by the research questions.

#### **5.3.1 Registration to vote**

Evrensel (2010) observes that voter registration is the most complex process within the electoral cycle and adds that it is highly expensive. It is carried out to provide information that assists with election planning and logistics; sensitize the public to their electoral rights; separate

the function of determining whether a person meets the eligibility criteria to participate in voting from the function of controlling balloting; augment controls on fraudulent attempts to vote, such as ineligible persons voting, impersonation, or voting for an electoral district for which the voter is not entitled to vote; assist in providing data for the determination of equitable electoral district boundaries; determine voter allocation to polling stations; support the transparency of the process; and play a major role in voter education. These are very vital for a citizen to enjoy their right vote to since it is their civic duty.

It is therefore recommended that concerned government agencies put in place clear enabling policies so that the constitutional duty to facilitate citizens to register to vote is fully realized to enable them enjoy and exercise their right to vote. In line with the policies, sufficient resources should be availed to the electoral body (EC) to ensure it carries out its mandate effectively and efficiently.

The EC, the body mandated to carry out the function of registering voters should be duly financed to ensure it properly carries out the function in a timely manner.

Secondly, the EC should address the institutional shortfalls that inhibit its proper functioning in the registration process. These have been identified as lack of a continuous sensitization program to address the electoral needs of citizens and a continuous update of the voter register.

Thirdly, the government and the EC should put in place a voter education program to address the ignorance of citizens about voter registration, their duty, its importance and benefits.

### **5.3.2 Perception to the right to vote**

The right to vote has been identified as cardinal to the enjoyment of all other rights. It is protected under international (UDHR, 1948 and ICCPR, 1966), regional (ACHPR, 1981) and

national (The Constitution 1995). It has been associated with the struggle for political survival through race, gender and other social dimensions. To that extent, it is very important to human life and should not be taken for granted.

It is therefore recommended that government comes up with a policy on duties of the citizen in the constitution and how to operationalize them through voter education, introduction of civics curriculum in schools, colleges, tertiary institutions and universities. Deliberately focused programs should be drawn up for communities through their local leadership, religious leaders and cultural leaders emphasizing among others, benefits associated with the right to vote. In addition to that, voter mobilization as was seen in the 2016 general elections by CCEDU (2015) which was accredited by the Electoral Commission for that purpose should be supported by government. Lastly, the right to vote should be made mandatory (Beck, 2013) with sanctions where one has failed to fulfill their civic duty.

### **5.3.3 Voter turnout**

The factors which affect voter turnout have been identified during the research study as institutional, contextual and individual. It is along these lines that recommendations for voter turnout emanate from.

The institutional recommendation is to the EC in regard to the administration works of the electoral process; this should be by ensuring that there is effective and efficient management of the system by having well trained personnel, delivering materials in time, by putting polling stations in places which are easily accessible by the electorate, by investing in convenient ways of voting like the use of electronic voting, by deliberate continuous voter mobilization and



sensitization. According to Holmberg and Oskarsson, (2004) poor administration of the electoral process as presented by the respondents is one of the major contributors to the low voter turnout.

Secondly, in considering the contextual set up of the elections, the EC should properly regulate the conduct of campaigns to ensure the actions of the actors and the way they are viewed by the electorate do not turn them away at election time. And in line with the political environment, the electorate should be motivated and not intimidated.

Lastly, it is recommended that for the individual factors that the individuals place in society which may include the following; the social status, integration, political interest and feelings of voting as a duty, and other individual characteristics like education, class, gender and age be considered as equally important in determining how and if people vote. The individual should through sensitization be made to own up the process in whatever their capacity. The voters should matter in the system as the owners, beneficiaries and whose single vote counts. Gerber et al (2008), observes that the social status, integration of the voter, political interest and feelings of voting as a civic duty should be addressed in a holistic manner by government and the EC to improve on the voter turnout.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

This thesis has studied the motivation for voters to register, the perception of the right to vote and the reasons for low voter turnout during the period 2001 – 2016. Institutions, organizations and individuals have also contributed in the research in order to reach a better representation of the reasons for the reducing voter turnout in elections in Uganda. During the study the researcher has come across various areas that would be of interest for further investigation. As this thesis is indicating there are several factors causing the low voter turnout in Uganda though

they vary in explanation as institutional, contextual and individual. Consequently, it would be interesting to examine the individual explanations and single out particular factors affecting the enjoyment of the right to vote. Further research could also be carried out to compare the situation for different countries within the region. An additional area of interest for research could be to study the effect of poverty on enjoyment of the right to vote in developing democracies.

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## **Appendix I: Interview Guide for Registered voters**

### **Interview guide for registered voters of Kamuli village, Kireka Parish, Kira municipality in Wakiso District**

#### **Introduction:**

#### **Introductory questions:**

1. Are you a registered voter? Why did you register to vote? For how long have you been registered? How should people be encouraged to register to vote?
2. Have you ever been refused to vote?
3. How important is voting to you? What do you understand by the right to vote? How should citizens be encouraged to exercise their right to vote?
4. Why do you think people register to vote but do not turn up on polling day to cast their votes? What should be done to encourage registered voters to vote?

**DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTION FOR ME? THANK YOU FOR YOUR**



## **Appendix II: Interview guide for key informant**

### **Introduction:**

### **Introductory questions:**

1. What motivates citizens to register to vote? Or why do citizens register to vote?
2. How do citizens know they have registered?
3. What is the right to vote? How do citizens understand the right to vote? What can be done to make citizens understand the right to vote?
4. Why do voters register but do not turn up to vote?
5. What measures should be put in place to ensure that citizens who are registered actually vote?

Do you have any questions? **THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**

## **Appendix III: Introduction Letter**