



Research Paper

# Godfatherism And Electoral Malpractice In Nigeria: A Reflection of People's Perception in Some Selected States

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## Abstract

In Nigeria, there seems to be a consensus between political and elitist writers that godfatherism is a menace to the electoral process. Godfatherism in the leadership of political parties has characterized the nation's politics since the advent of the extant Fourth Republic, weakening democratic institutions. The culture of political dominance guarded by a few political elites has not just become pervasive but has also raised so much uncontrollable tension and political instability as well as imbalances within our political space. Godfatherism has put question marks on the credibility of internal democracy and general elections in Nigeria. No wonder, the elections in Nigeria both primary and general are not free from the finger grip of godfathers. Party members are no longer in control of their political parties. Electoral politics and state powers are steered towards satisfying the self-regarding interests of the political godfathers. Politics is not utilized for the happiness of the greatest number. But if we may ask, 'How do individuals become a basic cluster in patron-client relationships in Nigeria and the process begin to affect the electoral and political process in the country often negatively?'. Given this, the paper is written to examine the menace of Godfatherism on the electoral process in Nigerian democracy. The study adopts primary and secondary data. 550 respondents comprising 330 (60%) males and 220 (40%) females from six zones within two States on the assumption that they understand the contents of the questionnaires better. The study discussed concerned scholars' and Peoples' perceptions, findings, research, and literature on the phenomenon under review to arrive at a clear understanding of the concept of godfatherism and electoral malpractice with its effects on contemporary Nigerian democracy. The paper concluded that godfathers manipulate the electoral process for their selfish interest, impeding good governance and denying the citizenry dividends of democracy. It recommended that the democratic institution should be strengthened to eschew the system of godfatherism and politicking, and to enhance transparency and political participation, ensuring good governance and political stability in the country.

**Keywords:** Godfatherism, Electoral Malpractice, Politics, Democracy and Nigeria.

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## I. Introduction

The concept of political godfatherism has gained prominence and assumed a dominant feature in electoral politics and governance in Nigeria. Over the years, political godfathers systematically ruled the country, State and even Local Government through their proxies. Godfatherism has put a question mark on the credibility of internal democracy in Nigeria. Most of the political office holders (including political appointees) who get to office are brought by a godfather. There is hardly any state that is denied the existence and influence of godfatherism (Ifeanyi, 2016). This trend has awkwardly affected the easy flow of democratic processes. Austeen (2019), noted that Political Godfather is a political gatekeeper who dictates who participates in politics and on what condition. Usually, these sets of persons in our society have always maintained a tradition of selfish overbearing pattern in hand-picking a candidate of their choice; they unleash their wealth to secure the party's nomination, sponsorship and manipulation of electoral processes for their selfish interest.

The term 'Godfatherism' in Nigerian politics carries a pejorative connotation of a small band of willful individuals who monopolize power and use it for their advantage (Omisore, 2001, Wilson, 1996, Ebohon & Obakhedo, 2010). The phenomenon is viewed as an ideology that is constructed on the belief that certain individuals possess considerable means to unilaterally determine who gets the party's ticket to run for an election and who wins in the electoral contest. Sadly, these political godfathers in most cases have an overwhelming influence on political parties which depend on them to bankroll their activities. The poverty of mind and pocket have always been an employable tool for these godfathers; they pride themselves in their self-acclaimed wealth to buy votes at both primary (delegates) and general elections (electorates) (Austeen, 2019).

Godfatherism and electoral politics are an aberration against national interest. Omotola (2007:35), observes that 'In Nigeria, there seems to be a consensus between political and elitist writers that godfatherism is a menace of the electoral process. In this wise, Coker (2004), noted that 'Power is not utilized for the happiness of the greatest number. 'The culture of political dominance has been guarded by a few political elites and today, this trend has not just become pervasive, but has also raised so much uncontrollable tension and political instability as well as an imbalance within our political space (Ebohon et al, 2010). For Austeen (2019), the downside of godfatherism is that office seekers/holders usually lose their independence and by default become surrogates to their sponsors, not minding the demands of their offices. No wonder, in the end when godfathers' protégés are elected into office, the mechanism of merchandization of the state is immediately activated for nothing but to recoup their expenses profitably (Austeen, 2019). Marx termed this as the *Fetishism of Commodities* in the country; however, today this has transcended into the twenty-first century, even in Nigeria. For example, Human Rights Watch (2010), noted that since many aspirants to political office in Nigeria lack access to resources usually needed to run for such office; most time, the godfather dictates to their protégés how to run government, any opposition from the protégés spells disaster as was the case between the foremost godfather chief Adedibu of Oyo State and his godson former governor Senator Ladoja.

The impact of godfatherism on Nigeria's general election is unprecedented. In Omotola (2007:35), it is interesting to note that godfather's influences that can affect the electoral process have all or nearly all, of the following attributes;

- (a) have political connections
- (b) security connections
- (c) a private security outfit
- (d) a reputation for unorthodox behaviour (sometimes anti-social) and
- (e) money or access to money (Omotola, 2007).

Similarly, Ebohon et al (2010: 157), posited that it is saddening to note that by 2010, over ten (10) years of civilian rule, the hope and expectation of the people had been dashed due to the undue influence exerted on the political and electoral process by a Cabalistic class known as "Political Godfatherism", "Large Givers" or "Money Bags". Noting further, Ebohon stated that godfatherism, an anti-democratic crisis of monumental proportion manifests itself in all kinds of electoral malpractice, including the imposition of candidates, perpetration of political violence and other forms of perversion of the democratic process, there is the employment of using the instrumentalists of electoral fraud and violence, subversion of the electoral process through vote riggings, ballot stuffing, thuggery and falsification of the election result by the political class (Ebohon et al, 2010). This accounts for a growing sense of disenchantment and disillusionment concerning the political process. At this juncture, one may ask to what extent godfatherism and electoral malpractice affected the socio-economic lives of the citizens in Nigeria, and on what theory can it be situated?

Elite theory is applied in this work to establish the effects of godfatherism as it tends to negatively impact our democracy in the long term, while in the immediate term, benefits the key advantaged 'Few' players. It establishes the behaviour of godfatherism and godson on one hand, and how godfatherism is destroying our nascent democracy, on the other hand.

The study should form the basis of serious concern as the effect of political godfatherism tends to impact negatively on democracy in the long term, while in the immediate term benefits the key advantaged 'few' players. The study has it that democracy is developing in Nigeria but democracy is growing for few and until the people become more proactive, godfatherism will engender electoral malpractice and dividends of democracy denied. The study is therefore significant in that it unveils the need to de-emphasize the building of powerful individuals in our democracy and instead build people-oriented institutions since power ought to be given to people and not taken away from them.

### **1.1 Problem of Study**

Godfatherism has become a dominant feature of electoral politics and governance in contemporary Nigeria. In particular, in the Fourth Republic, the phenomenon is being driven by self-aggrandizement, greed,

selfishness, and conflict with its untold negative effects on the citizenry and political process. Specifically, the study argues that:

1. If godfatherism is not checked then the imposition of candidates will persist.
2. If an electoral process is not devoid of godfatherism with money politics, then the polity is characterized by a high prevalence of manipulation of the election process, political aphorism and political malpractice.
3. If godfatherism is used in the negative as practised in Nigeria, then democratic ethos such as a free and fair electoral process, and popular participation coupled with popular welfare cannot be guaranteed. In other words, if the building of powerful individuals in our democracy is not de-emphasized rather than building people-oriented institutions, then godfatherism will persist and dividends of democracy denied. It is the above problems that this paper intends to examine.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

Our goal in this paper is to examine the menace of godfatherism on electoral malpractice in Nigeria's democracy. Specifically, the study is to critically examine the crisis of political godfathers in contemporary Nigerian democracy and to offer some suggestions for strengthening democracy in Nigeria.

## **1.3 STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

There are no satisfactory answers to the questions posed above; nevertheless, what evidence is available suggests the following sets of answers to the questions. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed and shall be further examined in the course of the research.

1. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between the influence of godfathers and the political participation of others in Nigeria.  
H<sub>a</sub>: Political godfathers use their influences to block the participation of others in Nigeria politics
2. H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between money politics and electoral malpractice in the democratic practice of the Fourth Republic.  
H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant relationship between money politics and electoral malpractice in the democratic practice of the Fourth Republic.
3. H<sub>0</sub>: Godfatherism politicking does not threaten core government policies and programmes vis-à-vis the interest of the masses.  
H<sub>a</sub>: Godfatherism politicking threatens core government policies and programmes vis-à-vis the interest of the masses.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Anankwenze (2004), located the etymology of the concept 'Godfatherism' in Christianity. According to him, godfathers are chosen as surrogates to help biological or foster parents raise a Christian child to become a god-fearing law-abiding adult of society; most Christians had godparents who help to shape moral development; most particularly orphans, who lost their parents early in their childhood; Godfather and Godson is a sacred religious responsibility in the Christian faith designed to guide and nurture the child to succeed in life. This is in every sense of it, religious godfatherism (Anankwenze, 2004).

Anankwenze (2004), Godfatherism (kingpin gangsters) first featured in Political Science Literature concerning the City of Chicago in the Pre-world War II Era. The term 'Godfather' originated in Chicago and became noted in American Political Science Literature under the euphemism of 'Party Machine'--- the head of criminal gangs sponsored politicians in elections, manipulated the results to get them elected, and in return received protection and contracts from their political godsons (Anankwenze, 2004). This is becoming a guiding principle of contemporary Nigeria's democracy. Many godfathers in present-day Nigeria operate the mafia-style by displaying similar violent and aggressive politicking coupled with manipulating devices of haunting their way by any means, relying on Machiavelli's slogan: the end justifies the means (Ajay, 2006). Afe Babalola (2018) acknowledged that one of the problems militating against political parties in Nigeria is the absence of internal democracy often symbolized by what has come to be known as the godfather factor or godfather.

Literarily, Godfatherism refers to individuals who determine who, what, when and how things operate and are usually in the corridors of power. Ebohon & Obakhedo (2010; 157), stated that the concept of 'Godfatherism' gathers quick momentum on arrival into the political and academic development firmament in Nigeria. Godfathers are seen in Nigeria to be men who have the power personally to determine both who gets nominated to contest an election and who wins an election. For Fatola (2016), a 'Godfather' in Nigeria context is one who under either immense wealth or political goodwill can determine not only the persons that are nominated by their parties to contest the election but who in most cases can guarantee the victory of such

candidates; the sure guarantee may come the form of purchases of votes and hardly by legitimate means. Continuing, Falola notes, "A political godfather in Nigeria context may even be able to form a political party, therefore, most politicians will do anything to gain the favour of a political godfather" (Falola, 2016:2).

The presence of godfathers in electoral politics in Nigeria has impeded good governance. It is not surprising therefore, for Olawole (2005), to observe that 'Godfatherism has far-reaching negative effects on the democratization process in Nigeria. While comparing the actions of the godfathers (Azikwe, Awolowo, Tafawa Balewa etc.) in the First Republic to the activities of the present godfathers in Nigeria Polity, Olufemi (2008), noted 'The Fourth Republic godfathers, (Uba, Late Tony Annine, Late Chief Lamidi Adedibu, Bafarawa in Sokoto, Adams Oshiomole etc.) operate Nigeria polity with impunity because of the influence and cordial relationship they have with the leaders in government through their activities.

The story of godfatherism in contemporary Nigerian politics in general and some parts of the country in particular is a fundamental statement about the state of democracy in the country (Gambo,2007). In this wise, Falola (2016), observes the culture of the political godfather which pervades the political landscape throughout the six geopolitical zones is the bane of Nigeria's nascent democracy. The culture has aided the fall of so many candidates who would have been great leaders in many states across the country. The idea that an aspiring candidate's popularity, acceptability and public goodwill can never take him to victory until he is appointed and backed by a politically influential godfather is a fatal blow to the concept of good governance (Gambo,2007). Apart from being antithetical to democratic consolidation, the godfather is an ethic-building block for corruption, retrogression underdevelopment, and mediocrity (Falola, 2016). Generally, the resultant effect attempt is poor delivery or non-delivery of dividends of democracy at all, in all three spheres (tiers) of government (Ebohon et al,2010). In short, the anticipated growth for the better is thus stunted; this menace of political godfatherism is one key internal factor that hampers the advancement of the democratization process in Nigeria particularly at the local level. Hence, it is clear that the citizens neither see the value of participatory democracy nor enjoy the dividends of democracy (Nafute, 2006).

Considering the work of some authors, such as Ayoade (2008), Obende (2008), Ebohon & Obakhedo (2010), Ogbonwan (2015), Falola, (2016), and Jones (2019), it is evident that 'across the country from 1999, 2003 up till the 2019 party primaries (Kogi and Bayelsa gubernatorial primaries), and 2020 Edo Governorship party primaries, godfatherism in our political landscape has been very rife. One may ask, 'How are those in authority selected for their positions? Are they chosen in free and open elections, or selected otherwise? In particular, Falola (2016), showing the notoriety of godfathers in the entire nation, listed the themes of states as Abia, Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Bornu, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Kogi, Enugu, Kwara, Lagos, Oyo, Ekiti, Zamfara among others, To illustrate, below is a tabulated sketch in Table 1 of the activities of godfatherism and its implications on the political process,

**Table 1 showing sketched activities of godfatherism and electoral malpractice with its implication on the political process (1999 – 2016) Source: Falola, (2016) and Jones (2019) Activities of Godfatherism in the Fourth Republic.**

From the above, a number of similarities and differences can be identified from the operation of godfatherism in our states. First and foremost, the common feature of godfatherism in all the states is that

NAME OF GODFATHERS	NAME OF GODSONS	STATE	REASON FOR GODFATHER	METHOD OF ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE	IMPLICATION OF GODFATHERISM ACTIVITY
Dr. Olusola Saraki	1. BukolaSaraki 2.GbemisolaSaraki 3. AlhajiFatai Ahmed 4. Alhaji Adamu Attah 5. Cornelius Adebayo	Kwara	Nepotism/Influence	Selection/ Imposition of Candidate	Political Instability
(1) Chief Tony Annenih (2) Chief Gabriel Igbinedion (3) Chief Ogbemudia (4)Adams Oshiomole	1. Barr. Osunbor Osareimen 2. Lucky Igbinedion 3. UgbesiaOdion 4. Godwin Obaseki 5. Pastor (Barr) Ize Iyamu	Edo	Nepotism/Influence	Imposition of Candidate/ Favouritism	Political Violence
(1) Chief Chris Uba (2) Chief Andy Uba	1. Chris Ngige 2. Peter Obi	Anambra	Financial Gain	Imposition/ Selection	Political Violence/ Instability
Alhaji Amodu Sheriff	1. Alhaji Malakchala 2. Alhaji Cubio	Borno	Nepotism	Imposition of Candidate	Political Violence/ Instability

	3. Alhaji ShetimaKasim				
Late Chief Lamidi Adedibu	Senator Rashid Ladoja	Oyo	Influence/Favoritism	Imposition	Political Violence/ Instability
Chief Olusegun Obasanjo& Chief Osoba	1. Doug. Olumide Osoba 2. Senator IyaboObasanjo 3. Daniel Gbenga	Ogun	Nepotism	Imposition	Political Violence
Chief Ibrahim Idris	Idris Wada	Kogi	Nepotism	Imposition	Underdevelopment
Senator (Barr) Pius Ayim Senator (Barr) Sam Egwu	1. Elechi Amadi 2. Umahi	Ebonyi	Influence	Imposition of Candidate	Political Violence/ Instability
Nnamani		Enugu	Financial Gain	Imposition of Candidate	Political Instability
Orji Uzor Kalu	1. Orji Theodore 2. Ekpeazu Eze	Abia	Nepotism/Influence	Imposition	Political Instability
Senator (Barr) Godswill Akpabio	1. Umana Okon Umana 2. Onofik Luke	Akwa Ibom	Nepotism/influence	Imposition	Political violence/Instability
Rabio Kwankwaso	1. Abdullahi Gaduje 2. Abba Kabiru Yusufu	Kano	Nepotism/influence	Imposition	Political instability
Asiwaju Bola AhmedTinubu	1. Barr. Babatunde Raji Fashola 2. Akinwunmi Ambode 3. Babajinde Sanwo-Olu	Lagos	Nepotism/Influence	Imposition/selection	underdevelopment

godfathers are concerned with installing political godsons into public office. In April, 2003, Dr Chris Ngige, was declared the winner of Anambra State gubernatorial election courtesy of the role played by his godfather Chris Uba, with his financial and political maneuvering. Similarly, in Ogun state, both the son of a former governor, Olusegun Osoba Olumide, a standard bearer of House of Representative and Senator Obasanjo Bello, daughter of former president Olusegun Obasanjo rode to National Assembly on political connections through nepotism. (Tell, October 6, 2003:19). This entails huge resources and circumventing of electoral processes for their candidate who may not actually be the best on grounds of merit or people's choice by popular demand or vote (Nnamani, 2004).

From the foregoing, it is clear that there is a relationship that exists between the godfather and their proteges (godsons). However, the reason for such relationship varies from state to state or from godfather to godson. Some states, like Anambra, Ogun, Enugu, Kwara, Edo among others are examples of the significance of political connections (e.g Governor Chimaroke Mbadinuju's godfather is Emeka Ofor, a one-time Governor, Daniel Gbenga was a godson to former president Obasanjo (Anankwenze, 2003)

Apart from political connections, godfather exists in other states purely for financial gain. Anambra is a good case in point. In no distant time, after becoming the governor of Anambra in 2003, Dr Chris Ngige's relationship with Chris Uba, his political godfather, went sour. This was because Chris Uba (the godfather) attempted to control and dominate the governor for the benefit of getting more public funds for himself. He, Uba had asked the governor to pay him millions of Naira (4,000,000) monthly to defray the cost of installing him to office; the governor's refusal was the beginning of trouble in the state (Tell October 2003)

Equally, it was on record that in Edo state, the situation of godfathers in its political affairs seemed a little different with three notable godfathers namely, Chief Tony Annenih, Chairman Board of Trustee of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Brigadier General (Dr) Samuel Ogbemudia, Ex-South Leader of the party, and Gabriel Igbinedion, father of one time Edo state governor, Lucky Nosakhare Igbinedion. Ebohon (2010), asserts the trio were well known and recognized as political bigwigs with chief Annenih as the primary inter- pares; the trio were on the payroll of the state government between 1999-2003 when the son of Igbinedion, Lucky Igbinedion was the governor. There were several reported cases of disagreements between Governor Igbinedion and Chief Anenih over who gets what in the state, (Ebohon,2010). This was not because the latter bankrolled the former's election, but because of his political machine and the influence he wielded both at the state and federal levels. Though it appears that Oshiomhole in 2007 curtailed godfatherism in the state, but elections into the post of Local Council, House of Representative and the Senate, 2007 to 2019 party primaries as well as 2020 APC governorship primary reveal that Edo State's freedom from Godfatherism is a far cry. Ihonvbere affirmed this when he lost to Alimenkhena, an APC Edo North Senatorial aspirant in 2014 Election primaries. Similarly, Obaseki Godwin attributed his disqualification from participating in 2020 APC Governorship primaries to activities of godfatherism occasioned by Adams Ohiomole.

Furthermore, still on financial gain, in Borno State, Alimodu Sheriff was said to have financed his godson, Mala Kachalla, from 1999-2003 as governor. When the relationship went sour as a result of disagreement over financial gain, Alimodu sheriff in 2011 election, backed the candidature of Alhaji Gubio while his own brother was chosen as running mate. However, the two of them were shot dead by unknown “Boko Haram” members. Alhaji Sheriff himself contested for the position of the senate but lost to the PDP candidate. Notwithstanding, Alhaji Ahmadu Sherif still maintained the posture of godfather because he was the one who installed Alhaji Shetima Kassim, a one-time governor of the state (Abdullahi et al, 2011).

But considering Oyo State, the reason for Godfatherism is not a case of financial gain but of influence, Ebohon & Obakhedo (2010), affirmed this assertion by saying that, “between 2003 and 2007, Oyo State was a theatre of war between Alhaji Lamidi Adebibu popularly referred to as *Godfather of Ibadan Politics*, *Bale of Molete* (father), and Senator Rashid Ladoja (his protégé or godson), their battle for the soul of the state denied the people the dividends of democracy and good governance. Alhaji Adebibu was a man of tremendous political clout and a mobilizer with a very strong political machine which he claimed to have developed to secure the election of Senator Rasheed Ladoja (Ebohon and Obakhedo, 2010). Adebibu is, therefore, quoted as saying, “... I installed him there when people opposed him”, and “I am the politics in Oyo state and I am the issue to discuss by all and sundry” (Emordi, 2007). Lamidi fell with Ladoja because Ladoja failed to honour all agreements reached before his election. Ajayi (2006), termed the breach as Ladoja’s Sins’ among the ‘Sins’ enunciated for failure to remit N10,000,000 to Adebibu from the government security vote and essentially, lack of Ladoja’s respect for Olusegun Obasanjo while he was mediating the conflict between them (Ebohon, 2010).

According to a report (Vanguard, December 09, 2014 p 6), the governorship primaries of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) 2014 produced shocking results in some states. Most of the outgone governors, such as, Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State, Theodore Orji of Abia, Babangida Aliyu of Niger, and Sule Lamido of Adamawa, delivered their favoured aspirants as candidates just as former Minister of State (Education), Mr. Nyesom Wike came out top in Rivers inspite of pre-primaries opposition from some PDP elders and stakeholders in the State, while Mr. Jimi Abaje emerged winner in Lagos on the support of party leaders of Lagos State. Also, after last minute high win battle for delegates’ votes in which some aspirants offered mouth-watering sums of money and got delegates to swear, Chairman Senate Committee on Health, Senator Okowa emerge governorship candidate for Delta. What is clear in his emergence was that, aspirants ‘buy’ delegates votes. The sum ranges from N500,000 to N1,000,000..

It is worth noting that in Abia, Dr Ekpeazu Eze, a protégé of Governor Orji emerged PDP governorship flag bearer. The leading names that started the race were nowhere to be seen inspite of the Governor’s claim that he had gallantly eliminated godfatherism in democracy from Abia political landscape ([www.ionigeria.com/report](http://www.ionigeria.com/report)).

In Enugu, Senator Ayogu Eze won the primary election on the support of the state party chairman. In Ebonyi, the Deputy Governor, Engr, Umahi had won because of the support of Anyim Pius Anyim and former Governor, Sam Egwu. In Jigawa, Lamido’s ex chief of staff, Ringim emerged while in Niger state, Governor Aliyu’s former aide won on the support of the governor. Teslim Kolawole Folarin emerged in Oyo while that of Ogun was cancelled because primary was judged unauthorized.

In all, the electoral process in the states highlighted above was tainted with irregularities as a result of the activities of godfatherism. For the sake of clarity, we present the table below to indicate that the People Democratic Party (PDP) won more states from 21 to 28, in 2003 Gubernatorial elections as a result of electoral malpractice.

**Table 2. Result of the 2003 gubernatorial election**

1	State	Vote	Party	Winner
2	Abia	540,983	PDP	Orji Uzor kalu
3	AkwaiBom	1,028,722	PDP	Victor Attah
4	Anambra	452,829	PDP	Chis Ngige
5	Bauchi	1,198,130	PDP	Adamu Muazu
6	Bauchi,	1,198,130	PDP	Diepriege Alamisaya
7	Benue	681,717	PDP	George Akume
8	Borno	581,880	ANPP	Aku Modu Sheruf
9	Cross River	119,329	PDP	Donald Duke
10	Delta	1,038,607	PDP	James Ibori
11	Ebonyi	768,674	PDP	Sam Egwu
12	Edo	969,747	PDP	Lucky Igbinedion
13	Ekiti	229,906	PDP	Ayo Fayose
14	Gombe	494,562	PDP	Damjuma Goje
15	Imo	695,149	PDP	Achikeu denova
16	Jigawa	816,385	ANPP	Ibrahim Turaki
17	Kaduna	196,688	PDP	Mohammed Markafi
18	Kano	1,082,457	ANPP	Ibrahim Shekarau
19	Kastina	892,340	PDP	Umar Musa Yaradua
20	Kebbi	502,833	PDP	

21	Kogi	459,942	PDP	Ibrahim Idris
22	Kwara	323,242	PDP	Bukola Saraki
23	Lagos	911,613	AD	Bola Tinubu
24	Nassarawa	505,893	PDP	Abdulullahi Adeniyi
25	Ogun	497,35	PDP	Gbenga Daniel
26	Ondo	611,926	PDP	Segun Agagu
27	Osun	478,492	PDP	Olagunsoye Oyinlola
28	Oyo	636,720	PDP	Rasheed Ladoja
29	Plateau	364,903	PDP	Joshua Dariye
30	Enugu	1131292	PDP	Chimaroke Nnamani
31	Rivers	2,098,692	PDP	Peter Odili
32	Sokoto	665, 545	PDP	Attahiru Bafarawa
33	Taraba	784,015	PDP	Jolly Nyame
34	Yobe	369,906	ANPP	Bukar Ibrahim
35	Zamfara	829,935	ANPP	Yerima Sanni
36	FCT			

**Table 3: Results of the gubernatorial election of 1999 and 2003 in Nigeria: general losers comparative views**

S/N	PARTY	1999	2003	Gains(+)	Loser (+)
1	AD	6	1	-	-5
2	ANPP	9	7	-	-2
3	PDP	21	28	7	-
Total		36	36		-

Source: <https://www.inecmigners.com>

According to Philip, Samson and Haruna (2014), People Democratic Party (PDP) winning more States from 21 to 28, in 2003 Gubernatorial elections was as result of electoral malpractice. This view is quite revealing as it unveils the problematic dimension the phenomenon of godfather has assumed in Nigeria, especially during the fourth republic. Nnamani (2004 p28), it was observed that aspirants to political offices who are less financially empowered rely greatly on the financial miracle of the money bags in the society who invariably become their mentors and political godfather. In the same vein, Ebohon& Obakhedo (2010) noted that money politics could violate an electoral process and that godfather could use their money to the detriment of Nigeria democratic experiment. On this note, Coker (2004), posited that godfathers of Nigeria politics have always used their position power and influence for their personal aggrandizement to the in detriment of the poor masses.

From the foregoing, it is right to state that godfatherism in Nigeria politics is not tied to one factor, i.e. financial gain; it includes, influence, nepotism among others. Also, it is observed that godfatherism and election manipulation go hand in hand. It leads to imposition of candidates. It can be inferred also that godfatherism is not limited to one political party. It cuts across all the parties whether PDP, APC, APPP, ANPP, etc. just as it exists from one state to another. Nigeria is still far from true democracy in that the internal democracy of the political parties is still under the influence of godfatherism. So far, the 1999 to 2019 experience has shown that the processes by which candidate emerge from their political parties are open to manipulation. In many cases, candidates are handpicked by their many leaders. Where primaries are conducted and candidates emerge who do not enjoy the support of the party hierarchy, they are substituted without regard to due process. In 2014 party primaries, these cases abound in Rivers, Enugu, etc., (PDP primary) similar in Imo and Kogi APC primaries. (Olasankanmu,2014).

### III. Theoretical Framework

For this study, out of the several theories, the Elite theory will be utilized to analyze the concept of ‘Godfatherism’ and Electoral malpractice in Nigeria. This theory aims to establish the behaviour of godfatherism on one hand, and the consequences of their actions on the political and electoral processes on the other hand.

Elite theory sees ‘Elites’ as those who score high on the socio-economic system. Politics (Public Policy) may be viewed as the preferences and values of the governing elite (Varma, 2005). Elite theory suggests that people (masses) are apathetic (not interested in politics) and ill-informed about politics. On this note, Varma observed that ‘Political elites participate in or influence the making of decisions that allocates resources within and among social units (Varma, 2005)

Anifowose and Enemuio (2008: 293-295), chronicle the main assumption of Elite theory as captured by Thomas Dye and Harmon Zeigler thus;

*Society is divided into the few who have power and the many who do not. Only a small number of persons allocate values for society; the masses do not decide public policy; the few who govern are not typical of the masses who are governed; Elites are drawn from the upper socio-economic strata of society, and elites influence masses than masses influence elites.*



Simply, elite theory assumptions include the following:

1. That society is divided into two broad classes.
2. Only small number of persons allocates values for the society (Elite), the masses do not decide public policy.

3. The few who govern do it in the interest and values of the elite and not for the people.

Still on elite, Albert (2005), noted that an important issue raised by Pareto and Marx in their work is that political elites insulate and isolate themselves from their society and try as much as possible to reproduce themselves from within. This implies that the political elites reproduce themselves on an individual and selective basis in a process which according to Albert, it is specifically referred to as "Circulation of Elites", the criteria for such recruitment are often parochial and the process is usually done in a manner that does not in any way compromise the traditional integrity of the dominant class (Albert, 2005). Marx supports the position but argued that an element of revolution is needed for enthroning a newer social class or occupational grouping in such a society. In many parts of the developing world like Nigeria, where democracy has not been allowed to have a sound footing, it is still a case of selective recruitment of individuals through Godfatherism (Albert, 2005).

Political godfatherism in Nigeria builds an array of loyalists around them and uses their influence which is often monetary consideration, to manipulate the rest of the society. The consequence is that it denies the people the right to elect candidates of their collective choice; those so called anointed can never have the political will to subscribe to whims and caprices of the masses in flagrant violence of the selfish interest of their political godfather.

#### **IV. MATERIALS AND METHOD**

The design of the study is to investigate the behaviour of godfathers and its implications on the electoral process in Nigeria democracy. The researcher uses survey method. The population for this study is the entire electorates from Edo and Kogi States, that is, People from voting age in Edo and Kogi States having the figure of 1779788 and 1350883 respectively, 2015 voters register (INEC detail website 16/01/2015). Nigeria consists of 36 states and federal capital territory and based on simple frame of 18% two states were selected namely Edo and Kogi States.

To arrive at the sample size that represent Edo and Kogi States, the researcher adopted the formula of Taro Yamaro (1967) to decide the sample size. The formula states;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + n(e^2)}$$

Where n = sample size required

n = Total population

e = Margin error or level of significance which is  $\sqrt{(0.06)^2}$

Using the formula above,

##### **In case of Edo State**

Therefore, n = 1779788

$$n = \frac{1779788}{1 + 1779788(0.06)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1779788}{1 + 1779788(0.0036)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1779788}{1 + 6407.0568}$$

$$n = \frac{1779788}{6408.0568}$$

$$n = 277.7$$

$$n = 278$$

##### **For Kogi State**

Therefore n = 1350883

$$n = \frac{1350883}{1 + 1350883(0.06)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1350883}{1 + 1350883(0.0036)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1350883}{1 + 4863.1788}$$

$$n = \frac{1350883}{1 + 4864.1788}$$



$$\begin{aligned}n &= \frac{1350883}{4865.1788} \\n &= 2777.7 \\n &= 278\end{aligned}$$

Thus, the sample size for the study is five hundred and fifty six ( $278+278 = 556$ ), respondents. Resolvedly, the total number of citizens given questionnaires during the research process was 550 which were balanced as the simple size and the stratified method was used. Six zones were used – three in Edo State and three in Kogi State respectively, eighty (80) respondents in each zones totaling 480 respondents. The remaining 70 questionnaires were randomly distributed. A total number of five hundred questionnaires were retrieved from six categories of people in the six zones within the two states. The questionnaires were specifically sent to the political office holders, legal officers, traditional rulers, INEC officials, Civil/Public Servants and students alike that make up the sample.

The sampling size for the present study consisted of the five hundred and fifty six respondents who are within voting age. The rationale behind the use of electorates is based on the obvious assumption that they are placed to understand the contents of the questionnaires better. The demographic characteristics of the population shows that there are 334 males (60%) and 220 females (40%), 30% of the respondents are married, 5.55% are single, 8.33% are widows while 6.66% are widowers. Again, majority of the respondents are Christians 79.16% while 20.83% are Muslims.

#### **4.1. PROCEDURES**

The researcher distributed five hundred and fifty (550) questionnaires to all six categories of the people who should understand the topic, “Godfatherism and Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria”. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to those he felt would understand the contents of the questionnaires better. Some of the questions were open – ended and some were closed – ended. Out of the five hundred and fifty six questionnaires sent out, five hundred were returned. This represents 90% of the total respondents.

A total of 500 relevant responses rate were received for an overall response rate of 330 (66%). Armstrong (1977) opined that you might not retrieve all data given to respondents. The test of hypothesis involved the use of Chi – square test. The formula for the calculated value of Chi – square is  $\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(f_0 - f_e)^2}{f_e}$

Where:  
 $f_0$  = observed observation  
 $f_e$  = Expected observation

The  $\chi^2$  calculated value will be compared with critical value of  $\chi$  at 0.5 level of significance. By compares, the following decision rule applies;

1. If the chi – square is greater than the critical values reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.
2. If the Chi – Square value is less than the critical value, accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis.

#### **4.2. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

Out of the five hundred and fifty-six questionnaires sent out, five hundred were returned. This represents 90 % of the total respondents. The researcher sought to provide answers to the following three (3) hypotheses:

1.  $H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between the influence of godfathers and political participation of others in Nigeria.

$H_a$ : Political godfathers use their influences to block the participation of others in Nigeria politics

2.  $H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between money politics and electoral malpractice in democratic practice of the Fourth Republic.

$H_a$ : There is significant relationship between money politics and electoral malpractice in democratic practice of the Fourth Republic.

3.  $H_0$ : Godfatherism politicking do not threaten core government policies and programmes vis-à-vis interest of the masses.

$H_a$ : Godfatherism politicking threatens core government policies and programmes vis-à-vis interest of the masses.

#### **Question 1**

Political godfathers use their influence to prevent the political participation of others (unanointed candidates) in Nigerian politics.

**Table 1: Responses to political godfathers use their influence to prevent the political participation of others in Nigeria politics question to test hypothesis.**

<b>TABLE 1</b>			
<b>What is your age?</b>	<b>Do political godfathers use their influence to block the participation of others in Nigeria Politics?</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Over 42 years old	35	10	45
31-41	64	54	118
26-33	132	58	190
18-25	47	100	147
<b>Total</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>500</b>

*Survey Data, 2019*

$$X^2 = E \frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$$

Computing of  $x^2$  (4X2)

cell	Fo	Fe	(fo – fe)	(fo – fe) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$
A	25	35	-10	100	2.9
B	20	10	10	100	10
C	65.5	64	1.6	2.56	0.04
D	52.4	54	1.6	2.56	0.05
E	105.6	13.2	-26.4	69.7	5.3
F	84.4	58	26.4	69.7	12.01
G	81.7	47	34.7	1204.1	25.6
H	63.3	100	-34.7	1204.1	12.04
		500		X <sup>2</sup>	E 67.94

Degree of freedom

$$df = (r - 1)(c - 1) = (4 - 1)(2 - 1) = (3)(1) = 3$$

Rejection region

Calculated  $X^2$  ( $x^2 = 67.94$ ) is greater than critical

$X^2$  (a)  $df = 3$ ; it is statistically significant

(a)  $X = 0.5$

Critical  $X^2 = 7.82$ ;  $x = 0.5$

Degree of Association

Applicable since data are statistically significant

Result:

Reject  $H_0$  (null hypothesis) – The influence of political godfathers would not prevent political participation of others (un-anointed candidates) in Nigerian politics.

Interpretation:  $X^2$  at 0.5 at 3df since  $X^2 = 67.94$  which is greater than the chi-square tabulated values, we therefore, attest to the fact that “the influence of political godfathers would block participation of others (un-anointed candidates) in Nigerian politics.

## Hypothesis 2

Electoral malpractices (corruption, vote buying, money politics etc.) would significantly impact on the culture of political godfather in the Fourth Republic.

**Table 2: Responses to show electoral malpractice impact on the culture of political godfather in Nigeria question to test hypothesis.**

What is your qualification?	Does electoral malpractice impact on the culture of political godfathers Nigeria?		
	Yes	No	Total
SSCE or 'A' Level	20	40	60
BA,BSc,LLB,HND etc.	70	152	222
MA.MSc.LLM	78	112	190
PhD./MPhil	10	18	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>500</b>

*Survey Data, 2019*

$$X^2 = E \frac{(fo-fe)}{fe}$$

Computation of  $X^2$  (4 x 2)

cell	Fo	Fe	(fo – fe)	(fo – fe) <sup>2</sup>	(fo – fe) <sup>2</sup> /fe
A	21.32	20	1.32	1.74	0.087
B	38.64	40	-1.36	1.85	0.0463
C	79.05	70	9.03	81.54	1.165
D	142.96	152	-9.04	81.72	0.537
E	67.64	78	-10.36	107.33	1.378
F	122.4	112	10.4	108.16	0.966
G	9.97	10	-0.03	0.00009	0.00009
H	18.03	15	0.03	0.009	0.00005
		500		$X^2$	E = 4.177

Degree of freedom

$$df = (r - 1) (c - 1) = (4-1) (2-1) = (3)(1) = 3$$

Rejection region

Calculated  $X^2$  ( $x^2 = 4.172$ ) is smaller than critical value

$X^2$  (a)  $df = 3$ ; not statistically significant

(a)  $X = 0.5$

Critical  $X^2 = 7.82$ ;  $x = 0.5$

Degree of Association

Not Applicable since data are not statistically significant

Result:

Don't reject the  $H_0$  – electoral malpractice (corruption, vote buying, money politics etc.) would be a negative outcome of the culture of political godfatherism in fourth republic.

Interpretation:  $X^2$  at 0.5 at 3df since  $X^2 = 7.82$  which is smaller than the chi-square tabulated value, we therefore, reject alternative hypothesis “electoral malpractice (corruption, vote buying, money politics among others) would significantly impact on the culture of political godfatherism in the fourth republic.”

### **Hypothesis 3**

Godfatherism Politicking does not threaten core government policies and programmes vis a-vis interest of the masses and national development

**TABLE 3: Responses to are there consequences of godfatherism on citizenry and national development**

What is your occupation?	Are there consequences of Godfatherism on the citizenry and national development?		
	Yes	No	Total
Political Class	51	38	89
Public Servant	53	47	100
Civil Servant	89	34	123
Private Workers	60	08	68
INEC Staff	14	08	22
Students	63	35	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>500</b>

**Survey Data, 2019**

$$X^2 = \frac{(fo-fe)}{fe}$$

Computation  $x^2$  (6x2)

cell	Fo	Fe	(fo – fe)	(fo – fe) <sup>2</sup>	(fo – fe) <sup>2</sup> /fe
A	65.36	51	14.36	206.206	4.04
B	30.26	38	-7.74	59.91	1.58
C	74	53	21	441	8.321
D	34	47	-13	169	3.590
E	92.5	89	35	12.25	0.138
F	41.82	34	7.82	61.152	1.799
G	50.32	60	-9.68	93.70	1.562
H	23.12	8	15.12	228.61	28.58
I	16.28	14	2.28	5.199	0.371
J	7.48	8	-052	0.2704	0.00338
K	72.32	63	9.32	88.86	1.410
L	33.32	35	-1.68	2.822	0.081
		500		X <sup>2</sup>	E = 51.51

Degree of freedom

$$df = (r - 1) (c - 1) = (6-1) (2-1) = (5)(1) = 5$$

Rejection region

Calculated X<sup>2</sup> (x<sup>2</sup> = 51.51) is greater than critical value

X<sup>2</sup> (a) df = 5; it is statistically significant

(a) X = 0.5

Critical X<sup>2</sup> = 15.09; x = 0.5

Degree of Association

Applicable since data are statistically significant

Result:

Reject the H<sub>0</sub> – godfatherism do not affect negatively the citizenry and national development.

Interpretation: X<sup>2</sup> at 0.5 at 5df since X<sup>2</sup> = 51.51 which is greater than the chi square tabulated value, we therefore attest to the fact that godfathersim in politicking would threaten the core government policies and programmes vis-à-vis interest of the masses and national development.

## V. DISCUSSION OF RESULT AND MAJOR FINDINGS

Finding pertaining to the first research hypothesis show that political godfathers use their influence to block the participation of others in Nigeria politics. One may ask, ‘Can the will of the electorate be the basis for credible election in Nigeria without the influence of the godfather?’ The frequency distribution table reveals that; 278 respondents’ (majority) believe that there is significant relationship between influence of godfatherism and political participation in the Fourth Republic. In addition, taking the chi-square tabulated value 7.82 which is greater than 67.9. We therefore accept that the influence of political godfathers would prevent political participation of others in Nigeria politics. In this light, the respondents agreed that this was not the case in Advanced Countries where the candidates put up for elections will work for the betterment of the masses. Specifically, Joseph Isaac and Okoro Louis, in their perceptions note that “countries with proven democracies, like USA, Canada, UK etc. are not known to be operating godfatherism; Nigerian godfatherism is done with impunity. According to them, it is outrageously scandalous; it has resulted in loss of confidence and lack of political participation. It is evidently clear that they neither see the value of participatory democracy nor enjoy the dividends of democracy.

Again, result shows that electoral malpractice impacts negatively on the culture of political godfatherism in the Fourth Republic. Findings from the hypothesis reveal that there is significant relationship between godfathersim and electoral malpractice and its negative impact on the citizens. This is shown on the table as the calculated value 4.18 is less than the value 7.82. Hence, we do not reject the null hypothesis |H<sub>0</sub>|. By this electoral malpractice is the negative outcome of the culture of political godfatherism in the Forth republic. Based on the data collected from the field 322 respondents majority i.e. 64.4% believe that electoral malpractice is a negative outcome of the culture of godfatherism in the Fourth Republic while 178 (i.e. 36% disagreed ). It was discovered from the responses to the questionnaires that electoral malpractice impact on the culture of godfatherism in Nigeria. The test of hypothesis reveals that the majority of the respondents agreed that money politics is a major cause of electoral malpractice in Nigeria. *Godfatherism and electoral malpractice puts question mark on the*

*credibility of internal democracy in Nigeria.* Confirming this, Honorable Saiki, a one-time House of Assembly Member (2007 – 2011), attributing the loss of his second tenure bid to godfatherism in the grass root politics, submitted that ‘Nigeria politics portends danger for the upcoming generation’ Also, an observer submits that “godfatherism is a syndrome in our political process which does not promote leadership on merit. Abayomi added that vote buying would hurt democracy in the long run as only fraudulent office holders would be elected in such manner. A person who offers money for vote for will continue to defraud the citizens when they get into office. Vote buying is a frightening development in election; it undermines the legitimacy of election, brings about weak representative democracy.

Malami Sarkinnoma Joshua on 8th December, 2016 submits that money politics gives some unfair advantage over others, however, he quickly added money politics cannot altogether be eliminated. This is because without money, there would be no big party, groups and campaign, but it need be pointed out that money in politics is the root of all political evils and all serious discussion must begin with this observation. On this note, an INEC staff lamented that reforms to keep money out of politics have been infrequent and inadequate.

The study also discovered that in spite of widespread condemnation of godfatherism by some leaders from the state, the effort to eliminating it is still a far cry. A Local Government Staff in Akoko Edo, Mrs. Braimoh Angnes, hailed Oshiomole and former President Jonathan’s open announcements of tackling godfatherism in a rally 2007 and 2015 at Ogbé Stadium in Edo State. President Jonathan was ascribed to have said that “imposition of godfatherism is a thing of the past.” However, according to her, after 2015, Oshiomole single-handedly imposed all the candidates for Senate,, House of Representatives and Local Government Chairman. She specifically mentioned Senator Domingo Obende as a beneficiary of Oshiomole’s godfathersim activities at Akoko Edo Local Government Area.

The point that needs to be emphasized is that the relationship between godfather and godson is reciprocal. The godfather assures the latter electoral success while the godson uses his political power after winning the election to advance the social, economic and political influence of his mentor. This explains why elections in Nigeria are usually the contest of powers between godfathers. They come out with all tricks that could help to give their candidates victory. The trick include multiple voting, exchanging official ballot boxes with unofficial ones already filled with voting papers, stealing electoral boxes, chasing voters away from constituencies where their candidates are likely to have few votes, killing and wounding political opponents, vote buying etc. Numerous examples abound of politicians who have essentially handed over functions of their offices to their political benefactors with the effect that most political office holders are harm strong in the performance of their duties. They must refer to their political godfathers for matters, such as, appointment of commissioners, appointment into the board of statutory corporations etc. The politicians who eventually win the election based only upon the backing of their political godfather who feel no obligation to the electorates many of whom in any way/event, might have been disenfranchised in the whole scheme of events. The godson will therefore devote the entirety of his tenure in office to the promotion and satisfaction of himself, his cronies and his godfathers (Afe Babalola, 2018). So, these findings support the computed chi-square which rejects the null hypothesis.

The study went further to find out that godfatherism is antithetic to government policies and programmes vis – a – vis the masses. Findings show that the table value 15.09 is less than the calculated value 51.51. It therefore implies that the majority of the respondents 330 (i.e. 66%, supports). By this, it shows that godfatherism in politicking threatens the core of government policies and programmes vis – a – vis the interest of the masses. In this wise, a PhD course mate, Mr. Daniel Otoikan of University of Benin, and a Lecturer at Auchi Polytechnic notes that citizens will end up being impoverished because a leader that is produced by a flaw system will totally be disconnected from the aspirations of the people. To corroborate this, Vava Okomayin, a respondents from Edo North, notes that “after a godfather had spent much to sponsor a candidate, the candidate will in return ensure that the bulk of funds meant for development is channeled into the account of the godfather and so infrastructure and other developments are hampered”. From the same axis, Omolafe Johnson, submit that godfatherism promotes corruption, underdevelopment, lack of employment, since those infrastructures that are supposed to be developed for the gainful employment of the teaming youths are left to decay, while huge sums of money is made to escape to foreign banks through graft. Similarly, from Kogi East, Amina Alhassan Ojoma, a respondent from Kogi State University (KSU) opined that often times, the will and agenda of political godfathers are provided for rather than the implementation of electoral manifestoes. Observing further, she said that the role of political godfathers before and after elections does not promote the development of our political process but often brings us national disgrace. In other words, suffice to say the godfathers have become a threat to a political stability and democratic process, thus, an albatross to our political process, she added.

Furthermore, Mr. Ahmed Tijani Ahmed of Political Science Department Kogi State University, decries that ‘As long as godfathers exist, good governance will continually elude the people’. According to him, godfathers are selfish, lawless, unconstitutional and politically irresponsible as to their modus operandi, subjugating public office holders like governors to their dictates. Godfatherism is a threat to democracy. Most of the respondents strongly agreed with this assertion. In fact, there seems to be a unanimous agreement by both the respondents of Kogi and Edo States. An APC North East Senatorial District Primary hopeful flag bearer – Hon.

Adoji Ali notes that 'the emergence of Wada Idris is credited to Idris Ibrahim and the consequence is underdevelopment of Kogi State because he (Wada) was answerable to his godfather Ibrahim Idris.

Lending his voice, Oguiche Vincent, a PhD student and a Protocol Officer to the Office of Deputy Governor, affirms that godfatherism exists in Kogi State. Making his point, he said that there is hardly any assistance in terms of employment, political post among others that could be achieved without godfatherism. This has promoted mediocrity in the state. Reinforcing the above in Edo State, Seo Ogbonwan submitted that godfatherism is an evil building block for corruption, retrogression, underdevelopment, mediocrity, backwardness and perpetual poverty of the people.

A respondent from Eksako West L.G.A. Barr. Aziz Abdullahi opined that apart from corruption, other reasons why dividends of democracy are not equitably distributed are godfatherism and that godfathersim has turned out to be the worst injustice done to the electorates since their freedom are raped and made to suffer from the greedy wishes of the power brokers

In short, most of the respondents from the zones under study seem to agree that political godfathers interfere with government policies meant for the people via their local governments, states and even at the federal level with ominous consequences. It is no wonder that Mr. Okoro, a principal and one time Assistant Chief Inspector of Education (ACIE), Igarra has this to say,

*They (godfathers) use their money to negatively influence not only enlightened electorates but also the poverty stricken citizens that form the masses of this country. Hence, less impact is made in term of development as greater part of allocation is sapped; there is social psychological disequilibrium and general insecurity of life and property*

In the same vein, Pastor Ojonugba who lives in Lokoja and of God Saver's Ministry reveals that the negative practices of godfatherism tends to flourish in Nigeria's States while the entire citizens of more than 200 million population are subjected to poverty, corruption and employment. In all, the study reveals that the consequences of Godfatherism in national development are the same throughout Nigeria. So these findings support the correlated Chi-square which rejected the hypotheses.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The study has reliably shown that political Godfatherism epitomizes corruption and criminality; this scenario engenders political alienation and social exclusion.

That godfathers have turned politics into money-making business under which elections are rigged with a view to forcing predetermined candidates into offices. The office-holders are in turn subjected to all forms of indecent manipulations by their members. Most times the godfathers dictate to their protégé son how to run government with any opposition spelling disaster, as in the case of Adedibu of Oyo state.

The presence of Godfatherism and electoral malpractice in Nigeria has impeded good governance which is supposed to provide dividends of democracy in Nigeria. The elections in Nigeria both primary and general are not free from the finger grip of godfather and electoral malpractice; most of the political office holders get to office either through godfather or electoral malpractice or both.

From all indications, the dividends of democracy provided by government for the masses are enjoyed at low extent and not equitably distributed because of Godfatherism. This is the more reason why godfatherism must be eliminated from the polity.

## **VII. Recommendations**

Having made this extensive study, we therefore make the following submissions:

1. Since it breeds those factors inimical to electoral ethics, Godfatherism should be highly discouraged with constitutional backing.
2. Money in politics should be highly restricted as much as possible so that the public office holders will not use their already won positions as means of getting back what they have invested during the period of campaign.
3. Political parties should be guided by the ethics of service delivery before returning back any candidate to his or her position for the second tenure.
4. The electorate should be allowed to elect those who should govern them so that those elected can as well feel responsible to the same electorate rather than the godfathers.
5. Since Godfatherism usurped the constitutional rights of the electorates, it must be demanded by the electorate themselves. The time has come for the masses to wake up to their rights and reject political imposition that spares no dignity for the electorates.
6. Electronic voting and transmission should be adopted for all elections in the country in order to minimize electoral fraud. In this wise, we salute Namibia as the first in Africa to adopt electoral voting in the continent. Nigeria should follow suit.

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