

The Quest For Good Governance In Nigeria: A Survey of People's Perception In Benin City

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ABSTRACT

Good governance is integral to economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger, and sustainable development. The mechanisms, processes and intuitions through which authority is exercised in Nigeria to bring about the much sought after growth and development have been part and parcel of the nation's political history. The paper examines the trajectory of governance in Nigeria. It takes an overlook of governance as it affects the lives of citizens of the country. The paper also examines factors that have hindered and are still hindering the achievement of good governance in the country. The paper places its argument on some ideas imposed by the political terrain and instrumentality of the state now bedeviling the smooth, credible and effective running of government functions in Nigeria. The paper captures the concept of political clientelism and desire for political significance created by the party leaders/faithful, sometimes political godfathers and political office holders, who in the battle for supremacy have created problems that subvert the system which has led to the question 'is the attainment or pursuit of good governance in Nigeria really achievable?' Or is it just another case of a people showing how disconnected they are from reality?

Key words: Good Governance, Nigeria, Politics, Development, Citizens

INTRODUCTION

The role of governance in the polity of a state cannot be over emphasized. It is instructive to note that the growth and development of a state is contingent upon the manner in which the government of the state sets the platform for effective and proper discharge of authority and control. The issue of good governance is a phenomenon that has stunted the growth of many nations of the world with reference to Africa and Nigeria in particular. Nigeria, since independence in 1960, has battled with the issue of good, credible and accountable government in the country. The search for good governance seems to be Nigeria's most urgent need at this time in her history. Most Nigerians believe strongly that the factor that had crippled the country's progress in virtually every field of human endeavour is poor leadership and bad governance (Nnamdi, 2009). Politicians who form the government with no developmental plans; and even the 'party manifesto' they sold to the electorates during the electioneering campaign are most often not fulfilled. Sadly, the manifestos of most political parties in the country are not ideologically driven. Rather, political actors see their involvement in politics as a means for primitively accumulating wealth. While some view it as a means of investment through the sponsorship of candidates (godfathers) for elections so that when their candidates win, they would recoup a million fold what they spent to get their godsons into office. This has greatly diverted the attention of political office holders from the primary objectives of improving the general welfare of the state to settling political scores with godfathers. Ironically, the government of the United States of America has called on Nigeria to help strengthen good governance in Africa; a subject of perception she (Nigeria) is yet to achieve. In a meeting with President Jonathan of Nigeria, President Obama of the United States of America said he hopes President Jonathan would

use his new tenure to diversify the Nigerian economy and strengthen democracy and good governance in Africa (Adedjoja, 2011).

Good governance is integral to economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger, and sustainable development. The views of all oppressed groups, including women, youth and the poor, must be heard and considered by the governing bodies because they will be the ones most negatively affected if good governance is not achieved. The level of underdevelopment in Nigeria today is largely adduced to bad governance in the country. In the recent past, it was believed that bad governance in Nigeria was associated with the several years of military rule. But since the transition to democratic rule, there has hardly been any significant improvement in terms of good governance in Nigeria. There is no access to basic infrastructural facilities, public health care, potable water etc. There is a high rate of unemployment, inflation is on the rise and poverty is ravaging the system. The United Nations defined poverty as a situation whereby an individual is forced by circumstances to exist on less than one U.S dollar per day (Igbafe, 2007). The United Nations statistics show that over 100 million Nigerians live in abject poverty. This represents over 67% of the entire population. Also, according to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Nigeria occupies the 153rd position out of 186 under the Human Development Index. All of these trends and more are attributed to bad governance in Nigeria.

This study is motivated by the quest to promote development in Nigeria through transparent, participatory, efficient and effective, accountable and responsive governance. Therefore, the study will seek to provide answers to questions such as, what are the factors militating against good governance in Nigeria? Can the present political arrangement in Nigeria engender good governance in the country? Are the policies of government transparent, participatory and objective enough and are they directed at the poor and common man in the society? Given the extant laws and policies of government, is the attainment of good governance possible? The study will also attempt to ascertain seriousness/sincerity of government in its quest for good and accountable governance and to find out how the mode of governance in Nigeria has imparted the lives of citizens in the country.

GOOD GOVERNANCE: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The term good governance would be more meaningful if an idea of governance itself is explained. This begs the question, what is governance? There is no universally acceptable definition of governance. This is because a lot of scholars have put forward various definitions as to what governance stands for. For instance, Oyovbaire (2007) sees governance as the proper use of legitimate power and authority in the affairs of a nation or the people. Governance can be defined as the process that is employed to achieve the noble end of the state. Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development (Agwu, 2011). According to Ogundiya (2010), "governance is the process of allocating resources, through the instrumentalities of the state, for the attainment of public good". Thus, governance includes institutional and structural arrangement, decision making processes, policy formulation and implementation capacity, development of personnel, information flow and the nature and style of leadership within a political system. Governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP, 1997). Governance has three legs: economic, political and administrative. Economic governance includes decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies. It clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life. Political governance is the process of decision-making to formulate policy. Administrative governance is the system of policy implementation (UNDP, 1997). The goal of governance initiatives should be to develop capabilities that are needed to realize development that gives priority to the poor, advances women, sustains the environment and creates needed opportunities for employment and other livelihood (UNDP, 1997). Governance is often linked with participatory development of human rights and democratization. It therefore takes a holistic look at legitimacy of government. That is, the degree of democratization, accountability of political and official elements of government, competency of government to formulate policies and deliver services and respect for human rights and rule of law (Agwu, 2011). The various definitions given above show that governance is a manner or system of government. And it is the people that are at the centre of the process. The objective of the governing authority should be how to positively impact the lives of the citizenry, and, the extent to which it has achieved that makes governance good or otherwise. Therefore, what is good governance? It is important to note

that a governing authority does not determine if it is good or bad as the case maybe. It is the governed that does so; which is why governance must be people-oriented and not self-serving. The African Development Bank views good governance as one that embodies and promotes effective state, mobilized civil societies and productive private sector (Ogundiya, 2010). While the United Nations Development Programme sees good governance as a commitment and the capability to effectively address the allocation and management of resources to respond to collective problems (UNDP, 1996). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been at the forefront of the growing international consensus that good governance and sustainable human development are indivisible. And UNDP believes that developing the capacity for good governance can be - and should be - the primary way to eliminate poverty.

Good governance is, among other things, about being participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. And it promotes the rule of law. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources (UNDP, 1997). Good governance is described as the government of the society. It encompasses the just exercise of authority, the ability for problem solving and conflict resolution, the capacity for efficient management of resources for development, and high level of responsiveness to the needs and the interest of the general populace. Good governance revolves around the structure and functioning of the state, its relationship with the civil society and its role in development (Nnamdi, 2009).

Given the present social, economic and political condition of the Nigerian state, good governance has become a subject of intense and passionate discourse. This is reflected in the high rate of poverty, unemployment, lack of transparency and accountability, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, lack of equity, fall in the living standard of citizens, social injustice and most worrisome, organized corruption. These have become common features of the political system. For governance to be good, the welfare of the Nigerian people must be the primordial objective of the government. As Chinua Achebe, in his book *The Trouble with Nigeria* rightly pointed out that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership." It was his opinion that "there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character, there is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else," the problem is based on leadership (Achebe, 1983; cited in Dike, 1999). Therefore according to Dike (1999), "The lack of selfless, non-corrupt and committed leaders has contributed immensely to the sociopolitical and economic predicaments facing Nigeria today." In ensuring good governance, the different arms, institutions and agencies of government have their roles to play. For instance, the legislature provides oversight or checks over the performance by the executive and, indeed, also by the judiciary. Similarly, within the parameters of the constitution, the executive is expected to lead the people in the path of good governance, and to ensure that security of life and property and defense against external aggression are provided. In like manner, the judiciary provides the critical oversight to governance especially over the activities of the executive and legislative branches. In particular, the judiciary jealously guards the conduct of government such that actors observe the provisions of the constitution, the rule of law and any other behaviour patterns that could conduce to, or detracts from good governance (Oyovbaire, 2007).

The role of the civil society in engendering good governance in Nigeria is also plausible. The civil society is a reinforcing mechanism for effective governance in the overall interest of the majority of the people. As democratic governance has been enthroned in Nigeria since May 29, 1999, the civil society has been persistent in its agitation for good governance and sustenance (Iyekekpolo et.al, 2011). The civil society possesses the capability to corporate with, engage, antagonize, contend and influence the state on behalf of the citizenry. That is to say, the civil society can be seen as an arena where the populace resists unpopular decisions and policies when the government starts to engage in them and enjoin policies that are in the interest of the citizens when the government starts to neglect it. The presence of a strong/effective opposition (party) which would serve as a watchdog to the ruling party, that points out the mistakes and unpopular decisions of the government is equally very important. The actions of the opposition make the government to be more responsible and accountable to the people thereby engendering good governance in the process. Many Nigerians talk about good governance as the only guarantee to peace, progress, stability, free and fair elections; in fact, it is viewed as the only passport to delivering the dividends of democracy. For the health, power, manufacturing sectors, education and largely the nation to work, we need good governance in order to maximize our potentials, improve the general welfare of the Nigerian people and even development in geo-political terms, there must be good governance (Dickson, 2011).

THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

The neopatrimonial approach to the study of politics in Nigeria is used as a theoretical base in this study. Neopatrimonialism is the vertical distribution of resources that gave rise to patron-client networks based around a powerful individual or party (Francisco, 2010). According to Egemonye (2013), Neopatrimonialism is a system of governance where the formal rational-legal state apparatus co-exists and is supplanted by an informal political system of governance. It is a social order where patrons -‘big men’- secure loyalty and support of clients by giving them benefits from state resources. In this instance, an office of power is used for personal gains, as opposed to a strict division of the private and public sphere. Neopatrimonial politics have developed the capacity of being able to divert public resources for private lucrative gains, undermining development possibilities already restricted by social and economic constraints (Cromwell & Chintedza, 2005 cited in Francisco, 2010).

In the Nigeria political system, there are political office holders –‘big men’- who control state resources and they distribute these resources among themselves and those who are loyal to them. This explains why politicians in Nigeria want to belong to the camp (party) of the custodian of the state resources, which in most cases would be the Governor or the President. Where there is a power shift from one party to another, many politicians cross-carpet to the party in power. For example in Nigeria, whenever the sitting governor of a state decides to pitch his tent in another party, a lot of the politicians in the state especially the local government chairmen follow suit. In Nigeria, some governors run their states like their private estates; this account for the mode of governance in Nigeria, where corruption has become widespread and commonplace that citizens come to accept it as a norm.

The Neopatrimonial nature of the Nigeria political system weakens bureaucratic institutions, hinders good governance and prevents development from taking place. This is because powers have been personalized. It is difficult to draw a distinction between an office holder (person) and the position he/she occupies. In a neopatrimonial state like Nigeria, decisions are taken not on the basis of institutionalized rules but in favour of personal relationships and to personal advantage (Okafor et al., 2012). This practice has given rise to corruption, clientelism and nepotism, and these are some factors that militate against the attainment of good governance in any given system. Neopatrimonialism which pervades the Nigeria political system makes good governance elusive. This is because the system has led to great inequalities in the distribution of wealth and has condemned a lot of citizens to live in poverty. For example, 80% of Nigeria’s oil revenue is stolen by 1% of Nigerians (Egemonye, 2013).

Neopatrimonialism in Nigeria is seen as one of the obstacles to democratic transition in the country. Thus, its outcome has been bad governance which is manifested in corruption and predation, high level of inequality, a distorted export structure, lack of diversification of export and slow growth (Okafor et al., 2012).

HINDRANCES TO GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

The first factor in the pool of hindrances to the attainment of good governance in Nigeria is organized corruption. Corruption has been broadly defined as a perversion or change from good to bad. Specifically, corruption or corrupt behaviour involves the violation of established rules for personal gains and profit (Sen, 1999 cited in Igbafe, 2011). According to Maria Costa (2013), a Brazilian scholar cited in Agwu (2011) she stated that “fighting corruption is a pre-condition for good governance and the rule of law, which in turn are foundation stones of sustainable development”. The high rate of corruption at various levels of government has greatly stunted the growth of the economy. Political and public office holders see their positions as avenues for illegal wealth accumulation to the detriment of the common Nigerian. That is why people see political appointment or election into public office as a ‘do or die’ affair because it appears to be the only way of getting access to the national cake (Agwu, 2011). The political and economic arrangement being practiced in Nigeria has entrusted a dis-proportionate amount of the nation’s wealth in the hands of a few individuals. The income gap between the rich and the poor is very wide and it keeps increasing by the day. The over attractiveness of political offices has made persons without any burning sense of vision or will for the state to vie for political positions. They are only motivated by the financial benefits accruing to the positions.

Corruption fosters unaccountable governance as leadership strives to prevent the masses from getting to know how much funds are acquired and how they are put to use. According to Transparency International, corruption thrives where temptation to fraudulent activities coexist with permissiveness. Where institutional checks on power are missing, where decision making remains obscure; where civil society is thin on the ground; where great inequalities in the distribution of wealth condemn people to live in poverty (Igwe, 2012). Most politicians now engage in what is known as rent seeking. Rent seeking occurs when people seek to use government for their

private gain (Almond et. al, 2006). Rents are benefits created through government intervention in the economy- for example, tax revenue or profits created because the government has restricted competition. As Almond et al. (2006) further posit, “rent seeking may be a particularly serious problem in poor societies, where politics is often the surest or most effective way to get rich, and the courts and mass media may be too weak to constrain government officials from abusing their power.” The culture of impunity and social injustice has allowed corruption to thrive in governance. Corruption is a symptom of fundamental failure of governance and so the higher the corruption, the more sustainable development becomes elusive (Agwu, 2011). Corruption increases poverty and disproportionately affects those in the low income group because it pulls resources from the national treasury into the hands of a few individuals who are politically powerful. This of course has led to loss of government revenue, poor governance, failure of state institutions, brain drain and electoral malpractices, absence of law and order, civil unrest, poor investment channels, business failure, unemployment, poverty and unsustainable development (Agwu, 2011). Section 308 of the Nigerian Constitution (the immunity clause) which states that political office holders are immune from any criminal and civil offence for the period that they are in office has in a way helped to propagate corruption in government. Good governance is only spoken of when a person or group of persons is in power and has the authority to effectively and efficiently control the resources of the state. If they cannot be held accountable for misappropriation of resources or the abuse of power while in office, then good governance may be a mirage.

The second factor in the pool of hindrances to the attainment of good governance is the lack of party ideology. In most democratic states, political parties form the government; that is after a general election has taken place which brings politicians into public offices. An ideology is a system of social beliefs. That is, a closely organized system of beliefs, values, and ideas forming the basis of a social economic, or political philosophy or program. In terms of governance, ideology can be seen as a group of ideas that informs government’s policies and actions (Chigwe, 2012). Sadly, the lack of ideology in the various political parties existing in the country is brought to bear in governance. Most political parties do not have a clear cut agenda of what they intend to pursue if voted into power. Rather they make promises made by politicians of old. The promise of good access roads, steady power supply, good public health care, and infrastructural facilities still dominate campaigns. An ideology is meant to serve as a driving force as well as a guideline for a party when it finally forms the government. When a political party without ideologies forms the government, automatically, that government would most likely lack an ideology. The crises in the ruling party in Nigeria that resulted in the factionalizing of the party are a reflection of lack of ideologies. It is a party in which party members project their individualistic and parochial tendencies. This is why when politicians finally take oath of office, they do not fulfill their electioneering campaign promises rather they concentrate on looting public funds. The Nigerian constitution is one of the few in the world that makes provision for the existence of the party system and of political parties in a democratic regime. In Europe and North America, parties grow and develop as autonomous political institutions for the articulation and aggregation of common interest, ideas, values and challenges of governance to those who subscribe to them (Oyovbaire, 2007). And because of the over reliance on support from the government...these political parties are largely known for their bareness in ideas and ideological disposition, and owned by a handful of persons with which to trade and bargain for material benefits (Oyovbaire, 2007).

The third factor in the pool of hindrances is the federal character principle otherwise known as quota system. The federal character principle was enshrined in the 1979 Constitution and reaffirmed in subsequent constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The essence of the federal character principle according to Agbodike (1998), cited in Iyekekpolo et al., (2011) is to ensure social harmony among all Nigerians and to promote the stability and national integration of the nation. This policy provides that the six geo-political zones in the country must be represented in every cadre of the public service. This is aimed at fostering unity and national integration in Nigeria being a country with ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity. But this has come at a very high cost to governance in Nigeria. The formula has not adequately addressed the problems of the different and unequal ethnic groups. Unfortunately, this principle has been used to accelerate the promotion of mediocre and incompetent civil servant into government (Iyekekpolo et. al., 2011). This is because appointments into very sensitive public offices are sometimes not based on merit but on the geo-political zone a person is from to which that office has been zoned. This has enthroned mediocrity and jettisoned meritocracy thereby handing good governance a death sentence as people who may be more qualified for an appointment stand disqualified by reason of the part of the country they hail from. Appointment into departments and agencies of government are politicized. Politicians rather than technocrats and bureaucrats are being made to head key ministries and government parastatals. To this end, people find themselves in positions they do not necessarily qualify for but because they are politically connected. The implication of this is that decision making sometimes is parochial, unilateral and self-serving. The federal character principle has been manipulated by, and channeled to serve the

overall interest of the petty bourgeois ruling class. It is the members of their class who formulate and operate the principle (Iyekekpolo et. al, 2011).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the purpose of this study, the survey design was utilized. This was done with the use of copies of questionnaire that were administered to respondents and in-depth interview. Five hundred (500) copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents and thirty (30) respondents were interviewed. The sample was obtained from respondents in Benin City, Edo State. The participants were drawn from Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba Okha Local Government Areas all in Benin City with the use of cluster and convenient sampling methods. Out of the 500 copies of the questionnaire administered, 485 completed copies were retrieved. Therefore, 485 copies of the questionnaire were analyzed. The completed questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 2.0 (SPSS) and the in-depth interview was analyzed descriptive method. Interview was conducted in English language and transcribed by the researcher. Simple frequency and percentage was be used to show the strengths and weaknesses of variables.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the survey, it was discovered that majority of the respondents were male (52.6%) while the female respondents 47.4%. Majority of the respondents (52.6%) fell within the age bracket of 25-34 years, followed by those below 25 years (26.8%). This is again followed by respondents between the ages of 34-44 years (15.5%). And respondents within the age bracket of 45-54 years (4.1%). While respondents under the ages of 55 and above constituted the lowest with only 1%.

Table 1: Government sincerity/seriousness in quest for good governance

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think the government is sincere and serious in its quest for good governance?	Yes	190	39.2
	No	295	60.8
	Total	485	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 1 shows the perception of the respondents towards government seriousness and sincerity in its quest for the attainment of good governance in Nigeria. 60.8 % believe that the government of Nigeria is neither serious nor sincere in the quest towards attaining good governance.

This is in support with the response from the interview conducted. One of the respondents interviewed is of the opinion that:

“The government is not serious neither is it sincere; they are only saying it so that Nigerians would think there is hope. Meanwhile there is a lot of stealing and looting of government treasury going on” (IDI, 30/09/2013).

Another respondent supports the above statement when he said:

“The level of corruption that pervades the Nigeria political system is such that it overwhelms any form of seriousness in this regard. We keep hearing of missing funds in the country and nothing concrete is being done address the issue. So, I ask, is this what they call seriousness or sincerity? Certainly not!” (IDI, 27/09/2013).

From the literature reviewed on hindrances to good government in Nigeria, Mario Costa (2003) cited in Agwu (2011) posited that “fighting corruption is a pre-condition for good governance and the rule of law, which in turn are foundation stones of sustainable development”. Therefore, to engender good governance, corruption must be seen to being tackled at all levels in the Nigerian state.

Table 2: Impact of mode of governance

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	40	8.2
Negative	315	65
Indifferent	130	26.8
Total	485	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

For the impact of the mode of governance on the citizenry, Table 2 shows that governance has impacted negatively on the citizens. Two-third of the respondents affirmed that the impact of governance on the lives of the citizens has been negative. Most of the policies and programmes designed by government have not accomplished the purpose for which they were set up. Some programmes achieved little compared to what the brains behind them intended them to achieve. Some of the respondents adduced bad leadership to the trend. According to them, leadership in Nigeria is not geared toward the common man in the society. They said that emphasis on money and the quest for power is their primary focus.

One respondent said:

“We do not have good leaders in the country that is why people do not feel impact of governance. They only care about themselves and never for their people. They hardly keep to their election promises. All they do is steal money for their personal aggrandizement” (IDI, 27/09/2013).

In support of the above statement, another respondent said:

“Nigerian leaders are very selfish and not interested in the welfare of the Nigerian people, and they are highly corrupt. Nigerians have not truly enjoyed the dividends of democratic governance in the country; rather what they get is impoverishment. This is because when funds meant for a particular purpose say provision of health care facilities, are diverted to other purpose or better yet, embezzled, that is impoverishment” (IDI, 27/09/2013).

Table 3: Policies of Government

Questions	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness of the federal character principle	Yes	360	74.2
	No	125	25.8
	Total	485	100
Do you think the federal character principle can bring about good governance in Nigeria?	Yes	225	46.4
	No	260	53.6
	Total	485	100
Are you aware of the immunity clause for political office holders in Nigeria?	Yes	340	70
	No	145	30
	Total	485	100
Do you think the policies of government are objective enough?	Yes	75	15.5
	No	410	84.5
	Total	485	100
Is good governance really attainable in Nigeria?	Yes	370	76
	No	115	24
	Total	485	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 3 shows some extant policies that are being operated in the Nigerian political system. From the survey conducted, 74.2% of the respondents are aware to the existence of the federal character principle in the country for public service officers while 70% are aware of the immunity clause for political office holders. In seeking their opinion on the nexus between the federal character principle and the attainment good governance, 53.6% of the respondents were of the opinion that the federal character principle otherwise referred to quota system cannot bring about the much sought after good governance in Nigeria.

One of the respondents said that:

“Good governance is not about geographical distribution for equity but about qualified and dedicated people to hold public offices. I believe that the best person should be picked instead of adopting quota system. It is not only discriminatory; merit is also compromised in the process” (IDI, 10/09/2013).

The statement of the above respondent can be linked to the work of Iyekepolo et al. (2011). According to them, “the federal principle has been used to accelerate the promotion of mediocre and incompetent civil servant into government.”

On the opinion of respondents in respect of the immunity clause for political office holders and how it has impacted on governance, majority of the responses were negative. They were of the opinion that the immunity clause does more harm than good as far as good governance is concerned.

One of the respondents said:

“It has rapidly increased corruption in Nigeria and made corrupt political office holders untouchable. That is why governors will steal and get away with it. It has created room for tyranny, authoritarianism and abuse of office” (IDI, 10/09/2013).

Another respondent said:

“Immunity clause is among the serious problems the country is passing through as leaders cannot be tried as long as they are still in office. It gives them the impression that they are above the law as evident in their gross misconduct. And this negates the principle of the rule of law” (IDI, 12/09/2013).

Yet another respondent supported the statements above when he said:

“It (immunity clause) has not allowed the appropriate authorities to try erring and corrupt governors. This does not protect the rights of the masses in as much as the political office holders are invulnerable. At the same time, it allows those governors to continue to perpetuate their ‘evil’ deeds while in office and display high level of indiscipline without anyone being able to stop them before they cover it up” (IDI, 12/09/2013).

Also, another respondent said:

“It hinders good governance as political office holders tend to hide behind it and engage in corrupt practices. It provides the opportunity to commit crime with impunity while breeding sacred cows in the process” (IDI, 13/09/2013).

On what impact the godfather syndrome has on governance in Nigeria, one of the respondents had this to say:

“It has brought about underdevelopment in the country. This is because funds meant for developmental projects are diverted to settle godfathers; and this keeps the country perpetually stagnated. It hampers the growth of democratic government and kills the idea of good governance” (IDI, 10/09/2013).

Another respondent said:

“It does not promote accountability and efficiency in governance. For example, it is mostly the connected and not qualified visionaries get into office. Then what do you expect? Allegiance would be to their godfathers alone who they would be accountable to. This has affected the system adversely as power is conferred on a few and dictated by the rich, not minding the fact that the polity is being destroyed in the process” (IDI, 13/09/2013).

In support of the previous respondents one other said:

“It has brought about incompetence, underdevelopment and bad governance. And not only that, it breeds sycophant, miscreant, indolent and treasury looters in government” (IDI, 13/09/2013).

Table 4: possibility of Attainment of Good Governance

Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Is good governance really attainable in Nigeria?	Yes	375	77
	No	110	23
	Total	485	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Despite the negative comments/responses of the respondents regarding governance in Nigeria, many Nigerians believe that good governance is still very much attainable in the country. Table 4 shows that 77% of the respondent affirmed this. A lot of citizens believe that the attainment of good governance in Nigeria is possible. However, they gave certain conditions that must be met before good governance becomes a reality in Nigeria. Some of the conditions include:

- Reduction in corruption: they said corruption must be reduced to the barest minimum and the government should be seen to be fighting corruption.
- Sincerity of purpose: government must be transparent and accountable
- People oriented government: the government in power should be such that listens to the views of the people it represents before acting. Leaders should be selfless
- An effective judicial system: the judicial should be very effective in their judicial responsibilities especially in trials involving corrupt public officers and electoral fraud
- Putting an end to the tradition of recycling old generation of politicians and the injection of new ideas into the system.
- Restructuring of political parties: this should involve jettisoning the godfather syndrome and allowing the wishes and wills of the people to prevail over the few individuals in the society especially during elections
- Attitudinal change: aggressive and deliberate change of orientation specifically by those in the corridors of power and sincere attempt to make political offices less attractive.
- Review of the immunity clause: the immunity clause should be expunged from the constitution and allow sitting but erring governors to be tried to serve as a deterrent to others.
- Institutional independence: institutions such as Independent National Electoral omission (INEC), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and a host of others in the country should be allowed to function independently free from undue interference from ‘power centres’.
- Adherence to democratic principles and the rule of law

CONCLUSION

The government in its pursuit for the attainment of good governance in Nigeria has a lot to do to gain the trust of the citizens it governs. This is because the people do not feel the impact of the government in their lives, because the policies of the government are geared towards the elites and famous, the politician and those in positions of power. The masses do not benefit from the policies because they are of the opinion that government makes policies for their selfish gain/interest. The government should create proper awareness for the people because majority of them are not aware of the programmes carried out by the government (for instance, most of the respondents are not aware of the immunity clause for political holders in Nigeria). The Nigerian government should get the people more involved in the affairs of the country so they will have a sense of belonging.

Furthermore, it is clear from this study that the citizens of Nigerians have lost hope in the government and do not believe in the attainment of good governance in Nigeria except certain conditions are achieved. One of the conditions is the eradication of corruption. Corruption is the greatest enemy of progress. For a society to progress it must be wiped clean from all elements of corruption. Therefore, before Nigeria can dream of attaining good governance the bad eggs in the government must be wiped out.

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