

## ASSESSING THE IMPACTS OF ONE-STOP GOVERNMENT PORTAL ON IMPROVEMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN TANZANIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *As part of realizing development programmes faster, governments have been adopting modern ICTs and implementing e-government towards better public services. As such, the Government of Tanzania took an initiatives to establish One-Stop Government Portal “the [www.tanzania.go.tz](http://www.tanzania.go.tz)” which provide comprehensive, accurate and reliable one stop source of information about Tanzania. However, the contemporary literature paints a picture of scarce research on the impacts of One-Stop Government implementation initiatives in LDCs. This study aims at assessing the impacts of One-Stop Government Portal on improvement of public service delivery in Tanzania. Findings of the study pointed out that, One-Stop Government Portal significantly improve public service delivery at reduced cost, hence affordable to public service consumers. Specifically, it was found to enhance citizen’s access to information, improved quality of services, save time and procedural fairness. It is therefore recommended that there must be advocacy for awareness and integration of more services to improve service availability.*

**KEYWORDS:** e-Government, One-Stop Shop, Public Services

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### INTRODUCTION

For the Government to achieve increased public service efficiency, improved resource management and wider participation and deeper involvement of citizens, the adoption of electronic Government is the most significant initiatives. The use of ICTs has helped governments to redesign the way in which they are organized and how they function so as to deliver more efficient public services to citizens. Forms are an essential part of government websites, and researchers have recognized the importance of their perceived ease of use for citizens' willingness to use government websites (Carter and Bélanger, 2004). However, government websites have low usability (Venkatesh et al., 2017). Despite forms being largely used they still seem to be burdensome to citizens.

As a way to deal with repetitive forms filling, governments took step to implement a one-stop shop which acts a single point of contact where governments can collect data for one or more services through a single, integrated digital form. As such, the Government of Tanzania in year 2013 established the One-Stop Government Portal “the [www.tanzania.go.tz](http://www.tanzania.go.tz)” which provide comprehensive, accurate and reliable one stop source of information about Tanzania and its various Sectors. It was launched in year 2013 in support of the spirit of Open Government Platform (OGP) initiative by

the Government of Tanzania (Tepani and Mushi, 2016). This reduces the number of forms that citizens must complete by combining related forms.

One-Stop Government targets the improvement of customer-to-government interactions. It provides electronic public services of distinct public authorities to citizens and businesses in a customer-oriented manner from a single point of access (Wimmer, 2002). The customer-oriented approach towards online one-stop Government further allows citizens, businesses and other authorities to have 24 hours a day from anywhere in an easy-to-use and simple way according to their needs.

Despite its merits, however, the One-Stop shop does not overcome the main complaint of citizens, it still relies on forms as the primary mechanism through which governments obtain the data needed to deliver services to their citizens. Still citizens remain frustrated by government services, which they view as reactive and repetitive. Most government services are still triggered by citizens even with a one-stop shop, and require them to provide their data afresh for each engagement. Increasingly, citizens want governments to proactively provide services and information that are relevant to them and their current circumstances. For example, 40% of US citizens would prefer to receive recommendations and features that are personalized to their circumstances (Accenture, 2015). In Europe, only 4% of services are delivered proactively (Tinholt, 2015). Proactive service delivery means that the government delivers a service or information to a citizen when a life event occurs, without the citizen having to request the service. Although there are examples of proactive government service delivery in practice, such as in Austria, Bosse and Others, (2015) it remains uncommonness. Predictive service delivery is sporadic in both developed and developing countries. It occurs where the government predicts that a life event will happen and prompts a service before it take place, with the pre-emption in some cases avoiding a possibly detrimental life event from occurring. For example public services related to age and documents renewal.

Citizens are the primary stakeholders and their acceptance of the system services plays an important role in the success as they are the users of the public services, which is any activity created by the government to the citizens. The challenge of service delivery affects all citizens who demand quality public services in which its delivery process is complex. As a result, the successful implementation of ICT systems requires a clear understanding of the characteristics that services of such systems must deliver.

In their study, (Augustine et al., 2015) presented the opportunities of ICT use to facilitate effective service delivery in Nigerian public services particularly in local government system, as many countries in the globe have embraced ICT as a way forward, where it can be an effective tool to ensure increased access to government services, improved value for money as well as increased productivity, transparency and better service delivery.

Public service delivery to citizens go through a chain of events to access information

on basic government services particularly due to many layers of government structures and processes. Some civil servants act unlawfully and take advantage of the lack of knowledge or information by public service consumers to solicit bribes. In realizing that, One-Stop Government Portal as a means for public service delivery in Tanzania becomes one of the major concern for citizens. Therefore this study aims at assessing the impacts of One-Stop Government Portal on improvement of public service delivery in Tanzania. Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

- a) To examine ICT literacy level on ease of use of the portal and frequency of using One-Stop Government Portal in Tanzania.
- b) To determine economic status of citizens on equity of services in public service delivery in Tanzania.
- c) To evaluate expectations of citizens on effectiveness and efficiency of public services delivered through One-Stop Government Portal in Tanzania.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A public service delivery process is usually initiated by an interaction of the citizen or a business with a Government-Citizen interface, which aims on collecting the relevant data to provide the service (Scholta et al., 2019). Public services delivery processes are complex and highly differ, that raise a question of whether to implement a no-stop shop or one-stop shop of public service delivery. In dealing with these challenges, public sector Departments or Agencies across the globe are progressively adopting a One-Stop Shop citizen-centric service delivery model. The one-stop shop is one of the most popular e-government concepts in practice and tackles the e-government aim to enhance service delivery from a customer perspective (Blackburn, 2016; Janenova and Kim, 2016; Kircher, 2019; Kurmanov, 2020). The concept of One-Stop Shops is to enable citizens and customers a single access point to information and service transactions. Key elements which these and other governments have sought to address in the design and delivery of a customer centric model include: speed, engagement, responsive, value, integration, choice and experience. Meeting user expectations of easy access to services.

Accessibility is a crucial aspect of service delivery that raises a plethora of delivery concerns, like quality of service, access for people with disabilities, internet access and literacy. The underlying principle here is aligning with users' expectations, subject to affordability and available resources online. A distinctive feature of the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) model in Georgia is its clear separation of Back and Front Offices in the public service delivery chain. The Front Offices advise the Back Office on how to improve existing services and design new ones (Vashakidze, 2017). They represent the administration vis-à-vis citizens and continuously monitor citizens' expectations.

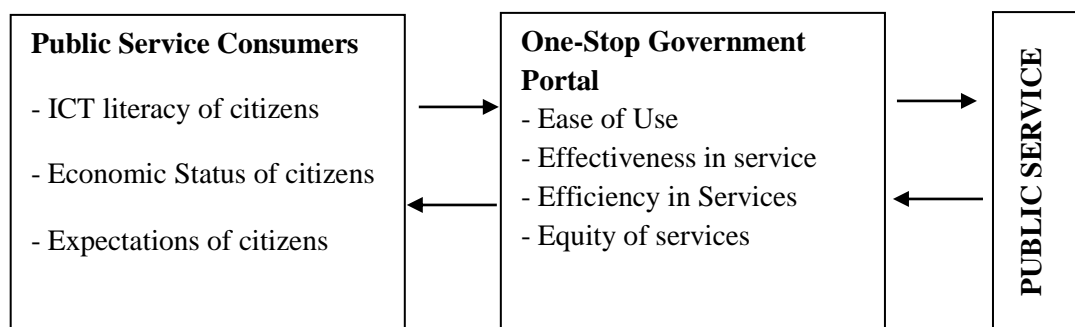
Kircher, (2019) revealed four constituent requirements for One-Stop shop implementation in a service delivery, which are single access point, multiple access channels, meaningful service bundling and an enhanced user experience and service

quality. These bundles can then be presented on a governmental one-stop portal to structure the available service offerings according to citizen expectations (Kohlborn, 2014). For that reason the quality of service bundles which comprises of service bundles for future transactions need to be managed and maximized accordingly so that citizens utilizes the One-Stop Portal. This is a big challenge particularly for developing countries like Tanzania which have fewer resources. Such outcomes are partly due to the lack of addressing organizational issues associated with implementations. The selected services for implementing one-stop shop should be transformed for the suitability indicators that are manifested within the characteristics of a public service that have to be investigated.

However, to make an overall statement about the suitability of a service for one-stop shop, Goldstein and Others, (2002) argued that the conceptual requirement view and the service process view have to be brought together. This enables a discussion of potentials that can transform a public service into a one-stop shop service. Public services should be available to citizens regardless of the underlying administrative structure. Thus, in recent years public administrations began to transform into customer-centered service companies which is also referred to as the modernization of public administrations (European Commission, 2017). Customers in this context are the recipients of public services and comprise citizens, as well as businesses.

The net benefits from using an information system can positively or negatively influence user satisfaction and the further use of the information system. This is also evidenced in a study by Venkatesh and Others (2017) on a usability of the “Obamacare” website they found that citizen satisfaction and intention to use the website were rated poorly. As a result of using the system, certain benefits will be achieved by the citizen. The Information System Success Model by DeLone and McLean (D&M) postulates that a system can be evaluated in terms of information quality, system quality and service quality. These characteristics affect the subsequent use or intention to use the system and user satisfaction. The conceptual framework (Figure 1) shows the characteristics that determine the public service delivery to citizens (Public Service Consumers) through the One-Stop Government Portal (OSGP).

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



**Source: Researcher, 2020**

A public service consumer visit One-Stop Government Portal which is a single point for accessing public services. Public service delivery using the One-Stop Government Portal are characterized by the ease of use of the services provided, effectiveness and efficiency of services and equity of services provided through the portal. Public services consumers of different services provided through the portal are citizens, whereby their use of the portal can be determined by their literacy level, economic status and their expectations of the services from the portal.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a survey research design, where by a total of 110 respondents (i.e 86 public service consumers and 24 civil servants from ministries and governments agencies) were drawn to collect quantitative data from citizens who are the public service consumers and civil servants working in various public service institutions in Tanzania. The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam at Ilala Municipal which was selected due to the fact that, it has larger number of population with accessibility of online public services which is suitable for data collection concerning research study. For the purpose of this study, simple random and purpose sampling techniques were used. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents from the community in Ilala municipality, while purposive sampling was be used to select key informants ranging from the ICT officers, OSGP users, Managers and policymakers to concentrate on people with particular characteristics relevant to research. The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The study used questionnaires as major tools for collection of primary data while secondary data collection involved review of the ministries budget documents, websites, relevant white papers, government reports and scholarly writings.

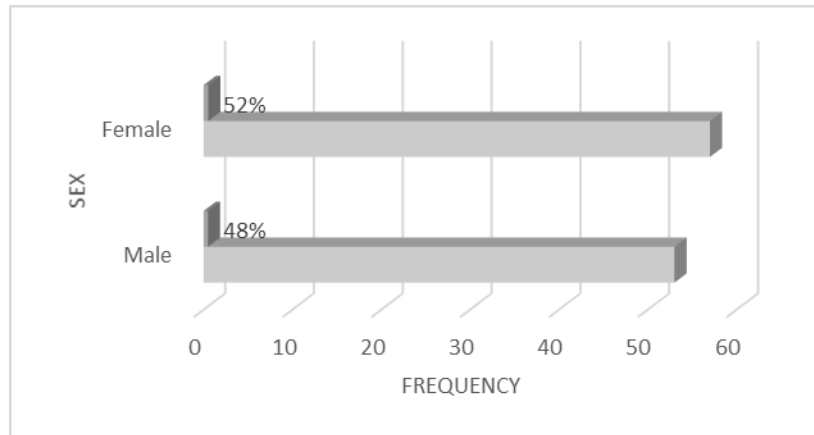
## **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

### **Demographic characteristics of respondents on the use of OSGP**

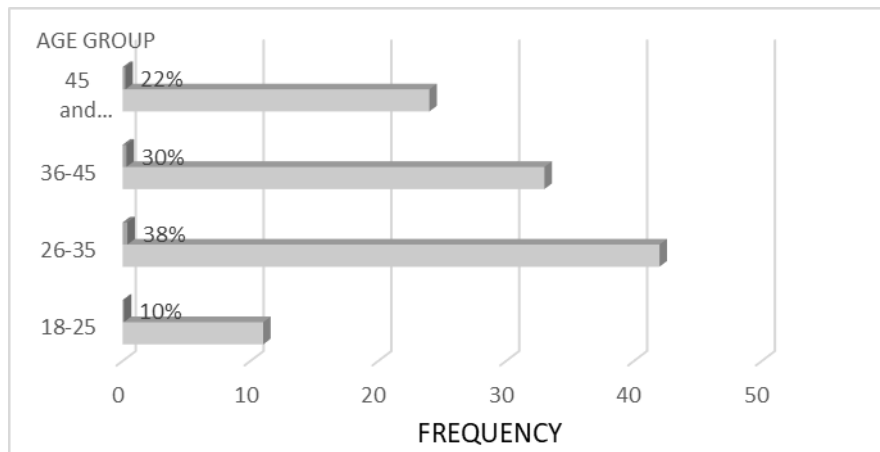
Demographic information is fundamental in the identification of demographic related characteristics of respondents, which covers the demographic information on gender, age, marital status and education level.

#### **Respondents by Sex**

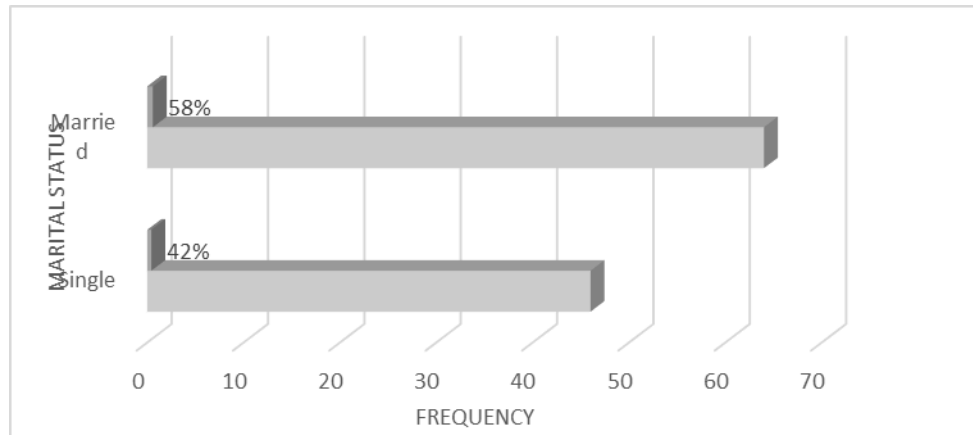
Regarding to this aspect 48% of the respondents were males and 52% respondents were females. Field data in Figure 2 indicates that the females has the highest respondents.

**Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex****Source: Field Data, 2020****Respondents by Age**

Regarding to this aspect 10% of respondents among 110 were aged 18-25, 38% aged from 26-35, 30% aged 36-45 and 22% of respondents were aged above 46 years. Figure 3 indicates that the age bracket of 26-35 years has the highest respondents.

**Figure 3: Distribution of Respondents by Age****Source: Field Data****Distribution according to Marital Status**

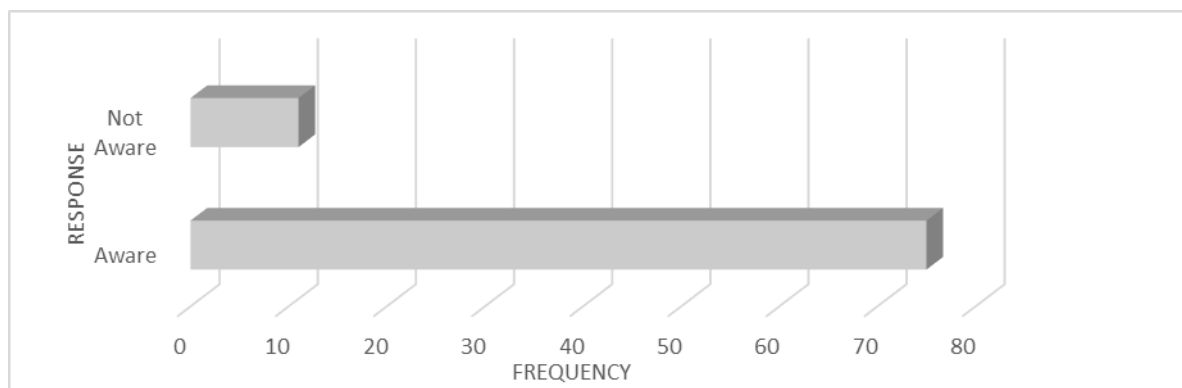
Based on the marital status of respondents, field data in Figure 4 indicate that 42% of the respondents were single, while 58% of the respondents were married marking the highest respondent's marital status.

**Figure 4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status****Source: Field Data**

### ICT literacy level of citizens on ease of using One-Stop Government Portal

#### Citizens' awareness on using the portal

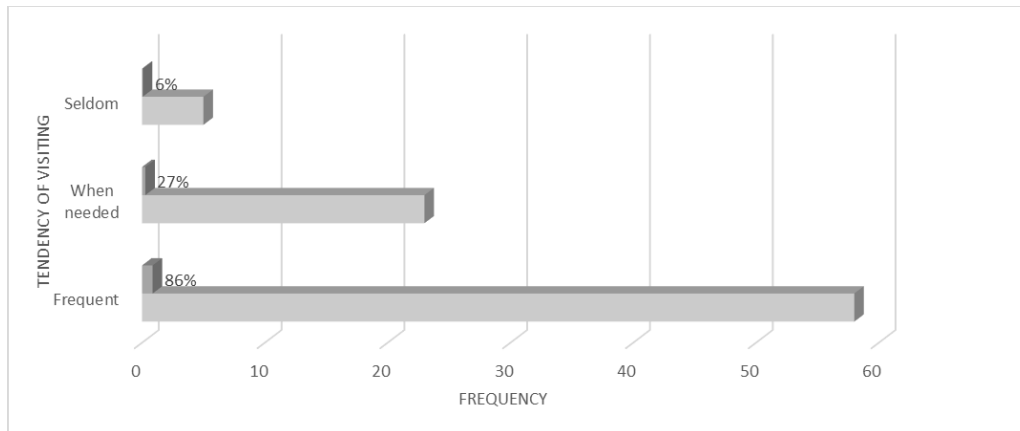
Based on the results in Figure 5 majority of citizens were capable of using the OSGP and access public services making 87% of the respondents. It is seen that there was only 13% of public service consumers who were not familiar enough with using the One-Stop Government Portal to access public services.

**Figure 5: Respondents on citizen's awareness on using the OSGP****Source: Field Data, 2020**

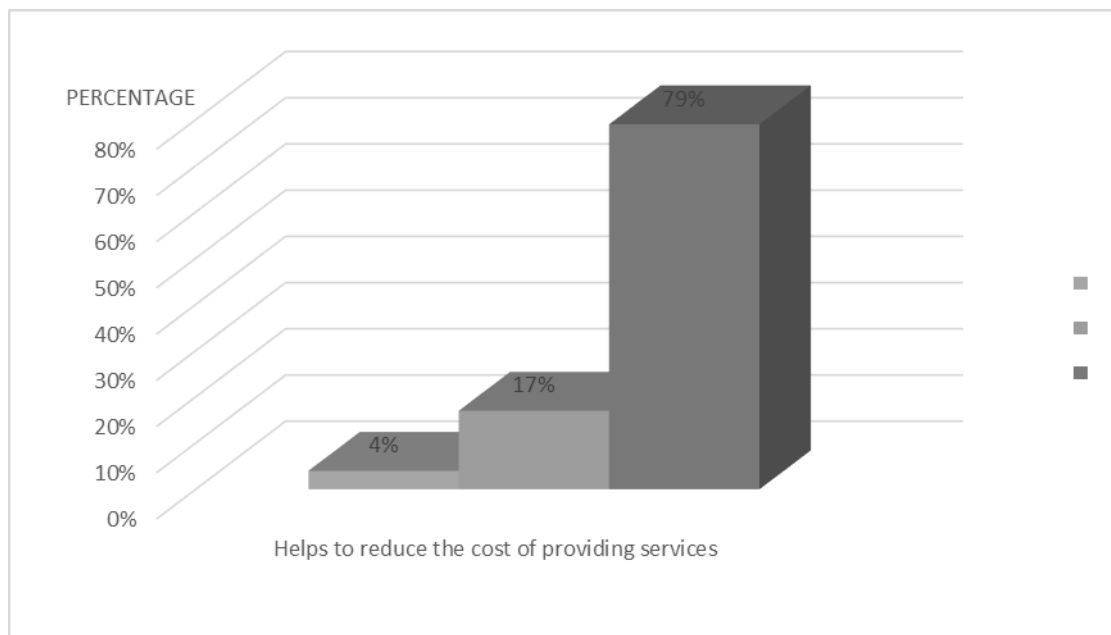
This situation is also expressed in a report by PWC, (2016) when they said, Citizens today are more aware of their rights to access information about public services and have higher expectations of service levels and service experience.

#### Frequency of using the One-Stop Government Portal

Based on the respondents' frequency of visiting the One-Stop Government Portal for accessing public services it was revealed by data in Figure 6 that 86% of public service consumers visited frequently, 27% said they that they visited it when needed; while 6% did not visit the portal frequently.

**Figure 6: Tendency of Visiting the Portal****Source: Field Data****Economic status of citizens on equity of services in public service delivery**

Based on the cost of acquiring services through the One-Stop Government Portal 87% of the respondents agreed that the portal has efficiently reduced the cost of getting public services hence affordable to citizens. The number of respondents who disagree that the portal has reduced cost of getting services is only 1%. These findings support the study by Kohlborn, (2014) which postulated that one-stop shop concept aims to reduce these bureaucratic and administrative costs for the citizens and businesses by transforming the public service delivery in a citizen-oriented way.

**Figure 7: Respondents on Equity of Services****Source: Field Data, 2020**

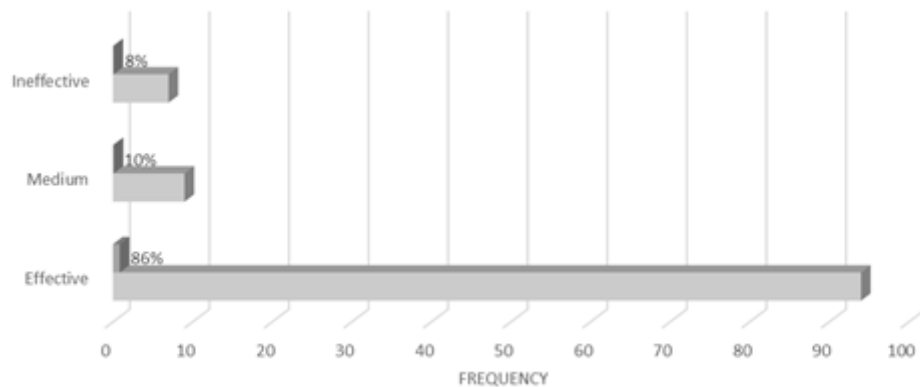


## Expectations of citizens on effectiveness of public service delivered through One-Stop Government Portal

### Effectiveness of OSGP

This question was meant for both Public Institutions employees as public service providers and citizens as they constituted public service consumers. As shown by data in Figure 8, the majority of respondents, i.e. 86% were of the opinion that One-Stop Government Portal was effective on improvement of public service delivery in Tanzania, especially services they frequently access, 8% rated it having medium effectiveness on public service delivery and 6% saw the portal as ineffective.

**Figure 8: Respondents Expectation on effectiveness of OSGP**



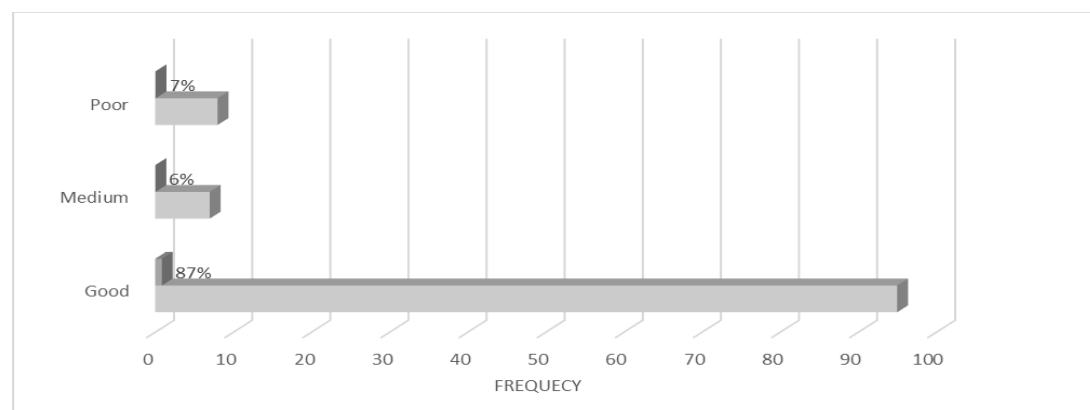
Source: Field Data, 2020

### Quality of Services provided through OSGP

Field data in Figure 9 illustrate that 87% of respondents rated the quality of services provided through the One-Stop Portal to be good while 6% and 7% said the quality is medium and poor respectively. Therefore the majority of respondents has agreed on quality of the services provided through One-Stop Portal is good which implies that the respondents are aware on services offered through One-Stop Government Portal.

Source: Field Data, 2020

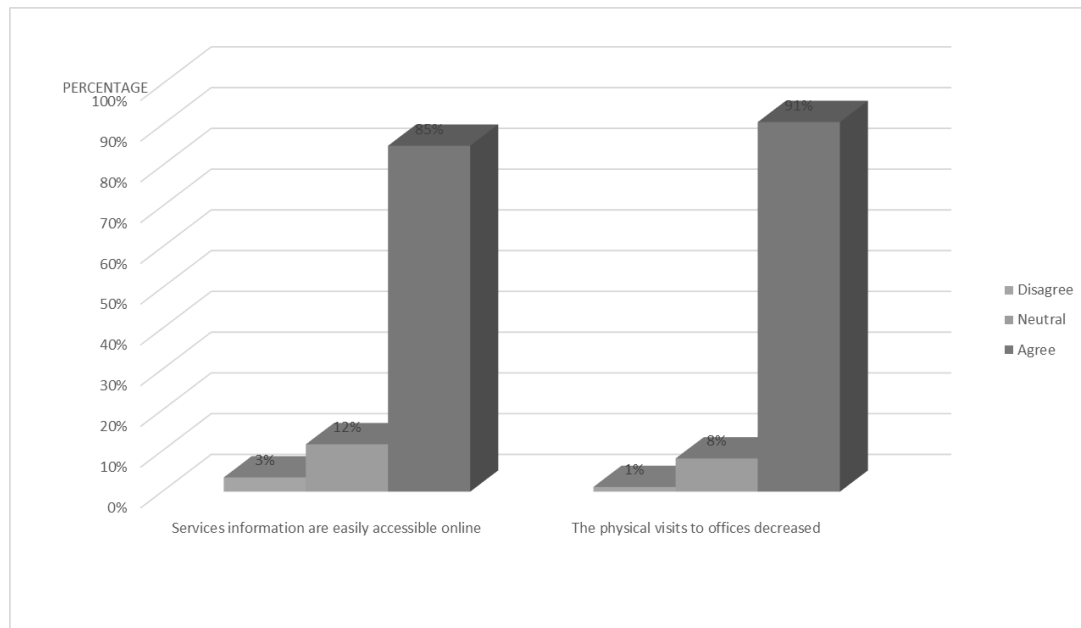
**Figure 9: Respondents on Quality of Service**



### Availability of services

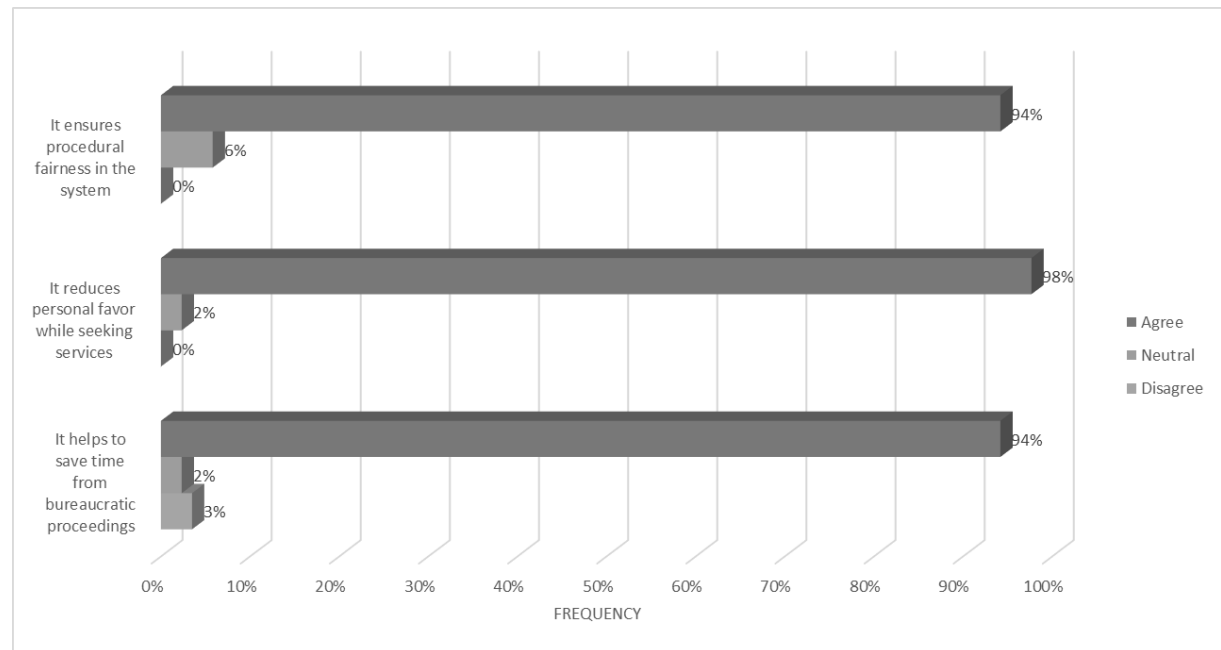
From field data in Table 10, 85% of public service consumers agreed that the One-Stop Government Portal has increased availability of essential services online, out of them 91% said the portal has decreased the visit to offices for getting public services.

**Figure 10: Respondents on Availability of Services**



### Expectations of citizens on the efficiency in services delivered through One-Stop Government Portal

From field data in Figure 11, 94% of public service consumers said that accessing public services from the One-Stop Government Portal has improved public services delivery in Tanzania by saving time from bureaucratic proceedings and services are quickly obtained and in an efficient style. Among them 94% acknowledged that the One-Stop Government Portal has ensured procedural fairness in the system and 98% confessed that it has reduced personal favor while seeking services.

**Figure 11: Respondents on the Expectations of Citizens on Efficiency of Services**

**Source: Field Data, 2020**

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings generally the study pointed out that, majority of public service consumers living at Ilala, Dar es Salaam are aware enough of suing One-Stop Government Portal and frequently visit the portal to access public services delivered through it. One-Stop Government Portal significantly improve public service delivery at reduced cost, hence affordable to public service consumers.

Also, the results indicated that One-Stop Government Portal is a key to improvement of public service delivery in Tanzania, specifically, it was found to be effective and efficient by reducing physical visits to offices hence enhancing citizen's access to service information online on a timely manner, saves time from bureaucratic proceedings, improved quality of services, ensures procedural fairness in the system and therefore reduces personal favor while seeking services.

In this context, the One-Stop Government Portal was seen to be a lever for the transformation of public services to the majority of citizens and other people living in Tanzania, despite having some challenges that have to be addressed by the Government.

It is therefore recommended that there must be continuous advocacy for awareness of One-Stop Government Portal to citizens and efficient integration of more Government services to a meaningful service bundling that will enhance availability of more services hence led to some degree to produce the expected value of service

availability.

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