EDUCATED ELITES PARTICIPATION IN ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNANCE OF OGUN STATE (2003 – 2011)

Ngozi Nwogwugwu, PhD¹
Femi Ajayi, PhD²
Emails: nwogwugwun@babcock.edu.ng

Abstract
Accountability and transparency has come to be one of the fundamental parameters for assessing the quality of governance in democratic societies across the globe since the last decade of the 20th century. It is commonly accepted by scholars and international institutions alike that participation of citizens in different aspects of the governance process enhances the practice of accountability and transparency in governance. Nigeria, in spite of its endowment with high caliber human resources as well as enormous natural resources has continually failed to live up to its potentials, for various reasons, amongst which is high level public sector corruption. The study examined educated elites participation in ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials in Ogun state, one of Nigeria’s 36 states. Descriptive survey design was adopted, while 1720 respondents selected from eight local government areas, out of the 20 in the state, were involved in providing quantitative data for the study. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interview with key political functionaries as well as community leaders and private citizens. This was content analysed and integrated in the discussion of findings. A high level of apathy was found to exist among the educated elites as majority of them did not utilize the opportunities provided through different platform in contributing towards ensuring accountability and transparency in the governance of the state between 2003 and 2011.

Key words: Accountability, Educated elites, governance, participation, transparency

¹ Ngozi Nwogwugwu, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Babcock Business School, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
² Femi Ajayi, PhD, is a Professor of Management and Conflict Resolution in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Babcock Business School, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.
Introduction

Accountability and transparency have occupied the front burner of political discourse in Nigeria since the return to civilian rule in 1999. This had been made more pertinent following the continual rating of Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world by transparency international since 2010. Brown & Moore (2001) write that accountability should be regarded as a key strategic issue that facilitates the achievement of an organization’s highest values. Goetz and Jenkins (2005) posit that accountability has two components: answerability and enforceability. Answerability involves the public official providing adequate report of his or her actions; while enforceability implies the existence of a mechanism that would provide or administer penalties if a public official fails to adequately report on the execution of tasks given.

Kogan (1986) writes that accountability refers to a condition under which a role holder renders account to another so that judgment may be made about the adequacy of the position holders performance. Learner and Tetlock (1999) posit that accountability goes beyond reporting activities to include provision adequate justification for the way the activity was carried out. This is what is obviously missing in the processes of governance in developing countries including Nigeria. Many public officials find it difficult to report on their activities, and worse still the higher the position they occupy the more they exhibit the tendency that their actions should not be brought under scrutiny.

Transparency International (2009) writes that transparency is an attribute of governments, companies, organizations and individuals being very open in disclosing information, rules, plans, processes and actions. Bellver and Kaufman (2005) assert that though it is widely accepted that transparency enhances accountability, however, the accessibility of information affects accountability and improves the quality of administration has not been sufficient clarified by scholars. The reality is that when operations of organizations are open to public scrutiny, officials are more conscious of their dealings, then when activities are kept secret.

The culture of keeping government business confidential and secret may have been capitalized upon by unscrupulous public officials to engage in corrupt practices. This has resulted in many agitations for accountability and transparency by public officials, championed on the global scale, by Transparency International. Various civil society organizations and whistle blowers exist at the national level that try to make activities of government officials to be in the public domain with their agitations for accountability and transparency by public officials.

At the federal level in Nigeria, many organizations established to curb corruption and ensure accountability and transparency exist, the Independent corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC), Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (Due Process Office), Code of Conduct Bureau, amongst others. Whether they have performed well in curbing corruption over the years has been the subject of several scholarly publications. However, the focus of our study, was the participation of educated elites in ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials, using Ogun State, one of the 36 state in Nigeria as case study.

Participation by the citizens in the different activities involved in the political process and governance of any society that practices democracy is the norm. The expectation therefore is that the educated members of the society should be at the fore-front of making contributions to ensure the proper governance of their society. This is especially so, given that the continual
rating of the country as one of the most corrupt countries of the world is evidence that accountability is not a natural attribute of public officials in the country. This study therefore examined the level of participation of the educated elites in the state in the processes aimed at ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials in the state during the period 2003 – 2011. The educated elites of this study are individuals who possess minimum of masters degrees in their various disciplines.

The paper is subdivided into seven sections, introduction, literature review, methodology, educated elites participation in ensuring accountability by public officials, educated elites participation in demanding for transparency in discharge of responsibilities of public officials, conclusion and recommendation.

Literature Review

Accountability

Accountability is a key requirement for good governance. Adegite (2010) referred to accountability as the obligation to demonstrate that work has been conducted in accordance with agreed rules and standards and the officer reports fairly and accurately on achievement of results ensuring stated roles and plans were followed. It means doing things transparently in line with due process and the provision of feedback. The idea of accountability is predicated on the “widely shared belief that humans are prone to error, and as such subjects of political authority should therefore be protected from the hazardous behaviour of their governors”. (Abe, 2011: 78).

The Institute of Governance (1998), adopts a perspective that goes beyond identification of culprits that have abused the process, by stating that accountability entails clarifying goals or standards for performance. It encompasses the way organizations and institutions organize themselves according to appropriate standards. And it comprises the value and behavioural norms of individuals (Institute of Governance, 1998 cited in Abe, 2011).

Adefila & Adeoti, (nd.) emphasize that accountability is a basic tenet of African public service ethics. It is unequivocal to say that it is a prime and enduring ethical value required of all public servants. Since public accountability is central to good governance, it had been generally taken to be the parameter for adjudging the public expectation of fairness, responsiveness and exemplary leadership. Smith & Hargue (1971 cited in Abe 2011, p. 78) submit that “the principle of accountability specifically requires that the government must have the assurance that public funds are spent for the purpose specified and without personal gains to any private individual beyond fair compensation of his services”. Johnson (2004 cited in Onuorah & Appah, 2012) sees public accountability as an essential component for the effective and efficient functioning of any political system. As such, accountability means that those who are charged with drafting and/or carrying out public policy should be obliged to give an explanation of their actions to their electorate from time to time.

Public and private sector institutions as well as civil society organizations are expected to be accountable to the public and their various institutional stakeholders. An organization or institution owes the duty of accountability to all those who are affected by its decisions and actions. Ensuring accountability requires a system of government by which different institutions check and hold one another accountable, compelling them to justify their actions (Nwahih & Ukaoha, 2010; Ogundiya, 2010, World Bank, 2007; Mantu, 2006; Diamond, 2004).
Abe (2011) sees fiscal responsibility as financial responsiveness in governmental affairs. It emphasizes adherence to laid down rules and regulations in the way and manner the various ministries, departments and agencies of government expend budgeted financial resources. It equally presupposes that intentions, purposes and eventual actions regarding the financial dealings of government must be comprehensively stated in a transparent and accountable manner. However, for the purpose of this present research, fiscal responsibility whose components are: political engagement, political clarity, predictability, and comprehensiveness, will be seen as a component of the accountability characteristic of good governance.

A recent study revealed that, in Nigeria, there is an obvious lack of commitment to fiscal regulations in the conduct of state affairs, across different levels of government. There is flagrant disregard for budgetary, accounting and auditing procedures by virtually all tiers of government, and this has become one of the major challenges to the sustenance of the country’s nascent democracy (Abe, 2011).

On the level of achievement of accountability by government agencies, it has been observed that:

the capacity to achieve full accountability has been and continues to be inadequate, partly because of the design of accountability itself and partly because of the widening range of objectives and associated expectations attached to accountability. He further argues that if accountability is to be achieved in full, including its constructive aspects, then it must be designed with care. The objective of accountability should go beyond the naming and shaming of officials, or the pursuit of sleaze, to a search for durable improvements in economics management to reduce the incidence of institutional recidivism. The future of accountability consists in covering the macro aspects of economic and financial sustainability, as well as the micro aspects of service delivery. It should envisage a three-tier structure of accountability: that of official (both political and regular civil employees), that of intragovernmental relationships and that between government and their respective legislatures. (Premchand, 1999 cited in Onuorah & Appah, 2012: 3-4).

Onuorah & Appah (2012) groups accountability into four categories, namely: Financial Accountability: encompassing the obligation of any one handling public resources, public office or any other positions of trust, to report on the intended and actual use of the resources or of the designated office. Administrative Accountability: this requires a sound system of internal control, which complements and ensures proper checks and balances supplied by constitutional government and an engaged citizenry. These include ethical codes, criminal penalties and administrative reviews. However, the authors fail to specify the level of educational attainment and competence required of the bureaucratic machinery that will be able to achieve this, as well as that of the citizenry.

Political Accountability: This type of accountability fundamentally begins with free, fair and transparent elections. Through periodic elections and control structure, elected and appointed officials are held accountable for their actions while holding public office. The authors were not
forthcoming with the specifications of the nature of the electoral management body that will be required to achieve this in a developing nation like Nigeria. It must be pointed out that for nations that have a young democratic culture, there is need for a strong and independent electoral management body, as well as competent security agencies that will provide the enabling environment for the electoral body to conduct regular free and fair elections.

Social Accountability: is a demand driven approach that relies on civic engagement and involves ordinary citizens and civil society groups exacting greater accountability for public actions and outcomes from both elected and appointed public officials. The authors fail to take into cognizance the fact that in developing countries, the civil society organizations are weak, while majority of the citizenry are not empowered to function in the desired capacity.

Shende & Bennett (2004) write that there has been an increase in the demand for financial accountability among governments of developing countries in recent years. This increase has been attributed to five factors, namely: (a) Two decades of fiscal turbulence across the globe that contributed to the erosion of credibility of governmental fiscal machinery, leading to large scale distrust of governments. (b) The spread of globalization which put economic policymakers in many developing countries a reactive, rather than proactive mood. (c) Change in the nature of government activities, in the form of withdrawal from production activities and assumption of active regulation of the activities of private investors (d) Change in expenditure pattern of federal/central governments, with more focus on servicing of public debt, contract payments, transfers to private sector, regional and local governments; leading to disconnect between funding and actual provision of services. (e) Rapid expansion of the scope of financial accountability with greater emphasis on prudent macroeconomic management. (Shende & Bennett, 2004).

Transparency

Transparency means that decisions by government agencies are reached in a manner that follows due process or approved rules and regulations. State business and conduct are open to the scrutiny of other state actors and of the public. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement (Nwelih & Ukaoha, 2010; Mantu, 2006; Diamond, 2004). Due to high incidence of public sector corruption amongst officials of various governments across the world, the major focus of transparency most of the time is on fiscal transparency.

Fiscal transparency can be defined as:

openness toward the public at large about government structure and functions, fiscal policy intentions, public sector accounts, and projections. It involves ready access to reliable, comprehensive, timely, understandable, and internationally comparable information on government activities—whether undertaken inside or outside the government sector so that the electorate and financial markets can accurately assess the government’s financial position and the true costs and benefits of government activities, including their present and future economic and social implications. (Kopits & Craig, 1998, p. 8).
The major facets of fiscal transparency can be grouped into three overlapping and interrelated areas:

The first encompasses transparency in government institutions and behavior. To secure support for fiscal policy and its implementation, the authorities must inform the public about the overall structure of government, as reflected in the relations between the public sector and private agents and in the interactions within the public sector. These include openness in the budget process, tax policy statutes and administration, the government’s financing operations, and the nature and costs of the regulatory framework. The second area consists of transparency in public accounts – that is, the measurement of government transactions, ownership, and obligations - required for sound fiscal policymaking. For this purpose, it is necessary to focus on the coverage, recording basis, valuation, recognition, and classification of relevant flows and stocks. The third area deals with the transparency of summary indicators used to assess fiscal policy stance and sustainability as well as of projections of fiscal aggregates - all dependent on the quality and transparency of public accounts (Kopits & Craig, 1998: 12).

World Bank (2000) emphasizes that good governance is characterized by predictable, open and enlightened policy making (i.e. transparent processes). When government operations are open and predictable it encourages public participation in different ways including ensuring that public officials are transparent and accountable in the execution of their responsibilities. It equally reduces opportunities for public officials to abuse the system, as all stakeholders are better positioned to monitor their activities of government.

Methodology

The importance of research design as a vital component of modern research “is to develop an overall plan for relating the conceptual research problem, to relevant-and doable-empirical research” (Ghauri, Gronhaug & Kristianslund, 1995: 26 cited in Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2006: 33). In order to achieve an empirical study, the research which adopted historical and descriptive survey designs utilized a mixed model of quantitative and qualitative research.

The study location was Ogun State, one of the thirty six states in Nigeria. Ogun State is located in the South-West geopolitical zone of the country. The State was created on February 3, 1976 by the Murtala/Obasanjo military regime out of the former Western region. The State is bounded to the West by the Republic of Benin, East by Ondo state, North by Oyo State and South by Lagos State (Onakomaiya, et al, 2000; Daniel 2003).

Research instruments that were created by the researcher were; questionnaire for the quantitative data and interview guide for the qualitative components of the research. The survey was carried out between September 2011 and May 2012. The questionnaire was structured and pre-coded. They were administered to 1, 960 educated elites who served as respondents for the research. The respondents were selected from eight local governments, Ikenne, Sagamu, (Remo
Political division); Ado-Odo Ota, Yewa South, (Yewa Division); Odeda, Abeokuta South, (Egba Division); Ijebu Ode and Ijebu North Local government areas (Ijebu Division). The copies of the questionnaire that were retrieved and useful for analysis were 1,720. Descriptive statistics was applied in the analysis of the data, which was presented in tables using SPSS software. Among the secondary data collected were relevant books, scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional papers/reports and relevant materials downloaded from the internet. The content analysis of the qualitative data gathered was carried out and integrated into the discussion of the findings generated through the questionnaire.

**Educated elites participation in ensuring accountability by public officials in Ogun State, Nigeria during the period 2003 – 2011.**

Table 1: Did you participate in any civil society advocacy activities agitating for accountability by elected public officials from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1161</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>1720</td>
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Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 1 above shows that majority of the respondents 1161 (67.5%) did not join in any demands for accountability by elected public officials, through joining the advocacy activities of civil society organizations. Only 559 (32.5%) of the respondents stated that they were involved in the demand for accountability by elected public officials through activities of some of the CSOs. This is surprising given the fact that Nigeria has continually been ranked one of the most corrupt countries in the world by transparency international. The expectation would be that a large number of the elites should be at the fore-front of the demands for accountability by public officials. The implication of this finding is that the educated elite in Ogun State did not pay particular interest to the advocacy activities of the CSOs on the need for accountability by public officials.

Table 2: Did you write memos to any ministry, department or agency demanding for accountability by public servants in the state from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td>551</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1169</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1720</td>
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Source: Field Survey (2012)
Table 2 above shows that majority of the respondents 1161 (67.97%) did not write memos to any ministry, department, or agency demanding accountability by public servants. However, 551 (32.03%) of the respondents however, were involved in the demand for accountability by elected public servants through the memos that sent to the relevant establishments. Writing of memos or petitions are necessary in ensuring accountability in the public sector. Such anti corruption agencies like EFCC and ICPC by their statute require citizens acting individually or in groups to write to report officials who are suspected to be engaging in corrupt practices. It is only the educated members of the society who possess the wherewithal to carry out such assignments. Where they fail to do to do, it could adversely affect the fight against corruption and entrenchment of accountability ideals in the public sector.

Table 3: Did you write a newspaper article demanding for greater accountability by public officials in the state from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1720</td>
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Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 3 above shows that majority of the respondents 1191 (69.25%) did not join in any demands for accountability by elected public officials through writing of newspaper articles. Only 529 (30.75%) of the respondents were involved in the demand for accountability by elected public officials through publication of newspaper articles. Writing of articles in newspapers demanding for accountability by public officials makes them conscious of the fact that the public is watching their activities and demands quality services from them.

Table 4: Did you participate in any phone – in programme on radio or television demanding for accountability by public servants in the state from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1720</td>
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</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 4 above shows that majority of the respondents 1388 (80.70%) did not participate in phone-in programmes either on radio or television, to make demands for accountability by elected public officials. Only 332 (19.30%) of the respondents however, were involved in the demand for accountability by elected public officials through any of the live phone-in
programmes during the eight year period. Participation in these phone-in programmes could be done from the comfort of the home of the person, with practically no stress. Various elected public officials and political appointees featured in some of these programmes, including the then state governor, and such programmes could have been utilized by educated elites to make direct demands on public officials to be accountable in the discharge of their official responsibilities.

Table 5: Did you participate in any of the town hall meetings hosted by either the legislator representing your constituency or the governor, if you did, did you demand for accountability by public officials in the state from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1361</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>1720</td>
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</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 5 above shows that majority of the respondents 1361 (79.13%) did not participate in any of the town hall meetings hosted by either the legislator representing their constituency or the governor, during the eight year period. Not participating in those town hall meetings means that they could not utilize the opportunity they provide to demand for greater accountability by public officials. However, 359 (20.87%) of the respondents participated in the town hall meeting and also utilized the opportunity they provide to demand for accountability by public officials. The finding corroborates information provided by Gbenga Daniel (the former governor) and some of the legislators interviewed (in separate interviews) that the elite in the state shun town hall meetings which should be the platform for them to make contributions to governance including making demands for accountability by public officials.

The data in tables 1 – 5 show a high level of apathy by the educated elites towards ensuring accountability by public officials in the state during the period under review. All the former political functionaries interviewed stated (independently) that most of the elite in the state do not show any form of concern about the activities of government except if a particular government policy directly affects their personal interest. The former governor stated, that the establishment of Financial Intelligence and Control Unit (FICU) by his administration was a deliberate attempt to curb any attempts at misappropriation of funds or corruption and ensure accountability by public officials. The expectation was that the elite in the state would weigh in utilizing various platforms available to ensure that public officials are kept accountable in the discharge of their responsibilities. Gbenga Daniel stated that the publication of the comprehensive financial report of the activities of the government over the eight year period which was made public a view days before the hand over to a new government was evidence of the administration’s commitment to accountability.
Educated elites participation in ensuring transparency in discharge of responsibilities by public officials in Ogun State, Nigeria

Table 6: Did you participate in any civil society advocacy activities agitating for transparency in discharge of responsibilities by elected public officials from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>29.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1211</td>
<td>70.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 6 above shows that majority of the respondents 1211 (70.41%) did not join in making demands for transparency by elected public officials, through any of the civil society organizations in the country that engaged in advocacy activities in that regard. Only 509 (29.59%) of the respondents however, were involved the activities of the different CSOs that focus on demand for transparency by elected public officials in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Table 7: Did you write a newspaper article demanding for greater transparency in discharge of responsibilities by public officials in the state from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1161</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 7 above shows that majority of the respondents 1161 (67.5%) did not join in making demands for transparency by elected public officials, through writing of newspaper articles demanding for greater transparency in the discharge of responsibilities by public officials. Only 559 (32.5%) of the respondents however, were involved using the platform of newspaper articles to demand for transparency by elected public officials in the discharge of their responsibilities.
Table 8: Did you participate in any phone – in programme on radio or television demanding for transparency in discharge of responsibilities by public officials in the state from 2003 – 2011?

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td>504</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1720</td>
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Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 8 above shows that majority of the respondents 1216 (70.70%) did not participate in any phone-in programme on radio or television to make demand for transparency by elected public officials. Only 504 (29.30%) of the respondents stated that they used the platform of phone-in programmes on radio or television to demand for transparency by elected public officials in the discharge of their responsibilities. Gbenga Daniel (personal interview on September 12, 2011) stated that his telephone number was made available to the public through state broadcasting stations (radio and television) as a sign of commitment of the government to transparency. He stated that all SMS that he received on the line on government policies and programmes during his tenure were responded to by him, personally. He stated that the educated elites in the state had ample opportunity to participate in demanding for transparency by public officials.

A senior civil servant, of the rank of Director, (personal interview conducted on 11th March 2012) stated that his comments and suggestions on a particular policy issue which he raised in the phone-in programme that the governor was on was acted upon by the government subsequently. He stated that though the governor was committed to transparency, the politicians around him were the ones frustrating efforts of the government as they sought to further their selfish interest. Those politicians knew that greater transparency, will not further their personal agenda.

Some of the educated elites who were interviewed expressed ignorance of the governors GSM being made available to the public (in separate interviews). Their position was that the GSM should have been made public through neutral media outlet, as state broadcast stations are usually regarded as public relations outlets of the government. According to them utilizing neutral media outlets would have shown the seriousness of the government on encouraging people to participate in ensuring transparency by public officials.
Table 9: Did you participate in any of the town hall meetings hosted by either the legislator representing your constituency or the governor, if you did, did you demand for transparency in discharge of responsibilities by public officials in the state from 2003 – 2011?

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid Yes</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>19.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid No</td>
<td>1391</td>
<td>80.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 9 above shows that majority of the respondents 1391 (80.87%) did not participate in any of the town hall meetings hosted by either the legislator representing your constituency or the governor, if you did, did you demand for transparency in discharge of responsibilities by public officials in the state from 2003 – 2011. Only 329 (19.13%) of the respondents stated that they were able to use the opportunity of the town hall meetings to demand for transparency by elected public officials in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Some of the respondents interviewed accepted that town hall meetings should be avenue for demanding for transparency by public officials; however the nature of those town hall meetings made it unconducive for their participation. They stated that the town hall meetings are usually carnival like sessions which supporters of the public officials turn to political rallies filled with singing and dancing and eulogizing the virtues of the public official. Their position is that attending such sessions to demand for transparency would amount courting attack by party faithful.

Table 10: Did you make contributions towards transparency by public officials through writing memos or position paper to any committee of the house of assembly?

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<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Valid No</td>
<td>1365</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1720</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2012)

Table 10 above, shows that majority of the respondents 1365 (79.4%) did not make any contributions towards ensuring transparency by public officials. By writing memos or position papers to any of the committees of the house of assembly. However, 355 (20.6%) of the respondents stated they were able to write memos or position papers to committees of the state house of assembly demanding transparency by public officials. The finding which indicates low
level of participation of educated elites in demanding for transparency by public officials through memos and position papers to committees of the house of assembly was corroborated by legislators during the period in separate interviews. The former legislators stated separately that very few residents of the state wrote or made complaints on transparency by public officials during the period. To them, if those who are being served do not complain it means they are satisfied with the quality of service.

Findings on tables 6 – 10 show a high level of apathy by the educated elite in terms of contribution towards ensuring transparency by public officials. This is very worrisome as transparency measures ensure that public officials are accountable in their responsibilities. This high level of apathy on the part of the educated elites comes on the background of their clear understanding of the importance of transparency as a major characteristic of good governance.

Majority of the educated elite were not involved in efforts at ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials. This has the tendency of creating the enabling environment for public officials to abuse the process and engage in various corrupt practices, when they realize that nobody holds them accountable for their actions. Several studies such as National Democratic Institute (2011), Hamutenya (2010), Cavill & Sohail (2007) and Sorkaa (2003), revealed that lack of transparency and accountability in government operations create opportunities for corruption.

The fact that majority of the educated elites in the state did not make any contributions towards ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials, during the period under review was not healthy for the democratic practice. This is made more precarious by the fact that the country has a very low rating globally, being regarded as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. As Sorkaa (2003) aptly stated that the rational for accountability is as a result of the general fear that public officials might exploit the governmental apparatus for their own personal aggrandizement. Given the situation where Nigeria is regarded as one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2010), the inability of the educated elite to participate in activities requiring accountability and transparency in governance, is a complete resignation to bad governance by self-seeking public officials.

When public officials know that their activities are subject of public scrutiny, they are more likely to be cautious, and discharge their duties according to laid down rules. Following the propositions of National Democratic Institute (2011) and Cavill & Sohail (2007) on lack of accountability and transparency creating avenue for corruption, it becomes easy to ascertain why Nigeria ranks among the most corrupt countries in the world, since the educated elite fail to hold public officials accountable for their official actions.

**Conclusion**

There was a high level of apathy by educated elites regarding participation in ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials in Ogun State during the period under review. Most of the educated elites in the state did not take advantage of the various platforms available to make contributions towards ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials. This is a very negative trend in democratic governance in the country. Active participation of the citizenry is necessary to keep public officials in check and ensure that corrupt minded individuals do not abuse the processes of governance.
The educated elite should be able to use the various mechanisms in putting pressure on the elected and appointed public officials to ensure accountability and transparency in government operations. Such activities as writing of newspaper articles, involving in phone programmes on radio and television, participation in constituency meetings, joining civil society organizations, are among the activities that the educated elite should engage in with a view to eliciting accountability from their representatives.

Educated elites who participated in one activity or the other aim at ensuring accountability and transparency by public officials, reported that there was positive outcome. This implies that active participation by a large number of educated elites in these agitations for accountability and transparency has enormous potentials for the country in its efforts to achieve good governance.

**Recommendations**

Elected public officials should educate their supporters on the value of town hall meeting so that they will desist from turning such meetings to political rallies.

The National Orientation Agency should organize massive enlightenment programme targeting the educated elites. Such programme would sensitize them on the need for them to participate in demanding for accountability and transparency by public officials using the different available platforms.

Telephone numbers and email addresses of key government officials such as governor and deputy governor, speaker, and principal officers of the house of assembly, the chief Judge, auditor-general of the state, amongst others, should be made public knowledge using the government websites and other media platforms.

Quarterly report of activities of the different arms, levels, ministries, departments and agencies of government in the state should be made public. This will make public officials more conscious since they know that their activities have become subject of intense public scrutiny.

**References**


Transparency International (2009). Global corruption report retrieved online from transparencyinternational.org