

Full Length Research

Challenges and Prospects of Good Governance in Ethiopia: the Case of Kemisie Town, Ethiopia

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This paper discusses about the prevalence of good governance in some selected public institutions of Kemisie town, Amhara region, Ethiopia. To do this the researcher used pragmatic paradigm, mixed research approach. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. To collect primary information interviews, FGD and questionnaires were employed. As well 206 sample populations were participated. Using five core elements of good governance the researcher reach upon the following conclusions; the general assessment of performance of good governance in Kemisie town shows that there are some progresses in establishing legal and institutional base for good governance but in terms of practices the study come across mixed results. The town achieved some progress in enhancing popular participation, government offices transparency and government accountability with some limitation. However, the government performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency and combating corruption is not satisfactory. The practices of good governance in the town is challenged by harmful traditional practices, human trafficking, inter-house hold killing, religious fundamentalism, land related conflicts, petty corruption, partisanship and bureaucrats skills and ethical problems. Hence, the study implies that there is the need for national attention to control illegal immigration-human trafficking, which is the ongoing humiliating activity in the area. In addition, it needs comprehensive attitudinal change works on revenge, which is the major problematic cause of killing and harmful traditional practices in the area.

Keywords: Challenges of Good Governance, Prospects of Good Governance, good governance, Good Local Governance

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INTRODUCTION

Good governance is pointed out as one of the target of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and agenda for poverty alleviation and sustainable development. It is considered as the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development. To

achieve economic and social development, strengthening good governance is assumed to play a key role especially in mobilizing human and capital resources. In this regard Ethiopia, after long years' tradition of centralized government and state structure, a

decentralized form of government and state structure has been adopted since 1991. This marked a dramatic change in terms of the tradition of the country's governance. Since then, the incumbent government committed itself to alleviate poverty by introducing proven economic strategies in tandem of good governance.

Despite these efforts of Ethiopian governments at both local and national levels and assistance of international community for the realization of good governance, assessment of the practical implementation of good governance on the ground remains an area of scrutiny. The assessment done to identify the status of good governance in Ethiopia is very few; most of the source of assessment is from the government who is both the initiators and the executors of the good government agenda. The second source of literature on the topic under the study is international donors. At third level, few academic journals and volume are existing. In general, there is rare academic research on good governance in Ethiopia and no in the study area. In addition Kamissie two is human trafficking rampant corridor and Oromo nationality special zone sandwich within the Amhara national regional state, which seek investigation of good governance practices. Therefore, this research would be tried to fill this gap by specifically assessing the situations of good governance in Kamise town of Ethiopia. The assessment of the situations of good governance in Kamissie town would be done as planned under the successive development plan of Ethiopia against the selected five pillars of good governance (participation, accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, and combating corruption) Hence, this paper has the following objectives;

- a. To assess the current situations of good governance in Kemisie town
- b. To assess the prospects of good governance in Kemisie town
- c. To identify the challenges of the practices of good governance in Kemisie town

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Approach

The approach adopted to undertake this research is mixed. Mixed approach is a research design which involves both the qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study. As Creswell explain, all methods have limitations and felt that biases inherent in a single method could neutralize or cancel the biases of other methods (Creswell, 2006). From different strategic models of mixed approach the researcher selected explanatory sequential design; collecting and analyzing quantitative data followed by collecting and analyzing qualitative data

based on quantitative data results.

Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques

The target population for this study is all stakeholders receiving services from public offices in Kamisie town in State of Amhara. Since there is no fixed number of target populations for the research, the unknown sample size determination formula (Foddy, 1988: 105) cited in (Sebsib, 2015: 87) was used:

Sample Size = PqZ^2/E^2 Whereas

P= population estimated (15%)

q= refers to the value derived by subcontracting from 100: 85%

Z= refers to the level of confidence (1.96- preferred level of confidence by the researcher)

E= refers to the maximum deviation tolerated from the population (deviation from the population percentage, 5%)

= $15 \times 85 \times 1.96^2 / 5^2 = 4898 / 25 = 196$. Therefore, 206 respondents were identified as sample including return rate (5%). Hence, 206 respondents were participated in filling questionnaires.

SOURCES AND METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Sources of Data

This study used both primary and secondary data useful to the study. Regarding secondary sources, the researcher used written documents such as books, newspapers, official reports, research findings, journal articles and government and non-government documents. As far as primary source is concerned firsthand information was collected from target populations using questionnaires, interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

The quantitative data is analyzed using descriptive analysis. Both Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20) and Simple statistical techniques like means, percentages and tables were used for this purpose. While qualitative data is analyzed by arranging and portraying the data collected through interviews and FGD in a way that help to detect patterns or problems, explore associations that exist in the data. In this analysis reiteration and elaborations of key concepts and suggestions would be made on the findings that fit with the existing literature under investigation. In doing so the researcher was identified dissimilarities while comparing the findings secured against literature reviews. Finally,

the quantitative and qualitative data integrated at data presentation stage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Practices of Good Governance in Oromo Nationality Zone

This subsection of the paper dealt with the practice of good governance in the study areas using the five core elements of good governance abovementioned.

Participation

Good governance to be prevailed, all men and women, majority and minority groups, old aged and youngsters should have a voice in decision making either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that represent their interests. Government alone cannot achieve good governance. For governance to be good, citizens, community based organization and civic society organizations must actively claim and affirm rights and initiate efforts to stimulate broad participation in governance process. Good governance requires collaboration with government to create a meaningful role in public decision making. To assess the situations of citizens, civil society and community based organizations participation in the study area, the respondents were asked varieties of questions and their response to questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were interpreted together as follow:

As depicted in the table1 out of the existing respondents 51.6% believe that there is institutional framework for societal participation in decision making of their town while 48.4% of the respondents respond that there is no any institutional framework for societal participation in local government decision making.

Although the respondents are near to equal still majority of the respondents (more than 50%-51.6%) of the respondent believe as there is institutional base for participation. In the same manner participants of interviews responded that the institutional base for participation is lay down by the government but it is not applied as expected. Therefore, the officials said that those who say there is no institutional base for participation in local government decision making are those citizens who are not aware of the existing institution. The town civil service office head, said, "It is the weakness of local government to provide awareness on the existing system for participation". The researcher also tried to see the existing document concerning institutional framework for participation and witnessed, as there are different town and sectorial-based rules and regulations officially introduced to enhance the participation of stakeholders.

Furthermore, respondents are asked question 'what is the current level of societal participation in your town?' As the above Table 2 depicted majority of the respondents (64.84%) believe that the current societal participation in Kamisie town is medium while 9.3% and 3.8% of the respondents see the current societal participation in their town as good and very good respectively. It is only 16.5% and 4.9% of the respondents are perceived the societal participation in their town as poor and very poor respectively. Hence, the quantitative data show that the absolute majority of the respondents (77.94%) perceive the societal participation in decision making of local government as progressive.

In support of this the Kamisie town government communication affairs head argued that the societal participation in local government decision-making increase from time to time. Further adding he said, "The town government also tried its best to open all decisions for societal participation by introducing different frameworks enhancing citizens' participation". To verify this argument the researcher tried to observe different documents as well as their workings while staying in the town for the purpose of data collection. During the time, the researcher observed that the town government institutions are relatively open to serve the service seekers. Also, there are different guidelines providing a room for societal participation.

However, the town civil service head, said that although the societal participation in local government decision making is increasing from time to time, there is limitation in providing inclusive participation. Specially, some husbands and fathers are still reluctant to send their wives and girls for participation. Also due to highly rampant illegal migration, youth participation in local government decision making is very low. Connecting with this the official said that illegal migration is the main challenges of good governance in the town. In the same manner the finding of Oromo nationality zone wide study conducted by Kamisie teachers teaching college shows that school dropout is high at high school level in Kamisie as oppose to other areas in the country. The finding of the college research cited illegal immigration and harmful traditional practices as causes.

Elders and stakeholders participating in interviews and focus group discussion have the same idea with the officials. Participants of focus group discussion said that the main problem of good governance in Kamisie town is illegal migration, inter-personal killing and harmful traditional practices. The elders participating in interviews have the believing that although there is government policy intervention to eradicate harmful traditional practices the society still challenged by traditional harmful practices. Some husbands are reluctant to send their wives to public forum as well some parents are still reluctant to send their girls to school than sending to Arab world or early marriage. As the account of participants'

Table 1: Institutional framework for the participation of society in local government decision making

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	88	48.4	48.4	48.4
Valid Yes	94	51.6	51.6	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Source: own survey (2017)

Table 2: Societal Perceptions on Current Level of Societal Participation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
very good	7	3.8	3.9	3.9
good	17	9.3	9.4	13.3
Valid medium	118	64.8	65.2	78.5
poor	30	16.5	16.6	95.0
very poor	9	4.9	5.0	100.0
Total	181	99.5	100.0	
Missing System	1	.5		
Total	182	100.0		

Source: own survey (2017)

early marriage, gender disparity and illegal migration still prevail in the town. In general, the finding of the data shows that the societal participation in Kemisie town is in progress but the participation of women and youth is constrained by harmful traditional practices and illegal immigration respectively.

Effectiveness and Efficiency

Effectiveness and efficiency is one of the core elements of good governance frequently used as indicators in good governance measurement. As a yardstick of good governance, effectiveness and efficiency has its own sub-indices which are changed into operational questions and included in questionnaires of this study. For the purpose of this study, ten close ended questionnaires accompanied by interviews, focus group discussions and official documents were presented in order to measure the prevalence and challenges of good governance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in the study area. (Figure 1)

The level of customers' satisfaction from the services of a given public institution is the major factor to indicate the status of good governance in the public institutions. Concerning kamisie town public institutions as the above bar-chart depicted majority of the respondents (53.85%) respond dissatisfaction while 23.63% respond highly dissatisfaction. Small groups 17.58% and 4.94% respond satisfaction and high satisfaction. The quantitative data

shows that majority of the respondents are dissatisfied with the service provision in the town. The data from interviews and focus group discussion also show the same finding. The elders participating in the focus group discussion argued that the bureaucracies in the town are too weak to provide up to time services to the society. The bureaucracy is too partisan in service provisions. In the town people get service not through the civil service laws but through informal attachments in terms of religious or friendship. In support of this the officials said that the civil servants are reluctant to provide services as expected. Furthermore, respondents are identified ethical problem, religious based partisan and inefficiency as the main bottleneck of the well-functioning of bureaucracy in the town. In support of this the town civil service office head cited corruption, false certificate, religious fundamentalism and partisanship as the major problems associated with bureaucracy in the town.

The other controversial issue in public service is the relationship between politics and bureaucrats. As the above table 3 depicted majority of the respondents (39.6%) believe that the political pressure on bureaucracy is medium while 14.3% and 15.4% of the respondents said that the political pressure on bureaucracy is high and very high respectively. The cumulative result shows that there is political influence on bureaucracy in public service provisions. The participants of focus group discussion forward the ideas, which support the finding of quantitative data. The discussants said that there is no activity performed in the town without getting approval

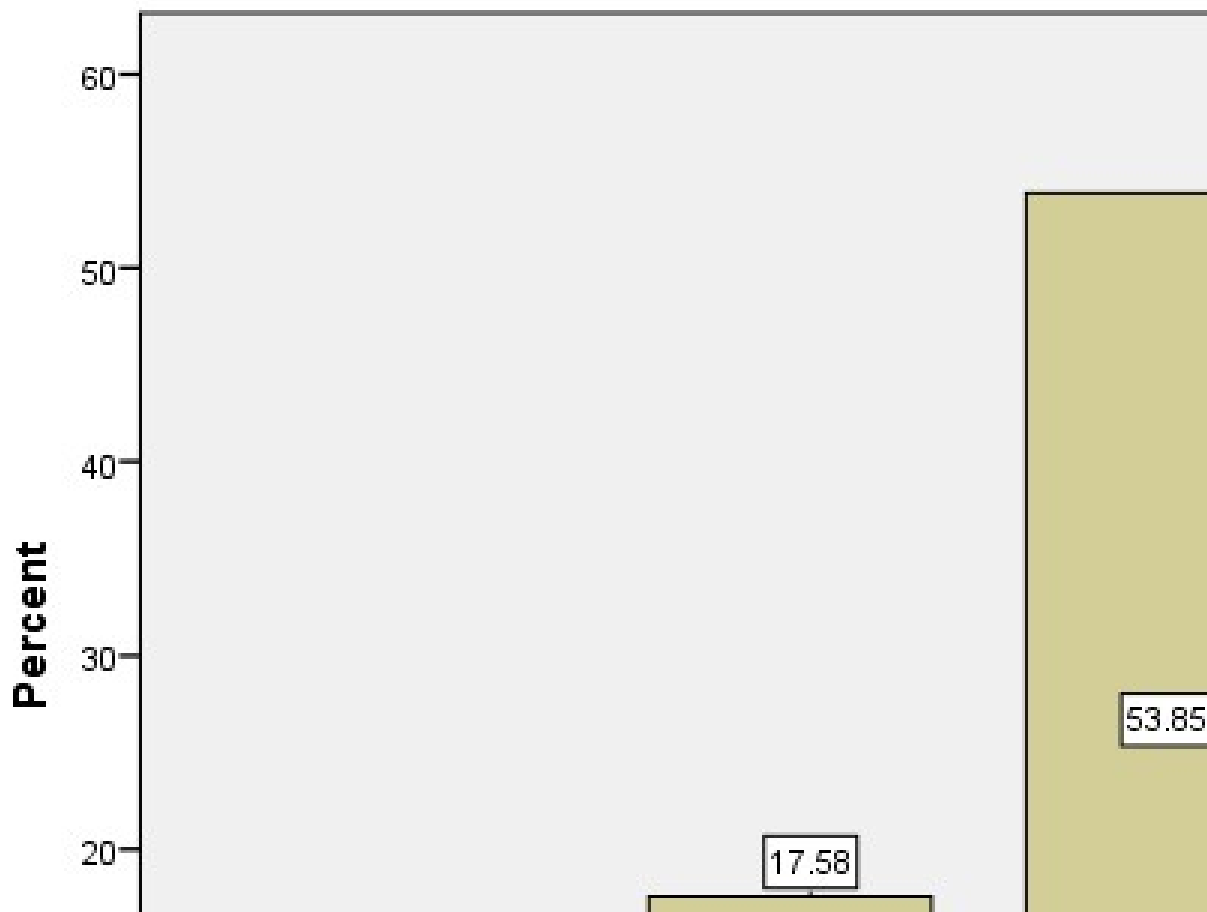


Figure1: Levels of Customers' satisfaction in public institutions

Table 3: public institutions vulnerability to political pressures

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid very high	28	15.4	16.5	16.5
Valid High	26	14.3	15.3	31.8
Valid Medium	72	39.6	42.4	74.1
Valid Low	32	17.6	18.8	92.9
Valid very low	12	6.6	7.1	100.0
Valid Total	170	93.4	100.0	
Missing System	12	6.6		
Total	182	100.0		

Source: own survey (2017)

from the politicians. Adding the participants said that all civil servants prefer to go to the party bureau than the town administration since the party decision is final over all government decisions.

Accountability and Transparency

Institutions good governance has also been assessed based on accountability and transparency. In FDRE constitution accountability and transparency are among

Table 4: Disclosure of Procurement Procedures in Public Institutions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	106	58.2	61.3	61.3
	Yes	67	36.8	38.7	100.0
	Total	173	95.1	100.0	
Missing	System	9	4.9		
Total		182	100.0		

Source: own survey (2017)

the pillars of the constitution (FDRE constitution, 1995: Art.12). Although, accountability and transparency are the two big pillars/yardsticks of good governance, for the reason of comprehensive understanding and since the behaviors of the two elements is interrelated, the researcher explains together in this sub-section.

One major indicator of government institutions transparency is procedures of disclosing procurement. As the above table 4 shows majority of the respondents (58.2%) responded as they have doubt on the transparency of procurement procurers in their town while 36.8% of the respondents respond that the procurement procedures in their town is transparent.

As table 4 depicted majority of the respondents are believed as the procurement procedure is not clear. In support of this the officials participating in interviews said that the procurement process in their town lack transparency. The officials further argued that the main source of rent seeking and petty corruption is the procurement procedures by citing some examples of currently investigated corruption case in the town. Participants of focus group discussion also have the same perception. (Figure 2)

Transparency may be defined as public access to knowledge of the policies and strategies of government. It is the free flow of information which can be enhanced through the improvement of democratic process. Transparency toward the community is one pillars of good governance. based on this the situations of transparency in kamisie town, 7.69%, 31.95%, 28.99% and 7.1% of the respondents said very high, high, medium, low and very low respectively. As the data shows majority of the respondents (31.95%) said that the levels of public institutions transparency toward the community is high followed by those who responds the level of transparency as medium (28.99%). The cumulative result showed that the participants believe that the government office transparency toward the society is at good stage.

The researcher also observed some different behavior from the office in the town in terms of opening the door of their office and welcoming for service receivers. Therefore, the perception of kamisie town society toward government transparency is good but there are some

indicators of problem of government transparency. (Figure 3)

Accountability is defined as the process by which actors provide reasons for their actions under the pain of sanctions. It may be administrative, financial, legal and political accountability. It can also divide as vertical and horizontal accountability. Vertical accountability is public officials answer to the general public and they are voted out of office for violating their duties. Horizontal accountability on the other hand refers to the capability of state institutions to check abuses by other public agencies and branches of government. In this study focus is given to vertical accountability.

Pursuant to this scenario respondents are asked, to rate the level of government accountability in their town. As depicted above 5.3%, 13.02%, 50.3%, 24.26% and 7.1% of the respondents respond very high, high, medium, low and very low respectively. The data shows that majority of the respondents (50.3%) believe that government accountability in their town is medium followed by those respondents who perceive government accountability in their town is low.

The participants of focus group discussion have different views from the majority of the respondents of questionnaires. The discussant argued that there is no accountability of government officials by pointing to political appointees. The discussant said that there are problem of good governance in the town like illegal immigration, petty corruption and land related problems but the officials associated with these all problems of good governance are not accountable. If the people request the government to question a given officials said the discussant the only measure taken up on he/she is changing the individuals from one woreda to another woreda or promoting to regional and federal level by naming some individuals who pass through this track.

The town civil service office head also forward ideas strengthening the views of focus group discussion participants. The official said that the major problem of good governance in the town is human trafficking, killing, land related problem, petty corruption and harmful traditional practices. But said the head, the officials associated with these problems especially officials who participate in corruption have leverage by giving example

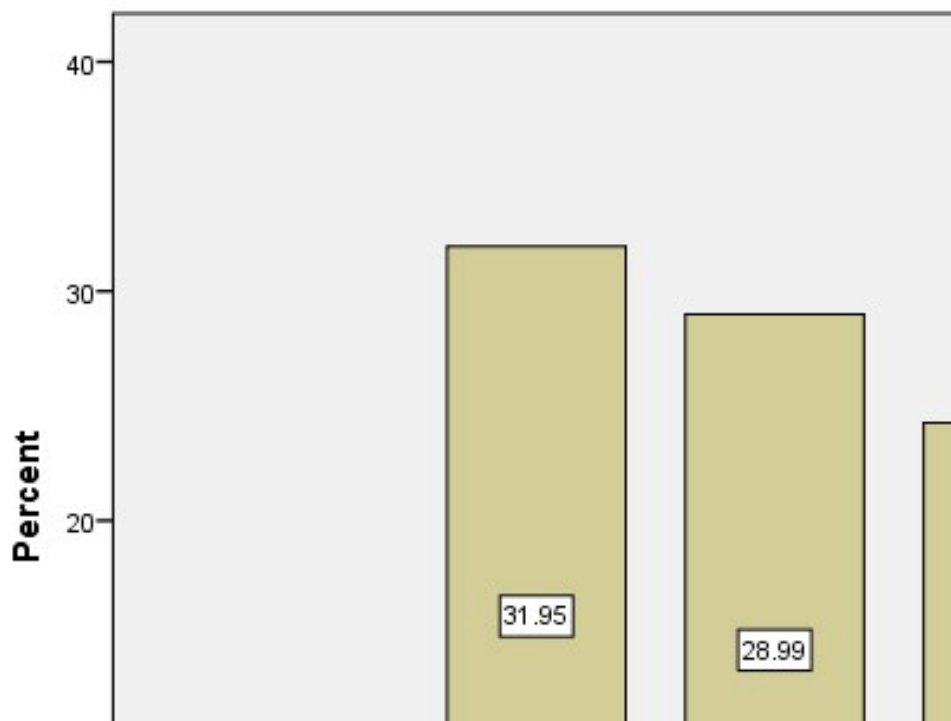


Figure 2: Public Institutions Transparency toward the Community

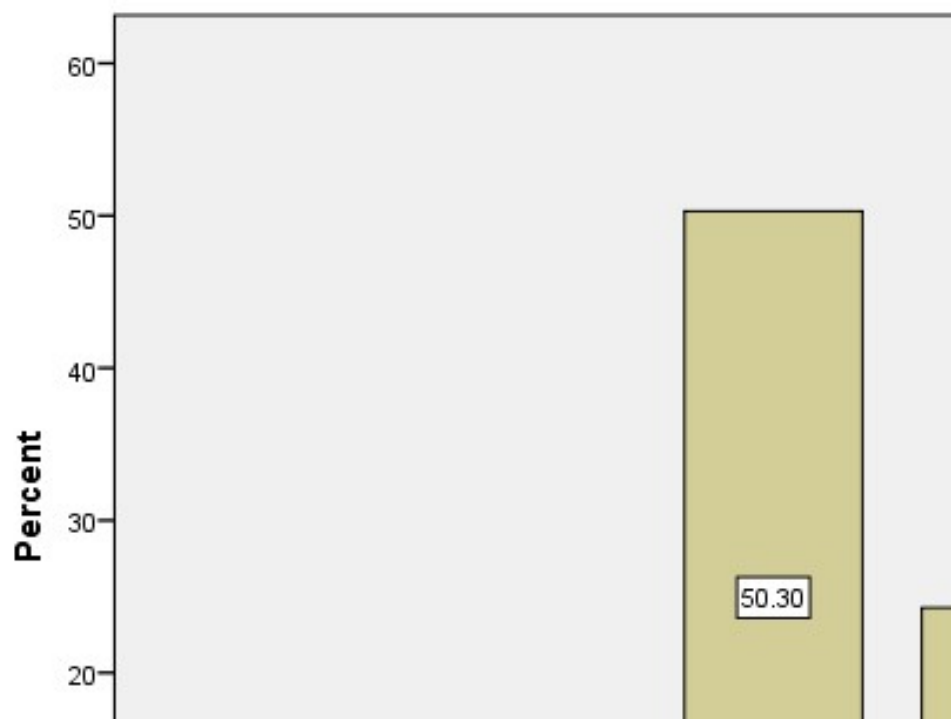


Figure 3: Accountability of Officials and Workers in Public Institutions

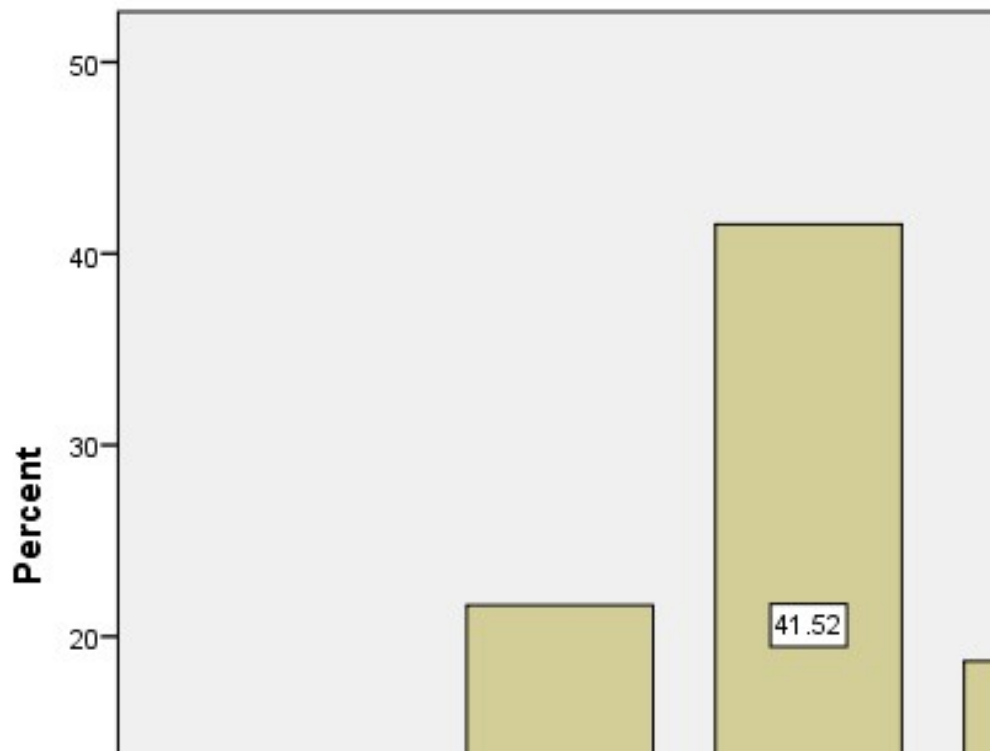


Figure 3: Severity of Corruption in the kemisie town

of some corrupt officials imprisoned but released after one month. Also he said that the police forces who are reluctant to effectively perform their function to control illegal migration and killing are not taking a responsibility till today. Adding the officials said that all people know the facilitators of illegal migration (the combination of illegal agent, police, security and court) but no one is take a responsibility.

Combating Corruption

Combating corruption is one of the pillars of good governance. The researcher also took combating corruption as independent measurement as well as assessment of situations of corruption as one specific objectives because of the Ethiopian good governance package took corruption as the major challenging factor of good governance and combating corruption as major measurement of Ethiopian good governance packages. Due to this combating corruption dealt with separately in this sub-section.

According to successive development plan of Ethiopia one way of enhancing the effectiveness of anti-corruption policy is through developing the active participation of society in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of anti-corruption policy. Concerning this majority of the

respondents (53.8%) answered, as there is no framework for society to monitor and review the implementation of anti-corruption policy while 36.8% of the respondents answered that the town has procedural frameworks through which the society monitor and reviews the implementation of anti-corruption policy. The researcher also tried to verify this finding by interviewing officials and reviewing some documents related to the issues. The officials explain that there are different anti-corruption packages and different rules and regulations established from federal to local government in order to enhance the participation of community in monitoring and reviewing anti-corruption policies of the country. But the main problem is corruption is a sophisticated practice which is beyond the communities monitoring capacity. The researcher also came across different anti-corruption, good governance, human rights and democracy performance manuals and packages. Participants of focus group discussion also said, "We hear about corruption only on meetings but in practices it seems that the officials by themselves have no heartfelt interest to halt corruption". (Table 5)

As discussed in the Figure 3 sub-sections one pillars of achieving good governance is reducing corruption. Hence, this question aimed at measuring the progress achieved in reducing corruption in the study area. As the above bar-chart shows majority of the respondents

Table 5: Monitoring and Reviewing Procedures to follow up the Implementations of Anti-corruption Policy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	98	53.8	59.0	59.0
	Yes	67	36.8	40.4	99.4
	3.00	1	.5	.6	100.0
	Total	166	91.2	100.0	
Missing	System	16	8.8		
Total		182	100.0		

Source: own survey (2017)

believe that the current severity of corruption in the study area is medium which 21.64% and 11.7% of the respondents argued it is at high and very high level. On the other hand 18.7% and 6.4% of the respondents believe as it is reduced rating the status as low and very low respectively. The cumulative result shows that the severity of corruption is rampant in the study area. In support of this view the officials participating in interviews said that although there is no clear grand corruption in the town, petty corruption is rampant and is one of the main challenges of good governance in kemisie town. Adding the participants of focus group discussion explain that corruption like favoritism, nepotism and abuse of power are the day to day activities in the town.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The overall practices of good governance in kamisie town shows that institutions assessed have not been found perfectly effective or totally failed in any of the five good governance yardsticks used in this study. Instead, they were found effective in some of the sub-indices of the yardsticks and ineffective in some other sub-indices. For instances, the town record progress in introducing rules, regulations and institutional frameworks. But, in practice the participation of all society is not achieved as expected. Specially, women participation is not as expected. Youth participation is also low due to rampant illegal migration. Concerning effectiveness and efficiency of government works the research finding come across weak performances. As the finding shows the societies, satisfaction in the town government service is low. In addition, there is a political influence on bureaucrats in the town, which according to the finding hinders some efficient bureaucrats to perform their activity freely.

The third yardstick used to measure kemisie town good governance performance is transparency. As far as performance of transparency in the town is concerned, the town achieves progressive performance. The forth indicators of performance of good governance used to measure the performance of good governance in Kemisie town is accountability. As the finding shows the level of accountability of government officials is medium.

Meaning that there are some progresses in increasing official accountability in the town but still some political appointees are not accountable for the actions and decisions they made. The fifth and last yardstick is combating corruption and concerning this indicator, the Kemisie town records weak performances. As the finding shows, there is no improvement in combating corruption in the town rather petty corruption like favoritism, nepotism and abuse of power become rampant.

To conclude the town achieves some progress in introducing legal and institutional framework conducive for the practice of good governance, but, the practice is challenged by harmful traditional practices, human trafficking, inter-house hold killing, religious fundamentalism, land related conflicts, petty corruption, bureaucrats skills and ethical problems. Hence, the study implies that there is the need for national attention to control illegal immigration-human trafficking. In addition, it needs comprehensive attitudinal change works on revenge, which is the major cause of killing and harmful traditional practices, which limit women's participation.

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